

 COBOURG	THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF COBOURG
	STAFF REPORT
TO:	Mayor and Council Members
FROM: TITLE:	Kara Euale Secretary, Christmas Magic Ad Hoc Committee
DATE OF MEETING:	September 3, 2019
TITLE / SUBJECT:	Final Report: Location of Lights for 2019 Christmas Magic
REPORT DATE:	August 14, 2019

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Until 2016, Christmas Magic Display of Lights was centered in Victoria Park and Victoria Hall. In 2016 the lights were temporarily removed from Victoria Park and relocated in Rotary Park and the Esplanade. In January 2019, in response to requests by citizens calling for the return of lights to Victoria Park (see Appendix I), Municipal Council voted in favour of establishing *The Christmas Magic Ad Hoc Committee* whose mandate was to provide recommendations regarding the location of the 2019 Christmas Magic Display of Lights.

Terms of Reference created in April 2019 directed that the Committee be composed of up to six citizens appointed by Council, in addition to the Arts, Culture and Tourism Coordinator and the Parks and Recreation Coordinator. Non-voting members of the Committee were to include the Director or Deputy Director of Community Services, the Manager of Marketing and Events, the Manager of Parks and the Community Events Coordinator. The Committee was required to:

- Consult with appropriate Town Departments to consider the budget implications on the possible locations of 2019 Christmas Magic;
- Consider all potential light pollution effects, or any other environmental effects on trees or other types of plants if used to hold lighting or decorative fixtures relating to Christmas Magic;
- Consider the logistics of suitable locations as they relate to entertainment, amenities and/or activities for participants attending the Municipal Event;
- Identify, engage, and work with other community groups and partners who are actively engaged in the celebration of the 2019 Christmas Magic; and

- Undertake any other assignment pertaining to Cobourg's celebration of the 2019 Christmas Magic as may be requested by Council.

On May 21, 2019, council appointed Bruce Moore, Ron Hyatt and Julie McCuaig to the Committee. On July 2, Council appointed Jane Frost, Dale Randall and Rosella Cornaviera to the Committee. Councillors Adam Bureau and Emily Chorley were the Coordinators of Arts, Culture and Tourism and Parks and Recreation. The Committee met on June 27, July 17, July 26 and August 14, 2019.

2.0 DISCUSSION OF ISSUES

The Committee considered several reports prepared by Staff addressing contextual issues as well as specific issues identified in the terms of reference: e.g. budget implications, potential environmental effects on trees and plants, logistical issues relevant to sites of activities, views of other community groups.

We make the following observations:

Victoria Hall:

Each year the lighting-up ceremony takes place outside Victoria Hall to launch Christmas Magic. The Committee recognizes that this is an essential part of the Christmas Magic tradition.

Rotary Park:

Christmas lights at the skating rink provides the public with a pleasurable experience and appears to have increased foot traffic to the downtown core in a measurable way, at least on the night of the tree lighting.

The Esplanade:

Unlike Rotary Park, there are no natural trees for lighting on the Esplanade. The site is not as visible as Rotary Park and is not as accessible. Its proximity to the Harbour poses a risk to young children. The Committee was told that the DBIA does not oppose a discontinuation of the lights at this site.

Victoria Park:

Many citizens of Cobourg have asked for the display of Christmas Lights in Victoria Park. While there is a concern about avoiding damage to the trees and the Park, staff have acknowledged that lights could be placed in a manner that minimizes any stress or damage to the trees and grass in the park (e.g. flood lights, projectors, solar lights). Returning lights to Victoria Park during the Christmas season would draw people to the park, which would be a boost to tourism at that time of year. The park is accessible to everyone. The lights could be placed in a way and at a time that does not interfere or disrespect any groups or events (e.g. Remembrance Day). Staff have advised that lights could easily be relocated from the Esplanade to Victoria Park and that staff will work within the approved budget of \$20,000 and divide the lights between Rotary Harbourfront Park, Victoria Hall, and Victoria Park. Staff are actively seeking

additional sponsorship in order to further enhance the impact of lighting displays in Victoria Park. The Committee recommended that the lighting of the structures within Victoria Park (such as the bandshell, canteen, and Lions Pavilion) would have a great visual impact on the lighting of Victoria Park. The DBIA discussed the possible relocation of the lights from Esplanade to Victoria Park and did not oppose the idea so long as lights remain in Rotary Park for the lighting-up ceremony.

3.0 SUMMARY

The Christmas Magic Display of Lights should include Victoria Park, Rotary Harbourfront Park and Victoria Hall. Increasing the magnitude of the Christmas Magic Display of Lights is responsive to public calls for action. It contributes to the bonhomie of this “feel good” town during the holiday season and would draw more people to the downtown core and contribute to revitalizations efforts. It is financially feasible and would not harm the environment.

The Committee recognizes that staff will work within the 2019 budget of \$20,000, and realizes that best efforts will be made to restore the former glory of past lighting displays in Victoria Park, although it will likely take several years and an increased budget and community partnerships to accomplish this.

