



STAFF REPORT

Meeting Type: City Council
Meeting Date: November 4, 2024
From: John Wallace, Recreation & Senior Services Manager
Subject: Declaration of Community-Wide Event (Winterfest 2024)

DECISION TO BE MADE:

Whether to declare Winterfest 2023 as a Community-Wide Event.

PURPOSE / OBJECTIVE:

By designating Winterfest as a Community-Wide Event, we are able to loosen regulations that might otherwise limit holiday decorating options for businesses participating in the Merry Makeover Challenge.

BACKGROUND / CONTEXT:

Signs are regulated by Chapter 15.32 of the Sandy Municipal Code. City staff has a long-standing practice of applying the Sign Code broadly in commercial areas, including to lighted window displays and similar items that could be considered decorations (the definition of "sign" in [SMC 15.32.210](#) is written in a very general and encompassing way).

- According to [SMC 15.32.080 - Prohibited Signs](#), certain restrictions are in place as to what businesses could possibly use with regard to holiday decorations. Specifically sections E and J, listed below:
 - 15.32.080 (E) - Signs that rotate, reflect, flash, blink, fluctuate, or have chaser effects (a "rotating signs" has sign faces or portions of a sign face which revolve around a central axis)
 - 15.32.080 (J) - Attention attracting devices, flags, balloons, windsocks, pennants, streamers, valances, spinners, spirals and other wind-activated devices including propellers.
- According to [SMC 15.32.035 - Community Wide Event Signs](#), some of the restrictions on decorations listed in the sign code could be loosened (see below), allowing for more elaborate holiday displays, if Winterfest was designated as a Community-Wide Event.
 - Special signs, including but not limited to banners, flags, wind-activated devices, streamers, balloons, pennants, posters, etc., as approved by the city council may be permitted:

- (A) The applicant must submit a written request, specifying the time period for display of signs, type of event, types of advertising/display material and proposed locations of display materials;
 - (B) Time limits: 21 days prior to the event and removal within seven days following the event;
 - (C) Street banners proposed to be erected over the state highway right-of-way are subject to a permit issued by the State Highway Division and all applicable rules of that agency.
- It is important to note that regardless of community-wide event status, all light displays need to remain static (non-blinking/moving), so as to not be a distraction to motorists on Highway 26, per ODOT regulations.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS / ANALYSIS:

This designation is consistent with the action the Council took for Winterfest 2023; it also mirrors the process the Council completed in the past for both the Mt. Hood Farmers Market and Sandy's First Friday events. In future years, we may look at the possibility of making Winterfest a permanent (automatically recurring) Community-Wide Event.

Event Dates

Winterfest 2024 will run from November 22nd through January 5th. According to [Section B of SMC 15.32.035](#), businesses would be able to start decorating 21 days before the start of the event (November 1st) and the removal of decorations would need to be completed 7 days following the event (January 12th).

Application Process

The Parks and Recreation Department will have an application process for businesses to take part in the Merry Makeover Challenge. As part of the application, there will be a signed agreement stating that the business owners understand the time frame and the parameters of our City Code. Applicants will also supply a written "scope of work" as to how they will be decorating. All applications will be reviewed and approved by city staff members. Businesses that do not participate in the Merry Makeover Challenge will not benefit from the Community-Wide Event designation and will have to follow the Sandy Sign Code.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that City Council designates Winterfest 2023 as a Community-Wide Event.

SUGGESTED MOTION LANGUAGE:

"I move to designate Winterfest 2024 as a Community-Wide Event from November 22, 2024 through January 5, 2025, pursuant to SMC 15.32.035."