

August 30, 2018

Standing Policy Committee Planning, Development & Community Services
222 3rd Avenue North
Saskatoon, SK
S7K 0J5

Re: Request to Speak – September 4th Meeting of Committee – Special Event Policy proposed Amendments.

Good Morning Committee Members;

Tourism Saskatoon has enjoyed fulfilling the terms of a Fee-for-Service Agreement with the City of Saskatoon for over 20 years. Over this time we have worked closely with City Administration to propose policy and procedural changes designed to position Saskatoon favorably in a very competitive environment. This is especially true as it relates to securing major cultural, sport and convention events to this destination.

Tourism Saskatoon plays an integral role in identifying and developing event opportunities, determining their value and potential. We then implement processes to win these pieces of business for Saskatoon, and the more than 16,000 Saskatoon people employed in our local tourism industry.

One of these processes includes working to secure necessary funding for major events, a search that includes tax-based support from the Province and the City, Corporate support and investment through the Destination Marketing Fund that we manage.

A significant change, and challenge, we face is confirming this financial support in timelines that are increasingly shorter. The biannual review structure currently in place for Major Special Event Funding is no longer tenable. A good example of this was the recent application for an event valued at over \$16 million to our local economy. The application was forwarded in February, but not brought to this committee until June, at which time an extraordinary, and probably unprecedented action by Administration to ask the committee to reconvene in order to deal with this request occurred. If this had not happened, we would have had to cancel our BID, and one of your major facilities would have suffered because of it.

In addition, new processes for Council and its Committees have resulted in too much information being publicly available, at a stage too early in the BID process. The analogy I would use is one that is closer to a Tender, where the public interest is best maintained by ensuring competitive RFP's are received, providing best value to the tax-payer.

Bearing this in mind, I offer the following:

Tourism Saskatoon, under its current Fee-for-Service Agreement, offers to assume the responsibility to Administer the Special Event Fund, and Profile Saskatoon Fund, at no cost to the program, and for no additional fees.

This would emulate our current responsibility in adjudicating the Civic Hospitality Fund. Public scrutiny over funding for major events, currently an investment of \$250,000 per year, would come at the Budget Development phase, not during active Bids.

The rationale for this includes:

- Increasing the speed and efficiency of determining City investment in major events to meet market trends.
- Provide us with an enhanced platform to negotiate other investment partnerships with the province and potential private sector investments.
- Ultimately drive event-based economic growth to support both facilities owned by the City, and the event industry at-large.

I understand the pressures that Council Committees and City administration come under to deal with the issues and opportunities of the day. I see this as a chance to further engage the 15 professional who work in the Tourism Saskatoon office, and that worry about event attraction, every day. It will decrease demand on City staff and City Committees while still providing full accountability in the use of public funds.

On the latter point, Tourism Saskatoon worked with Saskatoon's accommodations to establish the Destination Marketing Program, and for the last nine years we have been entrusted to put these funds into action. All DMP funds are administered separately within our books, with full accountability to our investing partners. I would offer the same transparency for Council.

In today's environment it is not enough to be "the same as" or "as good as" other Canadian Destinations – we have to be better. This new process will make us just that.

Based on your recommendation I would be pleased to assist with the evolution of the hosting policies for further consideration by the SPC, PD&CS.

Sincerely



Todd Brandt
President & CEO