



STAFF REPORT INFORMATION ONLY

Review of Winterlicious and Summerlicious Program Criteria

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| Date: | February 1, 2007 |
| To: | Economic Development Committee |
| From: | Donald G. Eastwood, General Manager Economic Development, Culture & Tourism |
| Wards: | All |
| Reference Number: | P:\2007\Cluster A\EDCT\ed-0702-005 |

SUMMARY

This report addresses two notices of motion pertaining to the Winterlicious and Summerlicious restaurant promotions: the participation of restaurants in the Scarborough area and a review of opportunities for inclusion of restaurants that meet the Council-approved criteria but have multiple venues.

The two motions were considered by staff in consultation with Ontario Hotel, Motel and Restaurant Association (OHMRA) and the processes were reviewed. In order to sustain the integrity of the programs the current criteria and process must be maintained.

All restaurants in all Wards of Toronto that meet the Winterlicious and Summerlicious criteria are invited to participate in the promotion. Restaurants wishing to be considered for the program should consult with the three rating publications used to determine program participation to find out how they might have their restaurant reviewed and/or receive a higher rating.

The program criteria also designates that participating restaurants must offer a unique dining experience. Multi-venue restaurants are permitted to participate, however restaurants that are part of a branded chain, offering the same menu, the same atmosphere and the same experience at each of the chain locations, are not eligible for participation in the program.

Staff will continue to consult and seek advice from the OHMRA and provide an online information page for restaurants to review to learn more about the criteria and how to be included.

Financial Impact

There are no financial implications resulting from the adoption of this report.

DECISION HISTORY

On October 26, 27, 28 and 31, 2005, City Council adopted “The Winterlicious and Summerlicious Culinary Programs produced by Toronto Special Events (All Wards)” without amendment which includes the adoption of the criteria and process established by staff to determine how the invitation list for participation in the program was developed.

On July 25, 26, and 27, 2006, Toronto City Council adopted, without amendment, the following motion:

Encouraging Greater Participation of Scarborough Restaurants in the Winterlicious and Summerlicious programs.

“**WHEREAS** the City of Toronto’s Winterlicious and Summerlicious programs do an excellent job in promoting Toronto as a destination for fine dining; and

WHEREAS promoting the hospitality industry in all Toronto communities is to the benefit of business owners and patrons alike; and

WHEREAS the most recent Summerlicious event, which ended July 23rd, highlighted over 130 Toronto restaurants; and

WHEREAS none of the restaurants that participated in this year’s Summerlicious program were located in the Scarborough Community; and

WHEREAS the Scarborough Community has a number of outstanding restaurants that could benefit from participation in the Winterlicious and Summerlicious programs;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the General Manager, Economic Development, Culture and Tourism be directed to report to Council, through the Economic Development and Parks Committee, on issues which may have contributed to the low participation rate of Scarborough restaurants in the past Winterlicious/Summerlicious events, and recommend strategies for increasing future participation in these programs;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the necessary provisions of Chapter 27 of the City of Toronto Municipal Code be waived to permit introduction and debate of this Notice of Motion at eh meeting of Council on July 25, 2006.”

On September 12, 2006 EDPC received the report “The Winterlicious and Summerlicious Culinary Programs Produced by Toronto Special Events” and requested that the General Manager of EDCT consult with the Ontario Hotel, Motel and Restaurant Association, to review opportunities for inclusion of restaurants in the Summerlicious and Winterlicious

programs that meet the Council-approved criteria but have multiple venues, and report back to the appropriate successor Committee dealing with these matters.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

The Winterlicious and Summerlicious culinary programs were developed in 2003 to extend the WinterCity Festival and the Celebrate Toronto Street Festival into city-wide celebrations and create an added incentive for spending and visits to Toronto. These programs focus on showcasing Toronto's diverse and unique fine dining experiences at a compelling price point. They fit the definition of wine and culinary tourism developed by the Province of Ontario which is; "tourism in which the opportunity for wine and/or culinary related experiences contributes significantly to the reason for travel to the destination or to itinerary planning while at the destination." (from *Ontario Wine and Culinary Tourism Strategy Exec. Summary, 2001*)

The City of Toronto supports the development and production of many food related programs and events that meet a wide range of objectives within the hospitality industry and engage a variety of restaurants at all levels. Programs and events addressing the needs of some of the hospitality industry include: Bloor West Village Ukrainian Festival, Caravan, Corso Italia Toronto Fiesta, Hot & Spicy: The Island Soul Edition, Sante: The Bloor Yorkville Wine Festival, Taste of the Danforth, Taste of Little Italy, Taste of Lawrence, Taste of TEDA, Tastes of Thailand, Toronto Ribfest, Vegetarian Food Fair, Wine and Cheese Show and World's Fare: Celebration of Food and Culture. City produced events such as the Tasty Thursdays Series and WinterCity food components include the participation of restaurants from all forms of dining.

The criteria and process adopted by council clearly states that "the restaurant must offer a unique dining experience to guests. Restaurants that are part of a chain (same name, same menu at multiple locations) do not meet this definition." This criteria was developed in consultation with the Ontario Hotel, Motel and Restaurant Association (OHMRA) who concur the Winterlicious and Summerlicious programs should offer and profile unique fine dining experiences.

The criteria also includes the grandfathering of the restaurants that participating in the inaugural promotions. The grandfather clause states: "At the inception of winter and summer restaurant promotion, prior to its current popularity, a number of restaurants who did not meet the criteria participated in the promotion. This clause acknowledges their efforts in engaging the restaurant industry and in championing our first campaign."

COMMENTS

Restaurants do not apply to participate, nor do staff solicit their interest to participate. The criteria and process adopted by council allows staff to compile a list of eligible restaurants. These restaurants are invited to participate and requested to respond by a specific date and time in order to fill the available space on a first come first serve basis.

The restaurants must be rated in two or more of the following rating publications (most

current published editions) with a minimum average of three stars or equivalent: Zagat Survey - consumer based ratings, Patron's Pick - consumer based ratings and Toronto Life Annual Eating and Drinking Guide - critic ratings. We continue to seek advice from the OHMRA on an annual basis to confirm that the rating guides and system are current and effective.

All of these publications encompass the GTA and are not exclusionary based on location within Toronto or the surrounding areas. Therefore, all restaurants in all wards that are rated and meet the criteria have equal opportunity to participate in the Winterlicious and Summerlicious programs.

In each edition of the program, two restaurants from Scarborough (Ward 41) have met the criteria and received invitation letters to participate. In each case (for 2006), neither restaurant replied. For Winterlicious 2005, a restaurant "Dragon Dynasty" from Ward 41 did participate in the program.

"Chain", as it is used in the criteria, has inherent reference to a "brand". A branded chain is a single concept that is re-created in multiple venues. The success of the brand lies in the re-creation of that single concept to build consumer confidence inherent in the brand. Consumers have an expectation with that brand and therefore make their selection accordingly.

There are restaurants owned by the same individuals or corporations participating in the Winterlicious and Summerlicious programs. Restaurants that are listed in the program that are owned by the same individuals or corporations are part of the program because each of their venues and menus are unique to the others. Each individual restaurant participant is unique in name and menu, offering a unique fine dining experience to guests.

The criteria is inherent in the program's success as it creates motivation for restaurants to participate and fulfills the consumer expectation of a unique fine-dining experience.

As part of the Economic Development, Culture & Tourism Divisional Program Review, staff will be looking at opportunities to broaden the economic impact and participation of additional businesses in the program.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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