

PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURE COMMISSION

TO: MAYOR AND COUNCILLORS

SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO DELEGATION: TOURISM BURNABY – HALLOWEEN
FESTIVAL

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. **THAT** Council receive this report titled “Response to Delegation: Tourism Burnaby – Halloween Festival”, for information.
2. **THAT** this report titled “Response to Delegation: Tourism Burnaby – Halloween Festival”, be forwarded to Chris Peters, Executive Director, Tourism Burnaby.

REPORT

The Parks, Recreation and Culture Commission, at its meeting held on March 14, 2023, received and adopted the attached report providing information on the possibility of hosting a large-scale Halloween Festival in Burnaby.

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor S. Dhaliwal
Chair

Commissioner R. Kent
Vice Chair

TO: CHAIR AND MEMBERS
PARKS, RECREATION & CULTURE
COMMISSION

DATE: March 14, 2023

FROM: DEPUTY GENERAL MANAGER PARKS,
RECREATION AND CULTURE

FILE: 66000-01

**SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO DELEGATION: TOURISM BURNABY - HALLOWEEN
FESTIVAL**

PURPOSE: To respond to Tourism Burnaby's delegation regarding the possibility of holding a large scale Halloween Festival in Burnaby.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. **THAT** this report from the Deputy General Manager Parks, Recreation and Culture be received for information.
2. **THAT** the report titled "Response to Delegation: Tourism Burnaby – Halloween Festival" be forwarded to Council for information.
3. **THAT** The report titled "Response to Delegation: Tourism Burnaby – Halloween Festival" be forwarded to Chris Peters.

REPORT

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Annually, the City of Burnaby has presented many activities during the Halloween season in several public facilities for the enjoyment of all ages. Recently, Tourism Burnaby has also been active in working with partners to present Halloween activations.

2.0 POLICY SECTION

The City of Burnaby Halloween Program aligns with the City of Burnaby's Corporate Strategic Plan and is congruent with the objectives of enhancing diversity, a sense of community and community involvement.

3.0 BACKGROUND

In 2019, Tourism Burnaby advanced the idea of developing a city-wide tourist attraction with a Halloween theme to boost seasonal visitor traffic which was of interest to local businesses. A delegation of representatives from Burnaby City Council, City staff and Tourism Burnaby visited Derry, Northern Ireland to experience that city's long-standing popular seasonal event.

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Upon returning, plans were launched for a version of the Derry experience in Burnaby, however, the Covid-19 pandemic caused significant disruptions to all city and community events and programs.

Historically, the Burnaby Village Museum has hosted a “Haunted Village” seasonal attraction. In response to Covid-19 restrictions, Parks, Recreation and Culture (PRC) presented a new multi-media event called “Eerie Illusions” at the Burnaby Village Museum in 2021 and expanded it in 2022. It was a gated paid-admission attraction to control access in compliance with public health orders and to enhance visitor enjoyment by managing crowd sizes at each site component.

In 2022, Eerie Illusions involved live performers, eco-sculptures, multimedia installations, themed installations, photo-opportunity stations, window displays, open building access, a scavenger hunt, food trucks and Tourism Burnaby’s photo contest. Marketing initiatives and media coverage helped draw both attention and attendance from across the Lower Mainland. In 2022, total attendance reached 23,008 for the ten day event which ran October 20-30, 2022. Sponsorships and contributions were received totalling \$15,000 in addition to many in-kind media sponsors’ contributions.

In addition to this signature event, the City also programmed 9 Halloween activities throughout Recreation and Culture facilities.

Tourism Burnaby presented Burnaby’s Halloween Festival in 2022. It involved partner presenters for Burnaby’s Immersive Haunted Halloween Experience at Warner Loat Park with “Empty Chest” presenting; Pumpkins After Dark at Swangard Stadium and Central Park; Hex After Dark Film Festival; Capture the Spirit Photography Competition; Halloween Decorations Interactive Map and the Halloween Festival Home Décor Program.

4.0 DISCUSSION

At the Parks, Recreation and Culture Commission meeting of January 1, 2023, Chris Peters, Executive Director, Tourism Burnaby, outlined their goals of a Burnaby Halloween Festival:

- Be the largest Halloween Festival in Canada by 2023;
- Have 50 events and activations by 2026;
- Be the result of collaboration with community groups, local businesses, City of Burnaby, the arts and cultural community, local First Nations, and tourism bodies; and
- Be an opportunity for the hundreds of diverse cultural groups of Burnaby to come together in a single city-wide celebration.

