



CREATIVE ECONOMY DEPARTMENT MEMORANDUM

TO: MAYOR J. LEHMAN AND MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

FROM: A. DONNELLY, COMMUNITY EVENTS COORDINATOR, EXT 4506

NOTED: K. DUBEAU, DIRECTOR OF CREATIVE ECONOMY DEPARTMENT
Z. LIFSHIZ, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF INVEST BARRIE
M. PROWSE, CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

RE: 2018 DOWNTOWN COUNTDOWN – WARD 2

DATE: APRIL 29, 2019

The purpose of this Memorandum is to provide members of Council with an update concerning the 2018 New Year's Eve Downtown Countdown event and to share the attached Impact Report.

The City's 21st annual New Year's Eve celebration was held December 31st, 2018 outside Barrie City Hall and is one of the largest free New Year's Eve events in Central Ontario. It is also one of the only New Year's Eve events that features live outdoor music with high profile headliners. As such, in addition to Barrie residents, the event attracts visitors from all over Central Ontario including Simcoe County, Muskoka, and York Region, as well as the GTA.

The event has played a significant role in profiling local and national musical talent while contributing to Barrie's emerging status as a music city. This year's line-up featured five time Juno Award winning Sam Roberts Band, the legendary Fred Penner, up-and-coming talent Skye Wallace, and local talent Cousin Jack. Each year, submissions are accepted from local bands for the exciting opportunity to perform as opening band in the lineup. Cousin Jack was the local act selected from over 30 submissions by the Downtown Countdown Entertainment Committee.

Highlights of the 2018 Downtown Countdown:

- Over 5,000 attendees braved the rainy weather to ring in the New Year at City Hall
- New activities at the Five Points Theatre provided special programming for families, including a resolution wall where participants could leave their hopes for 2019 and a magic mirror photo booth
- Valued partnership with Central Ontario Broadcasting – Rock 95 and 107.5 Kool FM – as well as Telus, Holiday Inn Barrie, Downtown Barrie BIA, Tourism Barrie and the Barrie Advance
- Increased audience engagement through the Creative Barrie social media channels
- Intercept surveys of attendees at the event indicated that:
 - 16% were from more than 40km away
 - 25% rated the event 10/10
 - 48% said it was their first time attending the event; 27% had attended the event 3 or more times

In the year ahead, our goal are to continue to collaborate with partners to provide exciting and valuable programming to Barrie residents that also encourages tourism, supports talent attraction efforts and further enhances Barrie's profile as a music city. The Downtown Countdown will also continue to highlight the high caliber of local talent. Based on community feedback, we will investigate options and associated increased costs for re-locating the Downtown Countdown to Meridian Place in 2019.