



STAFF REPORT

Meeting Type: City Council
Meeting Date: September 5, 2023
From: Rochelle Anderholm-Parsch, Parks and Recreation Director
John Wallace, Recreation Manager
Tiana Rundell, Parks Manager
Subject: Sandy Winterfest Planning

PURPOSE / OBJECTIVE:

Staff to provide an update on the 2023 Sandy Winterfest vision and progress.

Sandy Winterfest Vision

- Expand on the experiences and partnerships from last year by enhancing our decorations and events
- Creatively engage our businesses in the downtown area of Sandy to participate to help create a more centralized and wider ranging holiday feel.
- Sandy to be seen as a Winter destination to help fuel economic activity and tourism while providing free community events to our citizens of Sandy.

BACKGROUND / CONTEXT:

The first holiday focused light display at Meinig Park was in 2022. It was extremely well-received by the community. Due to the popularity, and the prospect that Sandy will become a Winterfest town, staff have been hard at work preparing for an expanded second annual Sandy Winterfest.

Meinig Park Electrical Improvements

The parks team is looking forward to enhancing patrons' experiences! This includes wrapping many more trees in lights, lighting both bridges that cross the creek with an arch and lighting the section of path leading down from City Hall to the lower bridge. Staff has also sourced some fun new additions to the character decorations.

- **June 2023:** 5 receptacles with four outlets each were added to the section of the park behind City Hall which will allow us to light the part of the path that leads to the lowest bridge crossing of the creek and many more of the trees between the creek and the three smaller structures.
- **August 2023:** Installation of an additional five receptacles with four outlets each is almost complete in the large, forested area North of the restrooms.
- The upgrades were completed with a contract not to exceed \$15,000.

Meinig Park Events

Like last year, Meinig Park will be open to the public to walk through from December 1st through early January. Along with our open decorated park, the Parks and Recreation Department will host seven free Community Events:

- **December 1st:** Winterfest Lighting - After turning on the tree in the Plaza, staff will turn on the lights in Meinig for a walk through. We will announce our Sponsors and Businesses who are taking part in the Merry Makeover Challenge and Santa Stroll (see below).
- **December 2nd:** Pet Pictures with the Grinch - Take pictures with your pet and family with the Grinch, enjoy some treats and beverages supplied by an event sponsor, stop by the petting zoo, and enjoy the park.
- **December 9th:** Snow Queen & Ice Princess - A dramatic reading by the Snow Queen and Ice Princess, The High School Choir and Band will play and sing carols and drinks and treats will be supplied by an event sponsor.
- **December 15th:** Stocking Stroll - Families will walk the Downtown section of Sandy, stopping at the businesses that pledged to take part in Winterfest. The businesses will have treats and presents for kids to fill their stockings. This will be the perfect time to take detailed inspections of the decorations and to vote on your favorite.
- **December 16th:** Estampa y Santa - Estampa Mexicana will perform, and Santa will be under the Gazebo. An event sponsor will hand out drinks and treats.
- **December 21st:** Shortest Day Walkway - Similar to the Longest Day Parkway, departments and sponsors will be invited to set up booths throughout Meinig Park. There will be a scavenger hunt put on by the Parks and Recreation Department that will lead them to each booth. An event sponsor will hand out drinks and treats.
- **Holiday Happy Hour:** Vendors will serve adult beverages and snacks for a time to socialize, walk the park and hear the winners of our Merry Makeover Challenge (see below).

Downtown Decorations:

Staff's plan is to expand on the traditional decorations (the trees on Proctor & the plaza) by decorating / lighting the islands on the west and east side of the downtown sector (The green spaces with the waterfall and the Welcome to Sandy sign across from 7-11). We are also looking at tastefully lighting the Veterans Memorial, the green space between Joes and City Hall, the Community Center and its landscape, the Library and City Hall. Along with the lighting, we are hoping to wrap the utility poles & light poles on Pioneer and Proctor with garland and wreaths alternating with a red and white banner topped with a red bow (think candy canes).

Downtown Events:

The goal is to engage with businesses to "pledge" to be a part of Winterfest." By officially taking part, businesses will agree to decorate their storefronts and landscape. Businesses who participate will take part in the first annual downtown business decoration competition (AKA...**Merry Makeover Challenge**) which will be voted on by the citizens of Sandy and finally, open their doors for our Family Friendly Stocking Stroll.

Not only will businesses be taking part in a community event with a long-term goal of increased tourism and economic growth, but they will also be incentivized to participate in Parks and Recreation events

that will bring people to their stores. Finally, there will be a three-tiered reward system for the best decorated businesses.

1st Place Mayor’s Award: \$750

2nd Place: \$500

3rd Place: \$250

KEY CONSIDERATIONS / ANALYSIS:

The Parks and Recreation staff are determined to regularly expand the Winterfest experience with the understanding that this will be a signature event for the City of Sandy. The team has high expectations for the growth of this event but there are also certain limitations.

These limitations include existing budgetary parameters, limited parks personnel and the Sandy Municipal Code. Although, the budgeted amount for Winterfest is generous, custom designs and a bigger and better experience is costly. Regarding staff, there are currently only three full time staff in the parks department.

Considerations also exist within the Sandy Municipal Code Chapter 15.32 (the sign code), which is the section of our code regulating not just signs, but also items like banners, lights, and other items affixed to buildings that might straddle the line between signs and decorations. First, staff will bring a recommendation at an upcoming meeting that the Council declare a “Community-Wide Event” (as was done, for example, for the Mt Hood Farmers Market) to generally provide extra latitude and flexibility under the code. The text of the Council’s declaration can be written to clearly articulate our intent to promote attractive and tasteful holiday decorations. Additionally, and more particularly, the sign code defines ‘signs’ very broadly (including as a “device that is affixed to [...] a building, structure or land and which directs attention to [...] an institution or business”) and goes on to prohibit items that “rotate, reflect, flash, blink, fluctuate, or have chaser effects.” Staff have used this portion of the code in the past to disallow blinking lights in downtown windows for example. For consistency purposes, staff intends to write the Merry Makeover program rules in such a way to disallow decorations that “rotate, reflect, flash, blink, fluctuate, or have chaser effects.” Finally, rules will be written to disallow decorations that block the right of way, or that create other safety concerns.

BUDGET IMPACT:

Below is a budget estimate. Staff are waiting on the quote regarding holiday lighting for the downtown sector, and creative displays (large scale/showstopping displays). This includes installation and the purchase of new material for an enhanced experience at Meinig.

Resources Biennium	2023 Expenses	2024 Expenses	Notes
\$125,000	\$70,000	\$55,000	- Annual plaza tree lighting, events - Heaters - Purchase of more decorations (light materials and lasers etc.) - Lighted walk-through experience, - Install costs - Electrical upgrades and equipment - Tree Lighting along Proctor and added decorations on Pioneer
\$55,000	\$27,500	\$27,500	- Enhanced downtown Lighting / Decorating

			-Business engagement / *Merry Makeover*
TOTAL	TOTAL	TOTAL	
\$180,000	\$97,500	\$82,500	

LIST OF ATTACHMENTS / EXHIBITS:

Attachment A: Winterfest Presentation