



PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

Item 3
March 3, 2022
Regular Business

AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION

TITLE:	Endorsement of Special Events Sponsorship Policy and Other Special Events Recommendations	<input type="checkbox"/> Discussion Only
RECOMMENDED ACTION:	Review policy considerations and provide input. Endorse policy and recommend for City Council approval. Endorse Staff's recommendations for special events.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Action Needed: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Motion <input type="checkbox"/> Ordinance <input type="checkbox"/> Resolution
STAFF:	Katie Herzog/Emily Moon, consultant	
COUNCIL LIAISON:	Craig Reynolds	
EXHIBITS:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Special Events Sponsorship Policy2. Special Events Permit Fees	

SUMMARY

- The Special Events Sponsorship Policy (Exhibit 1) allows for a sponsorship program which enables the City to support qualifying public special events (coordinated by 3rd parties) through permit fee reductions and waivers.
- Public special events are an important part of the community's life, and the City can play a central role in facilitating and supporting those enriching experiences.
- The City desires to enhance community event opportunities by promoting other entities' abilities to bring special events to fruition, while balancing the City's cost recovery and resource allocation goals.
- This draft policy allows the City to 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 and where the event meets all other sponsorship program rules.
- Next Steps: Move to endorse the *Special Events Sponsorship Policy* and recommend to City Council for approval, and move to endorse Staff's recommendations concerning special events, as described in this memo, and to share those recommendations with City Council.

At the Parks and Recreation Commission's [February 3, 2022](#) meeting, the Commission reviewed and discussed proposed elements of a policy that would govern the Recreation Division's Special Events Sponsorship Program. The program would provide special event permit fee waivers or reductions, according to eligibility criteria.

Commission members voiced support for the sponsorship program, as presented, and sought to clarify the language concerning whether eligible events could include fundraising activities. Staff committed to putting the draft policy elements into the Division's official policy template and bringing the policy back to the Commission for additional consideration and endorsement. The proposed policy is attached for the Commission's review.

Staff has included the Special Events Permit Fee Schedule (Exhibit 2), which includes “event level” categorizations that Staff will use to determine event fees and sponsorship levels. These categorizations will be included in the Special Event Guidelines, which will be available online to potential permit applicants.

The special event fees and proposed sponsorship program reductions are shown in the table below. This table was shared with the Commission in the February 3 meeting.

Level of Event	Application Fee (no sponsorship reduction)	Total “Event Fee”	Total Fees	Proposed Sponsorship Discount	Value of Discount	Total Fees After Sponsorship*
1	\$50	\$125 for one-day	\$175	100%	\$125	\$50
2	\$50	\$380 or \$620 for one-day	\$430 or \$670	60%	\$258 or \$402 (depending on level of review required and anticipated impact of event)	\$172 or \$268
3	\$50	\$820 or \$1,240 for one-day	\$870 or \$1,290	40%	\$328 or \$496 (depending on level of review required and anticipated impact of event)	\$542 or \$794
4	\$50	\$1,540 for one-day	\$1,590	20%	\$308	\$1,282

*Additional fees may apply, which are not eligible in the sponsorship discount – such as staffing.

Lastly, Staff would like to carry forward to City Council the Parks and Recreation Commission’s support of the additional recommendations that were discussed during the Commission’s January 6 and February 3, 2022 meetings. Those recommendations are:

1. *Continue to encourage Neighborhood Block Parties by limiting permitting requirements:*
 - Waive any application, special events and ROW fees. (This is 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 (such as barricades).

2. *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 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 events 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 fee will be required.

3. *Create three categories of special events (apart from neighborhood block parties and First Amendment events):*
 - I. City-organized and run public events
 - II. Public special events for which the City provides sponsorship via the sponsorship program
 - III. All other special events (whether public or private)

4. *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.

RECOMMENDATION

1. Move to endorse the Special Events Sponsorship Policy and recommend to City Council its approval.

2. Move to endorse Staff's recommendations concerning special events, as described in this memo, and share those recommendations with City Council.