

From: "Johnston, Sadhu" <Sadhu.Johnston@vancouver.ca>

To: "Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"

CC: "City Manager's Correspondence Group - DL"

Date: 10/27/2020 5:35:27 PM

Subject: Memo to Council: Micro Wedding Extension

Attachments: Wedding_Memo to Council DRAFT Oct 27 2020.pdf

Greetings Mayor and Council

Please find attached a memo regarding the micro wedding pilot. As you'll note in the memo, we are extending the program due to high demand.

Best

Sadhu

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DRAFT MEMORANDUM

October 27, 2020

TO: Mayor and Council

CC: Sadhu A. Johnston, City Manager
Paul Mochrie, Deputy City Manager
Karen Levitt, Deputy City Manager
Lynda Graves, Administration Services Manager, City Manager's Office
Rena Kendall-Craden, Civic Engagement and Communications Director
Gail Pickard, Civic Engagement and Communications Associate Director
Rosemary Hagiwara, Acting City Clerk
Anita Zaenker, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Neil Monckton, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Alvin Singh, Communications Director, Mayor's Office
Lesley Matthews, Chief External Relations and Protocol

FROM: Rosemary Hagiwara
Acting City Clerk

SUBJECT: Continuation of Micro-Wedding Pilot Program – Winter 2020/2021

PURPOSE

The following memo provides a status report on the micro-wedding pilot program launched in May 2020, and plans to continue the pilot program indoors until May 2021.

BACKGROUND

On May 8, 2020, the City launched a micro-wedding pilot program that offered 30-minute micro-wedding ceremonies on six designated dates between June and September 2020 to couples wanting to safely marry at City Hall during the COVID-19 pandemic. Demand from couples wishing to participate in the pilot program was high and timeslots sold out quickly.

At the conclusion of the summer, all 47 micro-wedding timeslots offered over the six designated dates were booked. Of the 47 timeslots, six went unfilled due to last minute cancellations by couples; however, there was no loss in revenue because of the program's non-refundable policy.

Couples paid an \$85 + GST non-refundable fee, which included non-exclusive use of the Helena Gutteridge Plaza, basic set up on the plaza with umbrellas, physical distancing decals for guests, a document signing table and unlimited time on the City Hall campus to take photos.

The fee also covered third party liability insurance and an on-site wedding coordinator to meet and greet wedding parties, manage the wedding schedule on wedding days and oversee COVID-19 safety protocols.

An online survey was sent to couples and officiants after each ceremony. The following summarizes the responses.

Couples – 30 responses:

- 100% felt that their micro-wedding at City Hall met their expectations
- 97% were satisfied or totally satisfied with their micro-wedding at City Hall
- 93% felt the \$85 fee was reasonable
- 83% agreed that they would pay more for an indoor wedding ceremony at City Hall
- 90% felt that 30 minutes was enough time for a ceremony
- 97% felt that safe physical distancing protocols were followed at City Hall
- 33% would have preferred a weekend date

Officiants – 6 responses:

- 100% felt that the micro-wedding at City Hall met their expectations
- 100% felt that 30 minutes was enough time for a ceremony
- 100% felt that safe physical distancing protocols were followed at City Hall
- 100% would officiate a wedding ceremony at City Hall again

The above survey responses include couples married on July 27, a date designated exclusively for LGBTQ2S+ couples. The City and the Vancouver Pride Society (VPS) partnered on July 27 to host micro-weddings in celebration of Pride Week in Vancouver. For this special date, VPS covered the costs of the officiant, a professional photographer and decorations on behalf of the couples. The day was a success and VPS is supportive of micro-weddings becoming a regular part of Pride Week festivities at City Hall in the future.

DISCUSSION

Given the positive feedback, staff plans to continue the micro-wedding program on a pilot basis until May 2021. Staff have a waitlist of couples wishing to get married at City Hall, and have received industry feedback that indoor wedding space is in demand this winter. Offering the Council Chamber in City Hall as an option would assist couples looking for a safe, reasonably priced wedding venue during the COVID-19 pandemic. Continuing the micro-wedding pilot program inside City Hall would allow couples to:

- Book 30-minute time slots online at vancouver.ca/weddings to get married in the Council Chamber on designated wedding days between December 2020 and May 2021.
- Invite up to eight guests including the officiant and witnesses. The couple, officiant and guests would stand on floor decals to ensure physical distancing of at least 2 metres between one another.

- Arrange their own officiant, and obtain a marriage licence prior to the ceremony. Marriage licences are available at the London Drugs Insurance Services on Broadway Street close to City Hall.
- Bring sustainable decorations to be set up and removed within the 30-minute time slot. Confetti, rice or flower petals will not be permitted in the Chamber.
- Pay a booking fee of \$275 + GST for exclusive use of the Council Chamber. The fee would include exclusive use of the Chamber for 30 minutes, basic set up, a document signing table, and third party liability insurance. The fee would also include the services of a City wedding coordinator to safely facilitate the move in and move out of wedding parties throughout the day, tidy and sanitize high-contact areas between ceremonies, and monitor adherence to COVID-19 safety protocols. Payment in full would be required to confirm the booking and no refunds would be issued in case of cancellation.

The estimated cost of the pilot continuing for 6 months between December 2020 and May 2021 is approximately \$21,700. The costs include a part-time wedding coordinator to promote, book and manage wedding ceremonies. The wedding coordinator would also stay current on COVID-19 safety protocols to ensure that micro-weddings continue to comply with public health orders from the BC Centre for Disease Control. The potential revenue for the pilot after 6 months is approximately \$22,000.

After May 2021, staff will report to Council with key successes, lessons learned, as well as options and recommendations for full program implementation. The timeline for the pilot will be as follows:

- **October 28, 2020** - A webpage at <http://vancouver.ca/weddings> will provide information about indoor ceremonies at City Hall, and an online registration form will open for couples to book a timeslot to get married in the Council Chamber on December 21 or 22, 2020.
- **December 21 and 22, 2020** – Five 30-minute micro-wedding timeslots per day will take place inside the Council Chamber as a practice run-through before increasing the number of micro-wedding ceremonies to ten per day in January.
- **January 2021 – May 2021** – On one to two dates per month, ten 30-minute micro-wedding timeslots will be available for couples to get married inside the Council Chamber. Designated wedding dates will not conflict with Council meetings, events or other high foot traffic days at City Hall. Available dates for 2021 will be posted to the website soon.
- **May 2021** - Staff will report to Council with key successes and lessons learned, as well as options and recommendations for full program implementation.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it is staff's plan to continue the micro-wedding pilot program indoors at City Hall this winter until May 2021 to help couples secure space to get married that is affordable,

attractive and provides appropriate physical distancing and COVID-19 safety protocols for couples, officiants and guests. Staff will adjust programming as a result of any changes directed by the Provincial Health Authority.

This pilot will fill an immediate need for couples and marriage officiants wanting to continue with wedding plans during this public health emergency, while assisting staff with the development of a full-scale wedding program that could generate revenue for the City well into the future. Staff will report to Council with key successes, lessons learned, and recommendations for full wedding program implementation after May 2021.



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