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To achieve those goals, Tourism Burnaby requested that:

- Parks, Recreation and Culture Commission and City staff participate in the Burnaby Halloween Festival organizing committee;
- Fees for partners at City-owned assets are reduced or eliminated for the first year and a sliding scale is introduced over the following years; and
- The City of Burnaby increase the number and duration of City-owned and run events.

City Special Events & Festivals

“Eerie Illusions” ran for two years at the Burnaby Village Museum as a pilot project involving many more elements and features than the traditional Haunted Village program. The enhanced spectacle was an experiment in building a more significant attraction in Burnaby inspired by the Derry, Ireland program.

In 2022, the first-ever Canada Day Street Fest was also held at Central Park next to Metrotown and was a huge success. While the event was only for a few hours on Canada Day, it operated as a “town centre festival” and required significant planning from the Culture staff team and other civic divisions and departments.

Staff have analyzed the request made by Tourism Burnaby in the context of the City’s broader special events and festivals plans. As presented at the February 14, 2023 PRC Commission meeting, the City plans and delivers a number of signature events throughout the year in addition to supporting a variety of community-led events. As part of the annual planning and budget process, staff have developed a plan for 2023’s special events.

Staff did investigate the possibility of a multi-day Halloween Festival at Metrotown for 2023, however, it was determined such an event would be logistically challenging and costly to run. Staff also considered re-activating an enhanced “Haunted Village” as well as a new Fireworks event for 2023 to occur on one day in October at the same part of Central Park that was used for Street Fest 2022.

Recognizing the financial challenges faced by many communities due to the current inflationary environment, staff prioritized 2023’s events and festivals throughout the budget process. Through this process, the Canada Day Street Fest was prioritized and it was determined that Eerie Illusions would wind-down. Instead, a new City Halloween fireworks event is planned to occur October 27, 2023 in the northeast corner of Central Park. The concept is supported by Burnaby Fire Department and RCMP as an excellent way to have residents and visitors enjoy fireworks in public together while also ensuring community safety. The Burnaby Village Museum (BVM) also plans to adapt its Haunted Village program in response to the effort to expand the City’s Halloween Program. With Eerie Illusion attendance reaching over 20,000 each year, there is a community expectation that the BVM will be able to provide an event of this scale. The BVM currently has funding to run a very small 4 day event that could host approximately 5,000 people. The BVM would like to offer an 8 day event with the opportunity to see an attendance capacity near 20,000. In order to do so, additional

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funding will be required and staff are looking at re-allocating existing resources to support this.

In addition to these events, there are a number of community-led events held throughout Burnaby. A chart has been prepared illustrating the number and diversity of Halloween seasonal events being held in Burnaby by both allotment holders (Attachment #1), and the City (Attachment #2).

Halloween Festival

Tourism Burnaby has made known its aspirations for the Burnaby Halloween Festival and is currently seeking more partners and resources. As noted in this report, staff are continuing to provide quality popular programs for Halloween, and continue to develop and pilot new seasonal attractions. Currently, the Culture event staff are at capacity based on this year's plan and the development of additional Halloween events would require additional staff and program resources.

Parks, Recreation and Culture staff have an ongoing relationship with Tourism Burnaby on many initiatives. While staff have reviewed the initial proposal presented by Tourism Burnaby, further information is required to understand and determine how the proposed festival could become an international Halloween Tourism attraction. The appropriate Culture and Recreation staff can be made available to participate on Tourism Burnaby's Halloween Festival organizing committee. Commission may also appoint a member to this committee. Participation on this committee will help staff to better determine the feasibility and advisability of more City participation in Tourism Burnaby's Halloween Festival into the future. However, staff do not have the capacity to organize additional initiatives as noted above.

In regards to fee reductions or waivers at City-owned facilities, there is a current process in place to address these requests. This will require the organizers to make a request to Commission on an as-needed basis and such requests would need to be considered within the limitations of the *Community Charter*.

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5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Parks, Recreation and Culture Commission receive this report from the General Manager Parks Recreation and Culture as information. Staff also plan to provide a copy of this report to Mr. Chris Peters, Executive Director Tourism Burnaby as information.



