



STAFF REPORT
City of Dripping Springs
PO Box 384
511 Mercer Street
Dripping Springs, TX 78620

Submitted By: Emily Nelson, Dripping Springs Ranch Park Manager & Kelly Schmidt, Parks & Community Services Director

Council Meeting Date: 09/07/2021

Agenda Item Wording: Discuss and consider approval of a Use Agreement between the City of Dripping Springs and Hell Country Productions, Inc. for the use of Dripping Springs Ranch Park grounds to host a Haunted House attraction.

Agenda Item Requestor: Emily Nelson / Aaron Sulser

Summary/Background: Hell Country Productions, Inc. a registered 501 (c) 3 Non-Profit in the State of Texas has reached out to the City of Dripping Springs Parks and Community Services department to collaborate in the production of a Haunted House attraction. The organization was quickly directed to the DSRP team as that park was the only location in the current park system that could easily host such an event/attraction.

Hell Country Productions, Inc. is proposing to build, maintain, and run a local community haunted attraction. The City of Dripping Springs currently does not have many events around the Halloween season. Aaron Sulser, founder of Hell Country Productions, Inc. has built haunted houses and haunted attractions for over 5 years. Every one of his events and attractions was well received by the community and successfully run adhering and complying with all required safety protocols.

Mr. Sulser expressed that the motivations behind his mission of building haunted attractions center around facilitating pure enjoyment. In his pitch he states, "People love getting scared. They love hanging out with friends and I love providing that type of atmosphere for the community." He added "I am wanting to host the event at the Dripping Springs Ranch Park as it has the space available for both the attraction and the parking." Mr. Sulser is hoping that this will be the beginning of an annual Haunt at Dripping Springs Ranch Park during the month of October.

The event will take place the weekend and will run for 4 nights (28, 29, 30, 31) in October. Hours of operation are 7pm-10pm (Thurs & Sun) and 7pm-11pm (Sat & Sun). The attraction will be rated in marketing materials so that community members have a clear understanding that the feature is intended for an audience age of 11 and older (PG-13) and will be scary. Dripping Springs Ranch Park will be hosting a Halloween Movie in the Park on Saturday, October 30 (like the Drive-in Movie PCS staff hosted there in 2020) to offer something fun for younger families.

Dripping Springs Ranch Park Manager Emily Nelson will be overseeing the development of the parking plan and will coordinate with Aaron Sulser and provide direction to him and his staff on how to facilitate adequate event parking and proper traffic control at the site.

In addition to partnering with the Parks and Community Services department to assist in providing an element that achieves the department's mission and generate revenue to support Dripping Springs Ranch Park at 30% of gross ticket sales, Hell Country Productions, Inc. will also be giving 10% of ticket sales (after 30% paid to the Dripping Springs Ranch Park) to Foster Village.

**Commission
Recommendations:**

N/a

**Recommended
Council Actions:**

Approve as presented with DSRP staff facilitating all operational needs and any additional city requirements pre and post opening of the seasonal attraction/event.

Attachments:

1. Hell Country Productions, Use Agreement
2. Hell Country Productions, Inc. Proposal

Next Steps/Schedule:

1. Procure letter of commitment from Hays County Sherriff or Constable for security at the attraction during hours of operation.
2. Obtain any outstanding documents and plans needed for safe operation.
3. Develop marketing plan roll-out and then begin marketing the attraction working collaboratively with Hell Country Productions, Inc, DSRP staff, and City Marketing/Communications Director.
4. Develop ticket sales build out in Activenet software or other event ticket sales application.