4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Having consulted with appropriate town departments and having considered all relevant factors, we respectfully make the following recommendations:

1. Maintain Christmas Lights in Rotary Harbourfront Park. The lights should be illuminated on the third Friday of November and remain lit around the outdoor rink until late February.
2. Remove the Christmas Magic Lights from the Esplanade and relocate them to Victoria Park. Install additional lights and decorations in a manner suitable to the size of the space in the Park, within budget. While it may be appropriate to remove Christmas decorations in the first week of January, we recommend that some lighting be maintained after January 7 so that the Park has some lighting through to late February.
3. Continue to put out an annual call for volunteers to assist staff as required in implementing and expanding Christmas Magic. Community engagement and involvement in lighting up Victoria Park should be encouraged.
4. Reconsider funding the lease of downtown lamp post lights for the 2019/2020 Christmas season. On July 4, 2019 the DBIA passed a motion committing \$9,000 for more lights and/or decorations for the downtown core lamp posts. Council would therefore need to approve an additional \$16,000 to move forward with the \$25,000 cost of leasing the lamp post light fixtures. This should also be considered in the 2020 Public Works budget.

5.0 ATTACHMENTS

Delegation to Council by Bruce Moore, Cobourg Citizen, January 7, 2019

6.0 AUTHORIZATION ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Submitted by the Christmas Magic Ad Hoc Committee on August 14, 2019.

APPENDIX I

Mail body: Mayor, deputy mayor and councillors I would like to thank you for...

Mayor, deputy mayor and councillors I would like to thank you for your time. I am here on behalf of many fellow citizens of Cobourg. Many of us believe that the Christmas magic belongs back at Victoria Park. In the current location at the harbour the majority of the town cannot see the display. I remember walking on King street last year at night and thought to myself wow this town does not look decorated at all for Christmas. The only way I saw the lights was to look down Second street and see just a small portion of it. Now at its current location it feels like a private display for the condo owners. If it goes back to where it was everyone that drives through town will see the lights. If someone from out of town was driving through they would not see the display at all. I put a poll on Facebook and asked the following question: Who would like to see Victoria Park lit up for Christmas. The park and beach is our largest tourist attraction in town so why is it left in the dark at Christmas? Please share with family and friends. If I get a huge response I will bring it to town council. □□□□□□□□□□□□□□. I will give you the results in a moment. Some of the people that voted on the poll stated how they miss it from when they were young and miss seeing the bandshell lit up and not be able to share it with their kids. Victoria Park and beach is our largest tourist attraction and we should show it off all year long and not just during the summer. here are the results of the poll. Almost 1300 Voted and over 1200 Said light the park and 44 said no leave it where it is. I think this proves how much the people of Cobourg feel about this issue and truly what they want. This is not a small amount of people for sure. Many of you while you were campaigning said your here for the people this is a way to prove it. Let's get Victoria Park out of the darkness and bring back the light. Light up the Park!!

Thank you!

Sent from my iPhone



Bruce Moore



This poll has ended.

1.2K Votes

1 Share



Like



Comment



Share



Bruce Moore created a poll.



November 6 at 6:39 PM · 🌐

Who would like to see Victoria Park lit up for Christmas this year? The park and beach is our largest tourist attraction in town so why is it left in the dark at Christmas? Please share with family and friends. If I get a huge response I will bring it to town council. 🎄 🎄 🎄 🎄 🎄 🎄 🎄 🎄 🎄 🎄 🎄 🎄 🎄 🎄 🎄

97% Light the Park ☑️

3% No

This poll has ended.

14

1.2K Votes 55 Comments 184 Shares



Like



Comment



Share



will do my best to bring this issue to the town council. Thanks again in participating in the poll. Had no idea it would get that big.

19h Like Reply



Rachel Purvis-Whitehead

Bruce Moore bring up the idea of a park lighting ceremony, have local vendors selling products that could be gifted at Christmas time, hot chocolate and hot apple cider sales with the proceeds going towards the city. Make a whole event of it!

8m Like Reply



Bruce Moore

Rachel Purvis-Whitehead they sort of do that now at town hall but I will mention your quote. I'm going to read some of the things people said during the poll when I give my presentation

Just now Like Reply



Write a reply...





Bruce Moore shared a post to the group: **Port Hope & Cobourg Buy & Sell Group.**



1 hr ·



Mike Pace
Waste of money

57m Like Reply



Erin Thompson
For some reason it felt more magical in the park, i think us moms/ dads can agree that when you let your kids go and run through the park and lights it's pretty cool - minus the fear of them running into the road where the condo owners are driving through, Just sayin ;)

2m Like Reply



Bruce Moore
Erin Thompson yes I think the park is more family friendly and don't have to worry about cars

Just now Like Reply



Write a reply...



Write a comment...





over 1200 saying right the park and only 44 saying No. Tomorrow I will be going to town hall after work and ask to bring this topic up at a council meeting. I will do my best to represent all 1200 plus of you. I will let you know when this takes place and would appreciate to see support at the meeting. This new town council said they would listen more to the public and their opinion. Let's find out together.

1h Like Reply



Valerie Green

Thankyou hun we all pay taxes here nwe all want the lights back to the park were all can enjoy n our out of town visitors

1h Like Reply



Mike Pace

Waste of money

57m Like Reply



Erin Thompson

For some reason it felt more magical in



Write a comment...

