

November 20, 2017

Mayor Roy Avis and Counsel
c/o Lisa Slomke
320 Portage Avenue
Fort Frances, ON P9A 3P9
Tel: (807) 274-5323 ext. 1215

Dear Mayor Roy Avis and Counsel:

Re: Municipal Alcohol Policy

The Northwestern Health Unit (NWHU) would like to recognize the commitment from the Mayor, Counsel and work of city staff to update the Municipal Alcohol Policy (MAP). MAPs promote moderate and responsible alcohol consumption and support community values at municipally owned and managed events and properties. MAPs set a positive benchmark for events where alcohol is distributed or consumed and limit what type of events are eligible for Special Occasion Permits (SOP) on municipal property. Therefore MAPs have the potential to influence social norms in the larger community.

Drawing from evidence taken from the MAP Policy Guide, I would like to request Mayor and Counsel take a stance that all youth-focused and family events, including minor hockey games, remain not eligible for SOPs within municipal property. I would ask Mayor and Counsel to vote against the proposed sale of alcoholic beverages, brought forward by Mr. Wayne Strachan, General Manager of the Fort Frances Lakers, at SIJHL games in Fort Frances for the following reasons:

1. **Regulating the Physical Availability of Alcohol** – It is best to limit alcohol allowed at public events, especially those events where families and youth will be in attendance. Research has repeatedly shown that consumption and related problems increase as alcohol becomes more available, and vice versa. It can be noted that other SIJHL League teams (English River, Dryden, and Thunder Bay) do not provide alcohol at their games.
2. **Modifying the Drinking Environment** – Youth are strongly influenced by their friends and family. When friends and parents approve of drinking alcohol, youth are more likely to drink and suffer negative impacts from drinking. Alcohol consumption becomes a social norm, and it is perceived that alcohol is needed to have a good time. Youth idolize hockey as a sport, and we should be cautious of fostering the acceptance of drinking alcohol at youth focused sporting events. Building community partnerships is vital to creating a comprehensive, multi-component community-based intervention to modify the drinking environment at the local level. (The Alcohol Locally Driven Collaborative Project (LDCP), 2014)



MAPs are part of a comprehensive approach to alcohol policy. They aim to support existing provincial alcohol policies, and build on them to tailor the policy landscape to the local context. The Northwestern Health Unit supports the use of MAPs to influence the social norms throughout our region and reduce the high level of morbidity and incidence of adverse health outcomes related to alcohol consumption in the NWHU catchment area that was previously presented to Mayor and Counsel.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kit Young-Hoon', written in a cursive style.

Dr. Kit Young-Hoon
Medical Officer of Health
Northwestern Health Unit

References

The Alcohol Locally Driven Collaborative Project (LDCP). (2014, 10 02). *Addressing Alcohol Consumption and Alcohol Related Harms at the Local Level*. Retrieved 11 21, 2017, from Ontario Injury Prevention Resource Centre:
http://www.oninjuryresources.ca/downloads/workgroups/ldcpalcohol/LDCP_report_rev_Oct_14_6.pdf