

Salute to Veterans Banner Project Presentation to Town Council (December 9, 2019)

Introduction:

Distinguished Mayor, Deputy-Mayor, and Councillors: My name is Jay Atkin. I am representing the Kingsville Salute to Veterans Banner Project committee co-founded by Daisy Stewart, Murray Stewart, Mary-Maureen Atkin, and myself. Mary-Maureen sends her regrets from an urgent eye appointment in Toronto. Tonight we appreciate the opportunity to provide you with an update on the project and to present some issues and concerns as the project moves forward.

This summer we witnessed a tidal wave of tributes from the community to our Veterans. In 2019, we had six times the number of 2018 banners and twice the number of anticipated banners projected in our January presentation to Council. This overwhelming response brought with it some challenging issues for the entire project: for us, the manufacturer, the Town, and our sponsors.

It was an experience for those able to attend the August 2019 launch in the Legion ballroom to view up close a gallery of all Veteran banners. The indoor banner gallery along with pictures of 2018 and some 2019 banners are included in the photo handout.

We extend our gratitude to the entire Municipal Services staff for the tremendous effort they expended. The number of flattering comments from both Kingsville and the county at the astonishing display of banners for our Veterans is something of which they can be very proud and for that they are to be commended.

Streetlight Banner Policy:

The Salute to Veterans Banner Project (hereafter referred to as "Project") understands that Municipal Services, after the energy, resources, and disruption of regular operations to accomplish this feat, would welcome some structure, regulation, and guidelines, thus prompting the Streetlight Banner Policy (hereafter referred to as "Policy"). The Project committee has reviewed the Policy and is in agreement with a lot of points; however, some of the proposed Policy content raises significant concerns for us.

We forwarded in writing to Municipal Services our comments, questions for clarification, and requests for change. Their response advised us that our comments would be considered. Our question pertaining to the rationale behind the capacity limit of 90 was answered along with an accompanying statement of reluctance for it to be increased as we had requested (See

Appendix B). Having received no further answers or clarification at the time of preparation of this presentation, we are expressing our concerns and recommendations to Council based on our interpretation of the Policy at this time.

We anticipate resolving Policy issues working with Municipal Services. Several issues, including Design, Liability, and Co-existing Banner Initiatives are summarized in Appendix A.

However, the committee's primary concerns relating to pole capacity and timeframes for display of banners require the attention and direction of Council.

Capacity:

Ideally, the Project would see every sponsored banner being raised from August through November. This year was an anomaly. We never again expect to see this number of sponsors come forward. However, to insure this and for the benefit of all concerned, the committee recommends a limit of 10 new sponsors per year depending on Council's concern for annual growth with regard to capacity.

We survived the tidal wave of response this year, but it was not without casualties. Because we are speaking about Veterans, we feel the reference to casualties is appropriate. These are outlined in Appendix A.

Municipal Services reached out to neighbouring municipalities when drafting this policy. Regarding increased capacity, Municipal Services were reluctant to increase that number because 90 was considerably larger than any other municipality banner program. We fail to see the relevance in comparing what other municipalities have in terms of numbers when determining our own town capacity; rather, we feel it important to focus on Kingsville's needs. We hope the Town will set its sights higher and increase the 2020 capacity to a level of banners more reflective of Kingsville's current community demand.

Our Recommendation Regarding Capacity

The capacity issue is related to the availability of brackets (referring to "sets of brackets"). There is currently a total of 130 brackets available (See Brackets). With the bracket expenditure already made, it would seem reasonable to place all 130 brackets into service. Municipal Services placed 10 banners on 5 parking lot poles (at the Unico Centre, Carnegie Centre, and Library) and added 1 pole to Cottam, effectively raising the current maximum to 101 banners. We recommend installing the remaining

29 brackets to increase the 2020 maximum banner cap from the current effective cap of 101 to a total of 130, including:

- a. by 4 in Cottam (over the current 14), perhaps by the park on Fox St
- b. by 5 in Ruthven proper (originally requested, currently none), and
- c. by 20 in Kingsville (securing 8 poles along Wigle/Lakeview, 4 along Park, and 8 along Herrington/Cull).

Our reasoning is to provide the following benefits:

- a. help avoid having banners by Cottam sponsors placed in Kingsville (i.e., there are more than 14 Cottam sponsors)
- b. allow our Ruthven proper sponsors to have their banners raised right in their community; this would allow the 5 banners originally intended for Ruthven proper to be moved from Kingsville freeing up 5 spots for Kingsville use
- c. provide much needed increased capacity in Kingsville
- d. expand coverage of banners along Wigle/Lakeview (ferry traffic), Park (lakefront traffic), and Herrington/Cull (Lakeside Park and Heritage traffic), complementing and enhancing routes along the lakefront development initiative
- e. allow, until future community groups became significant banner users, both the Jack Miner and Project banners to co-exist for their currently desired timeframes in the summer and fall at their current number of banners, and
- f. provide an excellent 2020 capacity base from which to manage future growth in measured amounts.

