



Staff Report

Report To: Council Meeting
From: Magda Badura, Manager of Corporate Services (Treasurer)
Date: 2025-03-27
Subject: Roots and Revival – Final Report

Recommendation:

That West Elgin Council hereby receives the report from M. Badura, Manager of Corporate Services – Treasurer re: Roots and Revival – Final Report; and That West Elgin Council receives this report for information only.

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to present West Elgin Council with a comprehensive overview of the Roots & Revival event, ensuring transparency and accountability.

Background:

This report provides a summary of the final submission from event organizer Kathy Navacas. For years, Rodney's Main Street had long served as the heart of our community, but the decline of tobacco farming and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic had resulted in a 40% vacancy rate. Despite these challenges, an incredible resilience in our community was noticed, with seven new businesses opening in the last 18 months, many led by passionate women entrepreneurs.

Recognizing the need for economic revitalization and community engagement, local organizations came together to create the Roots & Revival Festival. Their aim was to stimulate economic growth, promote local culture, and celebrate Rodney's agricultural and artistic heritage. Through the festival, they sought to revitalize Main Street by offering a variety of activities that would attract visitors and provide local businesses with the opportunity to thrive.

The festival was packed with events, including farm tours, concerts, street festivals, mural paintings, pop-up art galleries, and immersive art experiences. They partnered with the local library to create the first Chapter Chase, an event that encouraged participants to visit businesses along Furnival Road, scan QR codes, and enter for a chance to win a cash prize. This initiative alone drew over 100 entries and increased engagement with local businesses.

They also worked closely with the Rodney Kiwanis Club to facilitate student internships. Two local art students had the opportunity to work alongside a mural artist, creating their own panel mural while gaining mentorship in the arts. The local volunteer firefighters also held a fundraising

breakfast, increasing festival attendance by 150 people, showcasing how the festival brought the community together.

One of the key investments made possible by this event was the purchase of sound equipment for future use, which will be available for community events, helping to reduce costs and encourage more local programming. The mural project was another highlight, as the community came together to engage with the artist and watch the mural come to life. It remains a vibrant visual representation of Rodney's unique culture and spirit.

Over the ten days, October 2-12, 2024, of the festival, we were proud to see such a variety of activities that brought excitement to the area. The immersive art gallery was a standout feature, with five local female artists exhibiting their work and collectively selling \$1,200 in artwork. They were pleased to see that 95% of the musicians involved in the festival were from the Rodney area, ensuring that the economic impact of the event benefited our local artists.

While there was some initial skepticism about whether the festival would succeed, they were thrilled by the overwhelming positive response. Local businesses saw a direct increase in foot traffic, and vacant storefronts were highlighted as viable spaces for new business opportunities. Additionally, the property hosting the immersive art gallery, which had been closed for over five years, sparked new interest from potential tenants.

The festival's success didn't stop there. It helped inspire a new bi-monthly music series, which brings people to a local restaurant during quiet Sunday afternoons. It was clear that the festival had sparked new enthusiasm for the talent and creativity present within the community.

Roots & Revival was a testament to the power of arts and culture in revitalizing rural communities. The festival not only had a direct impact on local businesses, artists, and community members but also laid the foundation for long-term economic and cultural growth.

We are incredibly grateful to the volunteers, local businesses, and community members who helped bring this event to life. The festival would not have been possible without the support of the Rodney Kiwanis Club, the West Elgin Economic Development Committee, the West Elgin Women in Business Networking Group, and all the local artists, vendors, and businesses that participated. The festival's success reaffirmed our belief in the power of community collaboration; together, they transformed Main Street into a vibrant, thriving destination and set the stage for future growth.

Financial Implications:

There are no financial implications as the Roots and Revival Festival was funded by Main Street, Canadian Urban Institute, its future success will depend on community contributions (service clubs and volunteers) and the continued support of these groups.

Roots and Revival Festival
Income Statement
As of December 31, 2024

Revenues

Donations – Roots & Revival	\$ 3,680.00
Grant – Community Activator – My Main Street	125,122.87

Expenses

Contractors/Consultants Services	\$ 68,974.00
Communications, Marketing & Promotion	20,787.58
Program Costs	24,469.08
Capital Expenditures	14,437.74
Measurement & Analytics	<u>134.47</u>

Net (Gain)/Loss **\$ 0.00**

Policies/Legislation:

None

Alignment with Strategic Priorities:

Infrastructure Improvement	Recreation	Economic Development	Community Engagement
<input type="checkbox"/> To improve West Elgin's infrastructure to support long-term growth.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> To provide recreation and leisure activities to attract and retain residents.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> To ensure a strong economy that supports growth and maintains a lower cost of living.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> To enhance communication with residents.

Respectfully submitted by,

Magda Badura

Manager of Corporate Services – Treasurer

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	2024 Roots and Revival Festival - 2025-07-Corporate Services Finance.docx
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	Mar 13, 2025

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Robin Greenall