

CITY COUNCIL COMMUNICATION FORM

FROM: Winnie DelliQuadri, Special Projects and IGS Manager
Rachel Lundy, Special Events Coordinator

THROUGH: Gary Suiter, City Manager

DATE: December 14, 2021

ITEM: Review of Special Events

<u> </u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	DIRECTION
<u> </u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	INFORMATION
<u> </u>		ORDINANCE
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I. REQUEST/ISSUE & BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

This item reviews the last two years of implementation of the City's special activity permit process, identifies needed improvements, and provides new policy and process recommendations for council consideration.

Background: City staff, in partnership with the Steamboat Springs Chamber, spent two years, in 2017 and 2018, gathering information, meeting with stakeholders, and formulating a strategy for updating and improving its special events process. Throughout this process to evolve event administration, staff have followed the following goals or criteria for success:

- Support high quality event planning
- Support economics of the community
- Facilitate / support fun event experiences
- Minimize community impacts from special events
- Ensure public safety of residents and visitors
- 80%-100% cost recovery for the city

At the February 13, 2018 City Council work session, council directed the following regarding events:

- Minimize community and environmental impacts

- Limit events on Lincoln and shift events to Yampa Street and other venues
- Charge for services (cost recovery)
- City will subsidize Winter Carnival, 4th of July, and Halloween
- Put a policy in place that guides the city in saying no to events based on safety, staffing, capacity, impacts
- Online system
- Menu of venues

In April, 2019, City Council passed an ordinance (Attachment 2) that:

- Updated definitions for special activities and city, school and private activities.
- Identified exclusions from the special activity permit process.
- Updated special activity permit procedures.
- Clarified that the city will provide some services at a cost.

The adopted ordinance works in concert with policies that were adopted by city council in April 2019 for event categories, park venues, streets venues, event capacity, and event permit denials, as well as with deadlines, fees, and administrative matters determined by the City Manager. Resolution 2019-37, special activity permit policies, is provided as Attachment 3.

At the end of 2019, after the new ordinance and policies had been implemented over the summer, staff did a full debrief of the system. As a result of that debrief and subsequent presentation and recommendations to council, city council adopted a second set of policies that focused on ensuring that events fell within city capacity to provide services and did not conflict with other events. These new venue policies are in Attachment 4. At the same time, we implemented the medical matrix as a process improvement in order to ensure that events had an appropriate level of medical care available.

2021 Debrief Process: City council directed staff to identify how the policies adopted in 2019 are functioning, with an eye to any new policies that needed to be adopted. To do this evaluation, staff conducted a full debrief of each event with each event producer at post event meetings over the year. In addition, this Fall, we conducted one on one interviews with staff members responsible for providing various special event services. This debrief process identified that the current policies are working well to eliminate conflicts between events, to reduce community impact, and to ensure that events are within the city's service capacity. The debrief process also identified city staff capacity, waste management, and parking as ongoing issues. We also identified the need to continue working on criteria which differentiate between special events, field reservations, and facility reservations.

As a result of these meetings, we developed several recommendations which were then reviewed by staff and event producers in November. Feedback on the proposed improvements has been positive.

Planned Operational Improvements: The special activity permit application has evolved over the past several years and we are thrilled to report that we are working with OpenGov to bring our application and review process online, with an anticipated launch date of February 1, 2022. The online application and workflow will allow city staff and event producers to better track fees, will reduce the amount of time event producers have to spend on applications each year, and will significantly reduce the amount of staff hours involved in processing applications. It will also begin to automate some processes, like late application notices and fees associated with various services.

Other planned operational improvements include implementing fees for specialized maintenance needed to recover a park or field from intense event usage, the ongoing clarification of criteria that differentiates between field usage, facility usage, and a special event permit, identifying a location for future special event equipment storage, improving signage at Emerald Park in the parking lot, and scheduling field and park blackouts as needed before and after large events to allow staff to prepare the venue for the event and to do maintenance after an event.

Policy Recommendation – Modify Lincoln Avenue Venue Policy: The current venue policy allows three events – the 4th of July parade, the Halloween Stroll, and Winter Carnival Street Events – to fully close Lincoln Avenue as a special event venue. As a result of an I-70 detour on Highway 40, the 2021 4th of July parade was moved to Yampa Street, off of Lincoln Avenue. Yampa Street worked well as a venue for the parade and keeping Lincoln Avenue open greatly enhanced public safety response in the community, decreased congestion in old town, and enabled the transit buses to operate on schedule. The debrief identified several improvements that could be made to support the parade utilizing Yampa Street. Staff recommends permanently having the 4th of July Parade on Yampa Street, and modifying the Lincoln Avenue policy so that only the Halloween Stroll and Winter Carnival Street events are held in this venue. Staff recommend that both these events stay on Lincoln Avenue, as there are different safety concerns with moving these events to Yampa Street.

