



MOTION ON NOTICE

Safety at Concerts and Major Events

MOVER: Commissioner Evans

WHEREAS:

1. Whereas the City of Vancouver recently adopted a new Women's Equity Strategy by a unanimous vote of City Council;
2. That strategy contains five major objectives, one of which is to increase safety and reduce violence against women;
3. During the development of the strategy a survey of over 1600 residents found only 57 per cent of women compared to 73 per cent of men agreed they felt safe walking after dark. Senior women (75+ years) and young women (18-24 years) reported feeling the least safe, at only 41 per cent and 47 per cent respectively. Similarly, only 44 per cent of Aboriginal women, and 42 per cent of Chinese women reported feeling safe walking after dark;
4. Sexual assault and harassment are all too frequently experience by women and recent research points to large gatherings such as music festivals as posing a heightened risk. As reported in the Ottawa Citizen, Oct 31, 2017: "In the Ottawa region, more than 750 people seek help for sexual assault each year. Of those, one-quarter were attending a large gathering at the time of the reported assault. Almost all are under 25 years old.";
5. A 2017 survey by the Montreal Women's Council, found that 56 per cent of women who attend festivals said they'd been sexually harassed;
6. And it is not only women who are at increased risk in large gatherings. LGBTQ2 community members, persons with disabilities, and visible minorities can also experience high levels of harassment;
7. In response to complaints that festival organizers have failed to take action to prevent sexual assaults and/or to properly assist women reporting sexual assault and harassment, festival organizers in Canada and elsewhere have begun implementing measures to increase safety for women and other at risk groups;
8. Such measures include specialized training for security personnel, telephone apps, handouts to festival goers, and clearly identifiable safety team members circulating in the crowds;
9. A volunteer organization called "Good Night Out Vancouver" has been working with some Vancouver festival organizers to bring some of these measures into the planning of large gatherings in and around Vancouver; and
10. The Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation has approved a number of large gatherings in Vancouver parks over the coming year.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation consult with interested groups, including the Women's Advisory Committee, and institute a policy to require safety measures for women and other at risk groups to be included in future contracts with music festival and concert organizers, and to encourage the organizers of already approved events to adopt such measures on a voluntary basis if they have not already done so.