

To: Operational Services Committee
Date of Report:

From: Commissioner,
Date of Meeting:

Subject: New Year's Eve Event Proposal

Ward: All

1.0 BACKGROUND

On March 15, 2004, City Council approved a proposal by Eclipse Concerts Inc. for the City of Oshawa to host a New Year's Eve Snowball Event at Memorial Park for December 31, 2004. On July 18, 2005, City Council directed staff to engage Eclipse Concerts Inc. to produce a second New Year's Eve Snowball Event at Memorial Park for December 31, 2005. Both events were well received by the public with approximately 1,500 to 2,000 in attendance.

Eclipse Concerts Inc. and Nexus Canada have presented proposals to Operational Services Committee to produce a New Year's Eve event for 2006.

Operational Services Committee at the meeting on March 13, 2006, passed the following motion:

"That correspondence from James Sled, Nexus Canada received February 17, 2006 concerning a proposal for a 2006/7 Snow Jam New Year's Eve event be referred to staff, to be evaluated in conjunction with the proposal from Kerri King for the 2006/7 Snowball New Year's Eve event and report back to Committee."

The purpose of this report is to respond to the above Council motion and to recommend a proposed 2007 New Year's Eve event.

2.0 INPUT FROM OTHER SOURCES

The following have provided input in the preparation of this report: Legal Services, Corporate Communications and Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment (MLSE).

3.0 ANALYSIS

3.1 Review of Proposals

Staff has met with representatives of Eclipse Concerts Inc. and Nexus Canada to discuss and review their proposals for the 2007 New Year's Eve event. Uncertainty and speculation of the future event venue made it difficult for the two proponents to address costs and entertainment as it

was unclear if the event was to remain at Memorial Park or be moved to the new Downtown Sports and Entertainment Facility. Both proposals relied on the City's allocated and approved

Dependent on a successful sponsorship campaign. Each proposal also included a substantial Production fee of approximately \$5,000 to \$10,000.

3.2 Past Events

The New Year's Eve event for the past two years has been produced by Eclipse Concerts Inc. With staff providing substantial support and assistance with coordination for the event, along with

In-kind services. The venue for the event has been the McLaughlin Bandshell at Memorial Park. This outside venue has provided weather-related challenges including ice, snow, cold Temperature, has added extra cost to the production of the event and has, to some extent, made the success of the event weather dependent.

3.3 Alternative Vision for New Year's Eve 2007

On November 1, 2006, the City's Downtown Sports and Entertainment Facility is scheduled to open. The opening of this City facility would present an alternative opportunity to hold the 2007 New Year's Eve event at the new facility. This would also provide an opportunity to showcase the facility to the community and beyond. Hosting the New Year's Eve event at the new Downtown Sports and Entertainment Facility would eliminate the outside weather-related problems and allow expansion of the event making it an ideal choice for a long-term home for the event.

If this is the venue of choice, it would require that staff plan, manage and coordinate a new event together with our facility operator, Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment.

It is proposed that the event be free to the public, be broadcast by local television, be comprised of a "family" portion with a children's countdown at 9:30 p.m., an "all ages" portion with a main headliner, and include a "signature way" for Oshawa to bring in the new year at midnight. Public skating, both inside and outside the facility will also be considered as part of the event.

Discussions with MLSE indicate that a stage configuration using the floor and seating in the main

bowl would allow the proposed venue to accommodate up to 3,200 spectators.

It is proposed that the new event could be called "Oshawa Celebrates New Year's Eve 2007".

Moving the event to the Downtown Sports and Entertainment Facility would not require a third-party production company to produce the event as staff can assume many of the responsibilities together with MLSE who have significant experience in event management. Contracting of some services would still be necessary such as light and sound and possibly the use of a promoter to secure entertainment. This model is similar to the City's award-winning Canada Day event as staff independently produce this event without third-party production involvement. The elimination of the third party would reduce the production costs of the event enabling more funds to be used for entertainment or other activities.

This proposed model of event management would also allow staff in accordance with Report CM-

06-08, "Status Update on the Facility Sponsorship, Advertising and Donation Program" to

Staff has developed a Canada Day sponsorship program and package and has been successful in attracting sponsors. Staff is currently developing a sponsorship program and package for other City events including the summer series of Concerts in the Park, and the Christmas Tree Lighting event. The New Year's Eve event can be added to the sponsorship program in a similar fashion to the Canada Day Package including, Platinum, Gold, Silver, Bronze and Supporting Partner Categories. Similar to Canada Day, all revenue generated from the sponsorship program for this event would be used to offset the cost of the event.

4.0 RESPONSE TO THE COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN

Continuation of the New Year's Eve event would respond to Goal A1 - "Revitalizing the Downtown" and Goal A5 - "Enhancing Arts, Culture and Recreation".

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The 2006 approved budget for the 2007 New Year's Eve event is \$32,100. Any additional funding required would be obtained through sponsorship. It is recommended that the existing budget of \$32,100 be used solely for entertainment and an additional \$25,000 be targeted to be raised through sponsorships to offset the other costs of the event. Additional costs will be for sound, lighting and pyrotechnics, paid duty policing and part-time staff, marketing and promotion

and additional activities. In the event that staff is unsuccessful in attaining the full \$25,000 sponsorship, staff would take measures to reduce some activities associated with the event.

It is imperative to the success of the sponsorship initiative that a headliner is secured early, prior to staff engaging in the sponsorship program to assist in the attraction and appeal of the event to prospective sponsors.

6.0 CONCLUSION

The past New Year's Eve Snowball events at Memorial Park have been successful. However, there are weather related challenges of having such an event outdoors. There is an opportunity with the new Downtown Sports and Entertainment Facility to remove the weather related risks of a fully outdoor event. In addition there is an opportunity to work together with our Operator MLSE, who are a recognized leader in the entertainment and special events area. As such it is staffs' recommendation that it is no longer necessary to engage a third party producer for the City's New Year's Eve event if held at the new Downtown Sports and Entertainment Facility and

working together with MLSE.

The City of Oshawa has a unique opportunity to create and manage the City of Oshawa's New Year's Eve event and showcase the new Downtown Sports and Entertainment Facility. The opportunity to work together with MLSE, a major producer of events, would, in staffs opinion, result in the City producing a professional, entertaining and successful event for the City.

7.0 RECOMMENDED ACTION

That the Operational Services Committee recommend to City Council:

1. That the City celebrate New Year's Eve 2007 at the Downtown Sports and Entertainment Facility;
2. That the New Year's Eve event be planned, managed and administered by staff;
3. That staff work our Operator, Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment to plan and manage the New Year's Eve event;
4. That the New Year's Eve event be added to the City's sponsorship program and that all sponsorship dollars raised for this event be used to offset the cost of the event;
5. That Eclipse Concerts Inc. and Nexus Canada be provided with a copy of this report and thanked for their proposals;
6. That staff submit a summary report in early 2007 on the New Year's Eve event including the financials on costs and sponsorships; and
7. That direction be provided to staff on the event name.