

To: Town Manager, Michelle Metteer
From: Cindy Krieg
Date: December 10, 2024
Subject: December First Friday Event Recap



MEMORANDUM:

The recent introduction of Minturn First Fridays has been well received. These events began in September and have had consistently strong attendance. Town staff have received significant positive feedback from both attendees and participating businesses.

For the December First Friday, staff tried something new – a combined First Friday event with the Tree Lighting. While this created some logistical challenges, overall – the event was a major success. Below is a recap / summary of what took place.

Attendance:

Staff anticipated approximately 100 people, but it is difficult to estimate attendance for these events, especially when it's a holiday event. The actual attendance was in excess of 200 and is estimated at likely around 250. To compare this to the solo tree lighting event in years past – a strong turnout for that event has typically been around 50 (average is 25 – 40). Attendance at previous tree lightings was primarily just families who lived in the immediate vicinity and could walk over. Attendance at the December First Friday event included residents from all parts of Minturn and beyond.

Given the strong turnout for the First Friday, it seems apparent that our community would like to see more of these types of events.

Feedback:

Both Town staff and the event hosts (Eagle River Whisky), have received very positive feedback. Several residents have commented that they hope this will be the first of a new tradition.

Logistics:

The only challenge with combining the two events is that we were not able to effectively do some of the activities associated with previous tree lighting events. Due to the large crowd and being noisy, it is recommended that going forward – if the two events are combined (which there is strong interest in), that the Town do only the lighting of the tree and at a specific time. For example, if the First Friday event is from 4-6pm, we would light the tree at exactly 6pm and do away with the other parts of the former tree lighting event.

We will also plan and prepare for a larger crowd in the future, so the event can be more efficient overall.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

- Combine the December First Friday and Minturn Tree Lighting going forward, with the tree lighting part of the event consisting of just lighting the tree.