

Establishment of a Province Wide Combative Sports Commission

Recommendation

That the June 20, 2018, Citizen Services report CR_5552, be received for information.

Previous Council/Committee Action

At the January 17, 2018, Community and Public Services Committee, the following motion was passed:

That Administration:

5. Work with the Mayor's office to bring an update to the May 23, 2018, Community and Public Services Committee meeting on the results of continued advocacy to the Province regarding recommendation 18, on the establishment of a Province-wide Combative Sports Commission.

Executive Summary

Alberta Urban Municipalities Association Board is seeking more information on combative sports as a result of Edmonton's recent MNP report. The board is gathering perspective from combative sport clubs around Alberta and information on the potential cost of establishing and operating a provincial combative sports commission.

Alberta Culture and Tourism continues to work with municipalities, Indigenous and industry groups to ensure a safe and consistent environment for combative sports competition. More updates are expected in fall 2018.

Administration continues to share information with Government of Alberta staff on support for a provincial commission and local improvement efforts.

Report

History

In 2013, the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association passed a resolution which requested that the provincial government create a provincial combative sports commission to have better consistency, coordination and oversight in how combative

sporting events would be governed in Alberta, as is the case in all other Canadian provinces. Early in 2014, the Government of Alberta responded to this resolution indicating that a provincial commission was not required as the Municipal Government Act delegates this governing authority to municipalities. With the change in provincial government in 2015, the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association wrote to the Minister of Culture and Tourism to once again advocate for a provincial commission. The Minister responded indicating that all provincial bodies, agencies, boards and commissions were to be reviewed and the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association request would be reviewed along with other jurisdictional recommendations.

The City of Edmonton and City of Red Deer asked the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association to reinforce advocacy efforts to create professional provincial standards. One effort was to renew the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association resolution to create a provincial combative sports commission at the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association 2017 Annual Conference. In November 2017, the City of Red Deer presented a resolution at the convention requesting the Government of Alberta review this request again. The City of Edmonton supported the resolution and Alberta Urban Municipalities Association members voted in favor.

The Minister of Culture and Tourism responded to the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association resolution in February 2018, reaffirming that municipalities continue to have authority over the regulation of combative sporting events. The Minister also stated that the provincial government is working with other organizations and governments to “ensure Albertans feel protected and safe when participating in any sporting event”, and that the Minister’s office would provide more information when it becomes available.

At the April 26, 2018, Alberta Urban Municipalities Association Board meeting, a recommendation was passed for the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association Administration to:

1. Reach out to the consultant, MNP, which completed a report for the City of Edmonton on this topic (provincial combative sports commission), and invite them to present to the Safe and Healthy Communities Committee.
2. Reach out to grassroots combative sports clubs to learn more about their perspective on this issue.
3. Gather information regarding the potential costs of establishing and operating a provincial combative sports commission.

Alberta Urban Municipalities Association Administration would also like a subject matter expert from the City of Edmonton to attend the Safe and Healthy Communities Committee meeting in July 2018 to speak to the MNP report and the City’s case for a provincial combative sports commission. Administration is working with Alberta Urban Municipalities Association staff in this regard.

The goal of these actions is to obtain additional information so that the committee can make a more detailed and informed recommendation.

Intergovernmental Advocacy

Mayor Iveson's office has been in contact with the office of the Minister of Culture and Tourism, and discussions about the Government of Alberta's role in combative sports are ongoing. At present, the Minister's office has confirmed that it has heard from a number of municipalities on potential changes that could further strengthen combative sports in Alberta and they appreciate the advocacy from the Mayors of Edmonton and Red Deer, and the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association on this issue.

The government understands that this is a complex issue with many differing opinions. The Minister's office continues to work with municipalities, Indigenous and industry groups to ensure a safe and consistent environment for combative sports competition. More updates are expected in fall 2018.

Administration

On May 11, 2018, Administration met with Alberta Culture and Tourism representatives for a second time on the topic of combative sports in Alberta. Information was shared on improvements to safety, policy and oversight for local combative sports. Administration reiterated that establishment of a provincial commission could better support uniformity of medical testing and tracking, harmonization of rules, standardization of suspensions and best practices, and provide clearer provincial and national governance. To this end, Administration supported the Government of Alberta taking a leadership role in bringing all current Alberta commissions together in 2018, for discussions.

Provincial staff shared that they had spent several months gathering information and conducting a jurisdictional scan in Alberta and across Canada on the current state of combative sports governance and stewardship. Administration and Alberta Culture and Tourism acknowledged that there are a number of different organizational and operational approaches, and that further engagement with stakeholders is required to share information and seek a fair and inclusive approach.

Corporate Outcomes and Performance Management

Corporate Outcome(s): Edmonton is a safe city.			
Outcome(s)	Measure(s)	Result(s)	Target(s)

The City supports Edmonton’s vibrant and diverse sports and entertainment sectors and promotes a safe and healthy professional sport environment to ensure safety of athletes and spectators.	Establishment of a Provincial Commission	Edmonton’s combative sports industry is regulated through a Provincial Commission	TBD
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Others Reviewing this Report

- M. Sturgeon, Acting Deputy City Manager, Communications and Engagement