
HALDIMAND COUNTY



Report CEC-03-2025 Public Entertainment Licence and Designation of Municipally Significant Event for Rhune Mountain Music Festival

For Consideration by Council in Committee on May 20, 2025

Objective:

To seek approval to issue a Public Entertainment Event Licence for the Rhune Mountain Music Festival occurring June 26 to June 28, 2025 at 536 Port Maitland Road (Dunnville Airport). Secondly, to obtain Council authorization to deem this event as "Municipally Significant", in order to allow the event to qualify for a Special Occasion Permit by the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario.

Recommendations:

1. THAT Report CEC-03-2025 Public Entertainment Licence and Designation of Municipally Significant Event for Rhune Mountain Music Festival be received;
2. AND THAT in accordance with By-law 1915/18, a Public Entertainment Event Licence be issued to Black Throne Productions, 242 Troy Street, Mississauga, ON L5G 1S7 to hold Rhune Mountain Music Festival at 536 Port Maitland Road, Dunnville, from June 26 to June 28, 2025, subject to the following conditions:
 - a. A Temporary Use By-Law be passed, as recommended in PDD-11-2025, permitting camping as an accessory use to the Rhune Mountain Music Festival;
 - b. A building permit be procured for erecting any stage or tent structure that exceeds 60 square metres;
 - c. Final approvals from Grand Erie Public Health related to food premises and portable toilets are obtained;
 - d. Confirmation that security staff will be on location for the duration of the event from when gates open until all participants have left the property;
 - e. Provision of a Commercial General Liability Policy including liquor liability and coverage in the amount of \$5,000,000 per occurrence, as well as all other insurance requirements outlined in By-Law 1915/18;
 - f. An onsite meeting be held with the Manager, Emergency Services/Fire Chief, and Manager, Building & Municipal Enforcement Services, the day prior to the event to confirm all requirements are being met;
 - g. A refundable damage deposit in the amount of \$5,000 be provided to the municipality for costs of damages to municipal property or cleaning of municipal property;
 - h. The maximum allowable sound level from amplified music or musical performances be limited to 85 dBA at 30m distance from the opening of the hangar;
 - i. No amplified music or musical performances be permitted prior to 9:00am or after 11:00pm as per Haldimand County Noise By-Law 1098/10;

- j. Amplified music or musical performances are restricted to the hangar and amplified music or musical performances shall not occur anywhere else on the property;
 - k. The services of an independent, licensed acoustics engineer specializing in acoustics must be procured by the applicant to:
 - i. monitor sound levels to ensure that conditions a. and b. above are adhered to;
 - ii. collect sound level data from specific reception points on and off the event site as determined by the Manager, Building & Municipal Enforcement Services in consultation with the acoustics engineer hired by the Rhune Mountain Music Festival for establishing sound level criteria for future events;
 - iii. provide the sound level data collected during the licensed event to the Manager, Building & Municipal Enforcement Services within 60 days following the event;
 - iv. ensure the rear or east doors of the hangar remain closed during all amplified music or musical performances or practices;
3. AND THAT the Rhune Mountain Music Festival be deemed as an event of municipal significance for its perceived community benefit and to fulfill requirements for liquor sales at events as prescribed by the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario.

Prepared by: Kyra Hayes, Supervisor, Customer Experience & Communications

Reviewed by: Trish Cardwell, Manager, Customer Experience & Communications

Respectfully submitted: Megan Jamieson, CHRL, General Manager, Corporate & Social Services

Approved: Cathy Case, Chief Administrative Officer

Executive Summary:

Black Throne Productions, based in Mississauga, has submitted an application for a Public Entertainment Licence to hold the Rhune Mountain Music Festival, a 3-day outdoor event featuring musical acts, art, food vendors and camping. Based on the parameters for this event, a licence must be procured under Haldimand County's Public Entertainment Event Licensing By-law 1915/18, specifically through Council approval. This report lays out the by-law requirements related to a Public Entertainment Event and suggests a conditional framework for licence approval. This report also addresses the applicant's request to be deemed as 'municipally significant' to fulfill requirements for liquor sales at events as prescribed by the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario.

The event is being recommended for approval by staff, with numerous conditions.

The applicant will be in attendance at the May 20, 2025 Council in Committee meeting to provide an overview of the event and answer any questions from Council.

Background:

Haldimand County has a process in place for licensing Public Entertainment Events, as outlined in By-Law No. 1915/18. These events include outdoor concerts, festivals, or other performances – live or recorded – for public entertainment. A valid licence, including Council approval, must be obtained in order to hold or conduct such event.

