



Agenda Abstract

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Meeting Date:	Oct. 12, 2026
Department:	Planning and Economic Development
Agenda Section:	Consent
Public hearing:	No
Date of public hearing:	N/A

PRESENTER/INFORMATION CONTACT

Planning Technician Dakotah Kimbrough

ITEM TO BE CONSIDERED

Subject: Special Event Permit – 2026 Solstice Lantern Walk and Market

Attachments:

Special Event Permit Application (includes event layout and Certificate of Insurance)

Summary:

The Hillsborough Arts Council plans to hold their annual Solstice Lantern Walk and Market on Saturday, Dec. 19, 2026. Set up will be from 1 to 5 p.m., with the event running from 5 to 8 p.m., and breakdown will be completed by 9 p.m. This free event continues to attract participants from around the region, with attendance last year estimated to be between 5-6 thousand. Organizers expect between 4-6 thousand again this year, with peak attendance around 6 p.m.

Up to ten 10'x10' tents will be placed around the Farmer's Market Pavilion for information, first aid, entertainment, etc. Organizers will bring heaters, event lighting, band equipment, portable toilets, and portable hand-washing stations, with some items to be left overnight for pick-up the next day. Live music, artisans, and family-friendly activities will be available to enjoy. Many goods vendors and 4-5 prepared food vendors will be present; organizers have been provided with a Single-Day Tax Compliance Form to distribute to the prepared food vendors without a Mobile Food Vendor Permit.

The Lantern Walk route will follow Riverwalk from near the Farmer's Market Pavilion to the bridge by Gold Park and return via the same route. As a self-guided event, participants are encouraged to start and conclude at their own pace. The map layout details the location of volunteers, police security, watch zones, etc. After last year's pilot success, a circulator bus will provide shuttle service from parking areas in West Hillsborough to downtown stops including Cup-a-Joe and the pavilion.

Town-sponsored services being requested include police coverage and six waste roll-out carts at the pavilion.

Financial impacts:

Moderate; departmental costs associated with waste roll-out carts requested from Public Works and four officers required for police coverage of the event.

Staff recommendation and comments:

Staff recommends approval of the event and town-sponsored services; greenway use conditions will apply.

Action requested:

Approve, approve with conditions, or deny the Special Event Permit.