

Bylaw enacted for large-scale events

By Mark PavilonsEditor

Some new rules are coming into effect for large gatherings on private property in King. Council approved staff recommendations for a bylaw to regulate large-scale events. Special events on private property involve consultation with York Regional Police and emergency services, to ensure safety, traffic control, etc. The bylaw also contains stronger enforcement tools, including fines. The bylaw sets out a clear and consistent application and approval process. Over the years, large property owners have often held large events, but there has been an increased interest by event organizers to host paid-ticket events such as festivals, concerts and sporting competitions. King didn't have a formal permit process for large-scale events and it was difficult to regulate and control. Staff have implemented requirements over the years to protect the interests of the Township and even patrons, such as contracting paid-duty police officers, security and first-aid. Staff worked with consultants Aird & Berlis to develop the new bylaw, which prioritizes safety and established standard practices, along with noise exemption applications. The "fulsome guidelines" will help both the Township and event organizers in planning future activities. Staff are asking that applications for such events in the future be submitted at least 90 days in advance. This will allow time to address all of the issues ahead of time. Event organizers will be required to submit all details and a site plan that shows the area, road closures, parking, location of tents or structures, washrooms and more. Permit fees are geared to the number of guests, and range from \$150 to \$450. This bylaw and accompanying guidelines are able to leverage and strengthen partnerships with the King Fire and Emergency Services Department as well as York Regional Police. Staff coordinate meetings throughout the application process that allows emergency workers to provide valuable input to improve safety measures for large group gatherings," the staff report noted. In a presentation by staffer Jacqueline Brown, she noted these large events are defined as infrequent gatherings that do not exceed four consecutive days, involving 250 or more people. Applicants must also provide \$5 million liability insurance, naming the Township as insured as well. Events that are exempt include golf courses, agri-tourism events, farmers' markets and garage sales. As well, the Township is requiring applicants provide a security deposit, ranging from \$1,500 to \$20,000.