To date, the only events licensed under this by-law are annual motor vehicle racing events at Toronto Motorsports Park at the 2014 Lachie Music Festival in Cayuga. In 2018, an application was approved for The Lights Fest, which planned to release hundreds of candlelit lanterns at 536 Port Maitland Road (Dunnville Airport property), however, it was later canceled at the last minute due to a total burn ban being in effect.

Recently, Haldimand County received an application to hold the Rhune Mountain Music Festival at this same location, 536 Port Maitland Road (Dunnville Airport property) on June 26 to June 28, 2025. The application was submitted by Black Throne Productions, a company based in Mississauga.

Analysis:

Public Entertainment Licence Application

The Rhune Music Festival is described as a multi-day music festival featuring 40 artists representing a diverse range of Canadian and international musical talent. No more than 600 attendees are expected by the organizer, and since it is anticipated that alcohol will be served at this event, individuals under 19 will be prohibited from attending. The 19+ ticketed event is further described by the applicant as a celebration of music, art and community. The social media account for the Festival currently advertises the event, noting the music genre as Metal, Psych and DOOM.

Camping is expected to be offered during this event, but will require separate Council approval as a temporary, accessory use during the music festival. Report PDD-11-2025, being presented to Council on May 20, 2025, recommends passing a temporary use by-law at a future meeting to allow for up to 70 camping sites. If approved, camping would be allowed on the property, in conjunction with the music festival only, for one year after the by-law has been passed.

A letter from the property owner, at 536 Port Maitland Road, Dunnville, acknowledges that Black Throne Productions is allowed to utilize the property for the Rhune Mountain Music Festival. The proposed site plan for the event is included as Attachment 1 to this report for reference.

The complete application has been evaluated by related divisions, agencies and individuals, as required under Public Entertainment Event By-law 1915/18. The following provides specific comments garnered through that consultation.

Emergency Services

The Manager, Emergency Services/Fire Chief has reviewed the proposed event plans and support issuing a Public Entertainment Event licence based on the emergency plan provided. Notably, contracted Emergency Response Teams, Registered Nurses and trained first aid personnel will be on site for the duration of the event with a designated and marked first aid tent. Private security has also been contracted by the applicant and local hospitals will be notified prior to the event for full transparency. As a condition of the licence, a site inspection by the Fire Chief will occur the day prior to the event to ensure requirements are being met. It is also noted that recreational fires will be strictly prohibited.

Building & Municipal Enforcement Services

Staff have advised the applicant that a building permit is needed to set up the proposed stage, as well as for any tents larger than 60 square metres. As a condition of the licence, a site inspection by the Manager, Building & Municipal Enforcement Services will occur the day prior to the event to ensure requirements are being met.

The Building & Municipal Enforcement Services division supports the licensing application provided that all the following conditions form part of the licence and are strictly complied with:

- a. THAT the maximum allowable sound level from amplified music or musical performances be limited to 85 dBA at 30m distance from the opening of the hangar;
- b. THAT no amplified music or musical performances be permitted prior to 9:00am or after 11:00pm;
- c. That amplified music or musical performances are restricted to the hangar and no other amplified music or musical performances shall occur anywhere else on the property;
- d. THAT the services of an independent licensed engineer specializing in acoustics be procured by the applicant to:
 - i. monitor sound levels to ensure that condition a. and b. above are adhered to;
 - ii. collect sound level data from specific reception points on and off the event site as determined by the Manager, Building & Municipal Enforcement Services, in consultation with the acoustics engineer hired by the Rhune Mountain Music Festival for establishing sound level criteria for future events;
 - iii. provide the sound level data collected during the licensed event to the Manager, Building & Municipal Enforcement Services, within 60 days following the event;
 - iv. that the rear or east doors of the hangar remain closed during all amplified music or musical performances or practices.

Planning & Development

Staff have confirmed that 536 Port Maitland Road, Dunnville, is zoned for Public Entertainment Events, thus the event is permitted to be held on that property. However, the property is not zoned to permit camping. The applicant was informed and subsequently submitted a Planning application for a temporary use by-law to permit camping during the festival. Staff reviewed the request and are recommending approval through separate report (PDD-11-2025). If passed, the by-law will allow for up to 70 camping sites as a temporary use during the Rhune Mountain Music Festival, valid for one year from the enacted date (anticipated to be May 26, 2025).