We recommend an annual increase in the maximum capacity by 10 banners for 2021, 2022, and 2023.

We recommend that Municipal Services budget time and resources in the winter and spring to work with utility companies to secure poles to accommodate these capacity limits.

Brackets:

We are indebted to Council for the funds already approved for the brackets already acquired. We are also grateful to Mary Baruth for letting us use the Jack Miner Drive Thru Art Gallery brackets.

Municipal Services has stated that 90 new brackets have been purchased. At the outset of summer Jack Miner had at least 40 brackets, about 30 brackets mounted on poles and about 15 in inventory. Therefore, there are

currently a total of 130 brackets consisting of the 90 new (purchased) and the 40 previous (Jack Miner) brackets available for use.

We applaud Municipal Services for selecting the newer, superior Heavy Duty Banner Brackets over the previous type of bracket used by Jack Miner even at greater expense. Should Municipal Services be planning to use some of the recently purchased 90 brackets to replace/upgrade the older Jack Miner brackets, we recommend this be deferred until such time that additional newer brackets could be purchased for that purpose. This would effectively enable the current banner cap, from a bracket perspective, to remain at the proposed 130 regardless of any possible planned bracket upgrade.

An annual growth limit of 10 sponsors per year would limit the maximum cost for brackets to \$1600 per year at current costs.

Timeframes:

As requested at our January presentation to Council, the goal of the committee has been to raise our banners August through November (See Appendix A). Based on the approval of the above request, the committee assumed this would be the case each year, providing some assurance to our paying banner sponsors.

The Policy itself, in its current form, appears geared to banner events and offers a maximum of 30 days at no guaranteed date. Extension of the 30-day period is only at the discretion of Municipal Services as is the decision to delay the start date or shorten the length of time banners were displayed. There are no consistencies or guaranties of dates, length of time, or number of banners from year to year. This is very disconcerting.

Instead of an “event”, we feel this Project should be considered a significant ongoing annual community initiative occurring regularly to honour our Veterans. We feel both this and the Jack Miner projects, as Kingsville’s two inaugural flagship banner initiatives, should be awarded some kind of grandfathered priority and prestige.

Because of the nature, magnitude, and purpose of the Project we recommend that, unlike an application for a banner event, it be designated a special status (e.g., a Heritage, or History, or Town Beautification, or Salute to Veterans status). This status would include a “standing annual application” purporting specific details pertaining to timeframes and number of banners during that timeframe.

We recommend our banners be raised for 4 months from August through November (the last 50% of total annual banner time). Assuming a capacity

of 130, we recommend 105 brackets be designated for Veterans' banners (80% of the total capacity). Therefore, during this same timeframe the remaining 25 brackets (20% of capacity) would be available for Jack Miner to raise their banners as they did this year. In fact, they did not use the entire 4 months so brackets would be free for applications from other banner events.

This recommendation leaves all brackets (100% of capacity) available from April through July (the first 50% of total banner time). Considering most other banner events might be smaller than our project this should offer ample timeframe and capacity for multiple other events to be approved under the Policy guidelines.

This approach would provide the consistency we are seeking to offer our sponsors from year to year. A standing 80% of banner capacity for 50% of the banner time delivers the reliable expectation on which to move forward.

Summary:

If council were to endorse the Policy presented on November 25th, the Salute to Veterans Banner Project would change drastically. A moratorium on future sponsors would be necessary. We are obliged to honour those sponsors deferred from 2019; however, in good conscience, we could not accept further sponsors without being able to guarantee the banner disposition for our current sponsors.

The committee function would resort to working with Municipal Services at the beginning of each year to determine the number of annual brackets being allotted for Salute to Veterans banners and for what timeframe. With this number we would conduct an annual lottery from the pool of all banners to determine those sponsors fortunate enough to see their banner on the streets of Kingsville for that year and those unfortunate sponsors whose banners would remain in storage until the following year, when they would have priority in the next year's lottery.

We will forward a copy of this presentation to Municipal Services. We believe the Streetlight Banner Policy along with attention to recommendations made here will continue to make the Salute to Veterans Banner Project a viable initiative and we seek Council's support to make this happen.

Thank you.