Carmen Gonzalez
DEPUTY GENERAL MANAGER PARKS RECREATION AND CULTURE

CG:dn:tc

Attachments: 1. Appendix 1;
2. Appendix 2.

Name of Event	Event Description	Location	2022 Event Dates	Returning 2023	Target Demographic	Ticket Price	Attendance	Additional Comments & Thoughts for Next Year
Zombie Walk	Ticketed (paid) zombie walk (walk/trudge/lurch/limp along the path): prizes for the best costumes, included entry to pumpkins after dark,	Central Park (Patterson Skytrain to Swangard)	13-Oct-22	Likely	Adults	\$10 per person	40-60	
Pumpkins after Dark	Outdoor Halloween art exhibit that is designed for the public to walk through.	Central Park / Swangard Stadium	Sept 22 to October 31	Yes	Families	17.95 to 21.95	53,977	Staff recommend some changes to the event site, date accommodations to facilitate other events in the Stadium, and updated safety planning from the producing company.
Empty Chest Haunted Adventure	Event goers interact with NPC (non player characters) in various locations built in an LARP (live action role play) village in order to complete quests. Activities include archery tag, axe throwing, escape room style puzzles and a tavern (beer garden) with proceeds going to charity.	Warner Loat Park (Park is closed to all other uses besides preschool programming during the event dates)	Oct 20 - Oct 31 (12 dates)	Yes	19+	\$50 per person (early bird) / \$60 per person	~1000	Staff Recommend expanded dates for 2023 and longer hours each night (until 11pm instead of 10pm). Preschool programmer at Warner Loat Park has indicated that if date frame is expanded / if event runs the current amount of dates that they could co-exist.
Neighbourhood Decorating Contest	Contest for the best decorated spooky house in Burnaby. Judged by Tourism Burnaby, Mayor Mike Hurley, Fortis BC. Judges assessed based on Originality & Creativity, Adherence to topic, workmanship & Overall Effect. This contest was won by 3970 Frances Street.	Throughout Burnaby	Oct 23, 2022 Deadline to submit	Yes	Homeowners	No	32 homes+	\$350 grants were available for homes competing. Prizes ranged from \$250 to \$1000 plus a Block Party Pack for the Best Group of Houses. City involvement was limited to the Mayor as a judge in this.

Pumpkin Parade	Residents save their Halloween Pumpkins and bring them to display along the lit walking path for the community to enjoy. There are glow in the dark games for families to enjoy as well as craft tents and a scavenger hunt. This is also a recycling event, as the green waste team brings the recycling truck at the end of the event to compost all the pumpkins.	Confederation Park (infront of Eileen Dailly) - Corner of Albert & Willingdon	1-Nov-22	Yes	Families	Free	414 in 2022	Annual event with families travelling from as far as Chilliwack to attend. Pre-Covid included hot beverage station and staff would like to start that again. Focus more on the recycling aspect of the event in 2023.
Parent & Preschooler Hallowe'en	This one time holiday special will give you and your child an opportunity to engage in a variety of holiday related crafts and activities. One adult permitted per child.	Edmonds	October 29, 2022	Yes	Families (Preschoolers)	\$13	24 (12 preschoolers, 12 adults)	This program runs every year and is popular.
Spectral Visions	Works from the Cit of Burnaby Permanent Art Collection focusing on dark and mysterious historical and contemporary artworks by over 30 artists	Burnaby Art Gallery	Oct 1 - Nov 1, 2022	No	All Ages	Free/By Donation	807	The permanent collection has limited "spooky" content to draw from and so would not run this exhibition program again for a few years. Attendance was up by 10% this month, a good showing.
Haunted Village	Ticketed (paid) family-focused event featuring costumed staff & visitors, live performances, an hourly dance party, themed displays throughout the site and additional programming.	Burnaby Village Museum	N/A	Yes	Families	\$5 - Youth under 12 \$10 - Adults	N/A	This program ran for many years, up to 2019. This was replaced by Eerie Illusions during COVID-19, but returns in 2023.
Halloween Fireworks	New in 2023, the City will celebrate Halloween and fall traditions with a fireworks-centered event at Central Park focused on family fun. Event details are under development at this time.	Central Park (Patterson & Kingsway)	N/A	Yes	All Ages	Free	N/A	Date is set for Oct 27, 2023 (in conjunction with RCMP & Fire). This will be the City's only official Halloween fireworks and it will be part of the Burnaby Halloween Festival.