Legal & Support Services

Insurance for Public Entertainment Events, as outlined in by-law 1915/18, requires: “a Commercial General Liability Policy with an insurer licensed to do business in the Province of Ontario and acceptable to the Issuer. Such policy shall provide coverage for bodily injury and property damage in an amount not less than \$2,000,000.00 per occurrence or such greater amount as the Issuer may determine, and shall name Haldimand County as an additional insured. The coverage shall be written on an occurrence basis, contain a cross liability/severability of interest clause and shall provide for 30 days written notice of cancellation.” Upon review of the application, Legal & Support Services has indicated that coverage should include a liability limit in the amount of \$5,000,000 and that liquor liability be included as part of the coverage.

Roads Operations

Both the Ontario Provincial Police and the Roads Operations division have been made aware of the event and related traffic control measures. Roads Operations has indicated no concerns, however, has suggested the exit and entry points be modified so traffic will be coming and going from the north to improve traffic flow. Vehicles will enter and exit the property from two separate, clearly marked entrances on Port Maitland Road. A separate emergency entrance and exit is in place for emergency vehicles, if necessary. No road closures or detours are required to facilitate this event.

Grand Erie Public Health

The applicant has submitted a Special Event Organizer application to the Health Unit. The Health Unit will review their qualifications ahead of time and will complete any inspections once the providers are set up on site. The applicant is aware that all vendors must supply their own water. In addition, portable toilets, handwashing stations and waste receptacles will be required, with quantities based on the projected volume of attendees.

Ontario Provincial Police

The Ontario Provincial Police have been notified of the event and provided a site plan by the applicant as is a requirement of by-law 1915/18.

Neighbouring Properties

To date, neighbouring homeowners have not been consulted. The applicant indicates that they have a standard letter prepared for distribution to neighbours of the property and will document the date and time of delivery of these notifications. This written record is included as a condition of licence issuance.

Request to Deem Event “Municipally Significant” for Special Occasion Permit

In addition to the licensing and temporary use bylaw applications, Rhune Mountain Music Festival organizers have requested that Haldimand County deem their event as ‘municipally significant’, either through Council resolution or letter. This municipal designation will allow the event organizers to apply for a Special Occasion Permit from the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario (AGCO). Without a Special Occasion Permit, alcohol cannot be served at the event and is strictly prohibited.

Haldimand County Festival and Event Policy No. 2015/02 outlines a framework for deeming events as municipally significant, but applies only to events held on municipal property. Currently, there is no policy guiding the assessment of festivals and events on private property for this designation. As such, staff recommend using the same criteria outlined in the existing policy, to evaluate the Rhune Mountain Music Festival’s request for municipal significance.

The Festival and Event Policy suggests that events on public property be considered for municipal significance status if they provide a clear community benefit, such as enhancing Haldimand’s profile and driving tourism. The policy also requires organizers to submit a detailed alcohol management plan outlining the size and layout of the alcohol service area (e.g., tents, fencing, or barricades), as well as the qualifications of individuals serving alcohol. In their application, Rhune Mountain Music Festival organizers have indicated vendor opportunities for local businesses, and have committed to donating a portion of ticket sales to local charities. They have also agreed to provide staff with an alcohol management plan to support their request to be deemed municipally significant and to comply with the AGCO’s Special Occasion Permit requirements.

Moving forward, staff intend to develop a designated process and criteria for evaluating events on private property for municipal significance. In the meantime, and given the time constraints, staff have assessed the Rhune Mountain Music Festival’s application with a focus on compliance, health & safety, and community impact. Based on this assessment, staff recommend that the Rhune Mountain Music Festival be deemed municipally significant. Council may approve this recommendation alongside the conditional Public Entertainment Event Licence, or it may choose to deny it. If denied, organizers will be ineligible for a Special Occasion Permit through the AGCO, and alcohol will be strictly prohibited at the event.

Financial/Legal Implications:

The Public Entertainment Event licensing fee of \$1,358.00 has been paid in full by the applicant. All licensing fees are non-refundable as their purpose is to recover staff time related to reviewing and assessing an application. If the event is approved, a \$5,000.00 security deposit will be required prior to licence issuance.

Stakeholder Impacts:

Neighbouring properties may be impacted by the event by increase in local traffic and/or noise attributed to the event. There may be a positive economic impact to local businesses.

Report Impacts:

Agreement: No

By-law: Yes

Budget Amendment: No

Policy: No

References:

1. [Public Entertainment Event Licensing By-Law No. 1915/18](#)
2. [Festival and Event Policy No. 2015/02](#)

Attachments:

1. Rhune Mountain Music Festival Site Plan
2. Location Map