



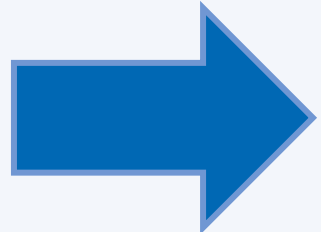
Public Special Events Sponsorship Policy & Special Events Recommendations

March 3, 2022

Previous Engagement and Development Process

January 6, 2022

- Commission acknowledged special events are an important part of the community.
- Reviewed policy considerations and the SWOT analysis
- Commission provided input toward supporting third party special events through fee reductions.



February 3, 2022

- Reviewed and discussed sponsorship policy elements
- The Commission reviewed and provided feedback on sponsorship program design, including fee waivers
- Provided staff with consensus input for development of final policy.



Tonight's Discussion

PART 1:

- Review policy elements
- If desired, endorse Special Events Sponsorship Policy and recommend to City Council its approval

PART 2:

- Staff's Special Events Recommendations
- If desired, endorse Staff's recommendations and share with City Council



City sponsorship of public special events

Policy elements

- Provide fee waivers or fee reductions for public events where the applicant/event organizing/hosting entity is a non-profit agency serving Mercer Island residents.
- Requests can be made at any time but must be made concurrent with applying for permits and by application review deadlines.
- No fee waivers, reductions or City contributions shall be granted for events that have not submitted complete permit applications by the review deadlines.
- Eligible events must be open to the public (not private) and inclusive in nature.
- Political parties or politically-based organizations and lobbying groups.
- Religious entities can receive public event sponsorship under certain conditions.

The City will not sponsor events that include religious worship, religious instruction, proselytization or inherently religious activities. Cultural celebrations, historical event commemorations and other non-religious public events organized by faith-based organizations may be eligible for sponsorship.



City sponsorship of public special events

Policy elements

- Sponsorship will be denied for any event that does not seek to advance the sense of community, health, wellness or safety of the public, or that is inconsistent with the Recreation Division's mission to enhance livability for all Mercer Island residents.
- Events may be used as fund raisers; and may have a registration or participation fee.
- Sports tournaments are not eligible for the special events sponsorship program.
- Each entity may only receive sponsorship two times per year.
- City staff will review the application and sponsorship request and will determine permit and sponsorship eligibility and award.
- Each sponsored entity must enter into a contract with the City.



City sponsorship of public special events

Policy elements

As applicable, sponsorship will consist of:

- Waiving the Event Fee for a Level 1 event
- A 60% discount on the Event Fee for a Level 2 event
- A 40% discount on the Event Fee for a Level 3 event
- A 20% discount on the Event Fee for a Level 4 event

The Commission established the policy framework that guides fee development and City Staff have the authority to set fees.



Recommended Motion:

Move to endorse the Special Events Sponsorship Policy and recommend to City Council for approval

Questions?



Part 2

In addition to the confirmation of the policy elements on February 3, the Commission discussed additional special event recommendations.

Staff would like to carry forward the Parks and Recreation Commission's support of the following recommendations to City Council.



Continue to encourage Neighborhood Block Parties by limiting permitting requirements

- Waive any application, special events and ROW fees (current practice).
- Limit two per neighborhood and two per road per year.
- Require that neighborhood block party applicants complete a simple form so that City Staff have knowledge of the event and can provide required resources.



Establish a First Amendment or Free Speech event notification form and related practices

- Treat First Amendment-type events in a distinct fashion, separate from other types of special events.
- While the City cannot require that a permit be applied for and issued, the City can request that organizers of planned events provide the City with a notice of the event.
- First Amendment events are solely expressive events and do not include non-expressive activity such as commercial food or sales, recreation, or competition. Solely expressive First Amendment event do not require permits or payment of fees.
- If non-expressive activities are intended to occur in conjunction with the First Amendment event, a Special Events (and any other applicable) permit and fees will be required.



Create three categories of special events

(apart from neighborhood block parties and First Amendment events)

1. City-organized and run public events
2. Public special events for which the City provides sponsorship via the sponsorship program
3. All other special events – whether public or private



Codify the sponsorship program and establish that there are a finite number of City-organized and City-run special events – as delineated in the budget each year.

- Gaining formal approval of the sponsorship program and the City's intent to conduct its own special events demonstrates the City's adherence to the State of Washington's regulations concerning the gift of public funds.
- Gaining formal approval of the program will help ensure that policy makers and permit administrators have knowledge of rules and practices that will govern the City's approach to special events.



Questions?

- Recommendation: Move to endorse Staff's recommendations concerning special events and share those recommendations with City Council.



Alternative Motions

- 1. Move to support Staff's recommendations concerning special events and to share those recommendations with City Council.**
- 2. Move to support the following Staff recommendations concerning special events and to share those recommendations with City Council:**
 - Continue to encourage Neighborhood Block Parties by limiting permitting requirements
 - Establish a First Amendment or Free Speech event notification form and related practices
 - Create three categories of special events (apart from the block parties & First Amendment events)
 - Codify the sponsorship program and establish that there are a finite number of City-organized and City-run special events (as delineated in the budget each year).

