

City Council

Motion without Notice

MM23.31	ACTION			Ward: 14
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Partial Reimbursement of Permit Fees for Toronto Music, Arts and Nature Alliance - by Councillor Paula Fletcher, seconded by Deputy Mayor Jennifer McKelvie

** This Motion has been deemed urgent by the Chair.*

** This Motion is not subject to a vote to waive referral. This Motion has been added to the agenda and is before Council for debate.*

Recommendations

Councillor Paula Fletcher, seconded by Deputy Mayor McKelvie, recommends that:

1. City Council direct the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation to refund 25 per cent or \$13,319.51 (excluding HST) of permit fees, on a one-time basis, for permits taken out by Toronto Music, Arts and Nature Alliance for cultural events programming held at Cherry Beach in 2024.

Summary

Toronto Music, Arts and Nature Alliance is a not-for-profit group that applied for and received commercial special event permits to organize eleven ticketed event dates for its Promise Cherry Beach event series in summer 2024.

Promise Cherry Beach is a popular community arts & music festival event series that has been held weekly each summer for the past 24 years. There are only two ways to access Cherry Beach: by crossing Cherry Street bridge or using Unwin Avenue. The nearest Toronto Transit Commission service is approximately 40-minutes away on foot.

This year, the events held at Cherry Beach were impacted by the unexpected closure of the Cherry Street bridge to facilitate emergency repairs, led by Ports Toronto. Resultant delays for festival attendees accessing or leaving the festival site had major unexpected impacts on festival attendance.

Toronto Music, Arts and Nature Alliance's permit fees were paid prior to Ports Toronto announcing multiple extensions to the bridge closure, and extended bridge closures were often communicated with limited opportunity for Toronto Music, Arts and Nature Alliance to adjust its programming.

Authority delegated to Parks, Forestry and Recreation to refund or waive permit fees for a not-for-profit is limited to \$1,000. Only Toronto City Council has the authority to waive permit fees exceeding this amount. Although Toronto Music, Arts and Nature Alliance is a not-for-profit

group, the events organized by the group do not qualify for financial relief under the one-time Special Events Stabilization Initiative announced in the summer.

The City of Toronto can support Toronto Music, Arts and Nature Alliance, a key stakeholder in Toronto's music, arts and cultural sector, and the organizer for Promise Cherry Beach by offering reimbursement of 25 per cent of Toronto Music, Arts and Nature Alliance's permit fees.

A 25 per cent refund of permit fees paid by the group totals \$13,319.51 (excluding HST) of the \$53,307.24 (excluding HST) paid, reflects an overall reduction in attendance for a portion of this summer's event series.

Reason for Urgency: The permit fees are past due pending the outcome of the discussion, so the issue needs to be resolved at this Council to provide fiscal certainty to both Parks, Forestry and Recreation and the Toronto Music, Arts and Nature Alliance.

Background Information (City Council)

Member Motion MM23.31