Process Improvement - Parking and Alternative Transportation Plans: The City's current special activity permit application and process do not consider venue parking capacity when considering a permit application for events of various sizes. The debrief process specifically identified parking issues as an ongoing concern for special events in certain venues – specifically at Emerald Park/Botanic Garden, Ski Town Park, and Whistler Park venues. In order to

reduce parking issues, minimize impacts from events, and improve the event experience for participants, staff recommends the implementation of a parking and alternative transportation planning matrix in the application process. Modeled after the successful medical matrix, the parking matrix will require that events which exceed venue parking capacity be required to limit parking at the venue, develop and utilize parking and drop off plans and alternative parking site reservations, provide and train parking monitors, and develop and implement an alternative transportation plan for the event, as needed to meet the needs of that event. To help implement this process improvement, staff have identified the parking capacity (both parking lot and adjacent street parking) for the targeted venues. The matrix uses a metric of 2 participants per car to identify the event size for each venue that will trigger the parking and alternative transportation planning matrix.

Staff recommend that these new parking and alternative transportation planning requirements be formalized as part of the program guidance and application and implemented in 2022.

Process Improvement – Targeted Enforcement: Each special activity permit includes a set of conditions specific to that event that have been developed during the review process to ensure event safety and minimize impacts. These conditions can include the number of required port-o-lets, the number of required trash and recycling stations, allowed egress to the site, allowed placement of trucks and equipment, waste management, and implementation of approved plans associated with the event. Many event producers follow these conditions, however some do not. Staff have not enforced these permit conditions in the past and are proposing to do targeted enforcement of permit conditions on those venues where there have historically been issues with different events. Policy adopted by City Council allows staff to deny a special activity permit if the applicant or event is non-compliant with event requirements in previous years. Staff plans to send notification letters to events detailing the issues and complaints received in 2021 and alerting them to potential inspections in the future. If these events do not comply with their conditions of approval in 2022, future applications for a special activity permit can be denied. Targeted enforcement would include having a Community Service Officer randomly inspect the event – this could occur prior to, during, and after the event. We anticipate targeting enforcement at approximately eight events in 2022. There is currently no staff capacity to enforce conditions at all events.

Process Improvement – Implement Application Deadlines and Fees: City council adopted a policy regarding the need for special event applications to be submitted to the city 45 days in advance of the event, in order to allow staff adequate time to review and process the application. This policy was waived during the initial stages of Covid, given the unknown around public

health orders and what would be allowed. As public health orders have remained consistent for events and gatherings, staff recommend that we now implement the application deadline and \$500 fee assessment for late applications.

Process Improvement – Transition Special Event Funding: City Council has annually appropriated funds to support special events in the community. These dollars were originally utilized to attract new special events, and then evolved to support ongoing events that met certain criteria, as well as to incentivize events to take place in the shoulder seasons. The Special Event Support dollars are administered as a grant application process by the Chamber. In 2019, Council targeted \$20,000 of the allocated funds be used to support the transition to new fees within the special activity process. These transition funds were also administered by the Steamboat Chamber, however utilized a reimbursement application process.

City Council has appropriated \$60,000 for special event funding in 2022. City and Chamber staff recommend evolving the special event funding so that it not only includes the traditional special event financial support, but also includes supporting destination management by special events, and supporting sustainability at special events.

Traditional Special Event Support: Within this framework, one third of the dollars (\$20,000) would be used to provide special event support utilizing the Chamber's special event criteria and grant application process, which are designed to support existing events and incentivize events to be scheduled in the shoulder season. (See Attachment 5 for information and the grant application for this program). Within this process, special event producers submit an application in advance of their event to the Chamber, a committee reviews the applications, and makes funding recommendations to city council. Special event producers who are awarded funds are paid on a reimbursement basis by the Chamber.

Destination Management Event Support: City and Chamber staff propose to evolve one third of the dollars (\$20,000) to support destination management by special events. Staff propose that these dollars be granted out by the Chamber with the same grant committee and process that is used for the traditional special event support funding. (See Attachment 6 for the proposed guidelines, information and grant application for this program). Within this process, special event producers submit an application in advance of their event to the Chamber, a committee reviews the applications, and makes funding recommendations to city council. Special event producers who are awarded funds are paid on a reimbursement basis by the Chamber.

Event Sustainability Incentives: City and Chamber staff propose that the final third of the dollars (\$20,000) would evolve to provide financial incentives for specific sustainability actions undertaken in an event. As shown in Attachment 7, event producers would be provided with a sustainability incentive for completing certain sustainability activities within their events. The incentive payments would be provided by the City on a reimbursement basis on a first come first served basis with documentation that the activities were carried out.

II. SUMMARY AND ALTERNATIVES:

The City and event producers have gone through 2020 and 2021 with policies adopted in 2019 and 2020. City staff and event producers have provided feedback on what worked well and what remains challenging. City staff have reviewed the feedback and developed options and recommendations for the following:

1. Policy Change - Modify the Lincoln Avenue Venue policy to remove the 4th of July parade from the list of events that may be held on Lincoln Avenue.
2. Process Improvement – Require Parking and Alternative Transportation Plans for events whose size is larger than the parking available at the selected venue.
3. Process Improvement – Begin targeted enforcement of special events both pre and post event, with fines for noncompliance.
4. Process Improvement – Implement application deadlines and late fees so that applications accepted after the 45 day window are charged the set late fee. Note that memorials and private parties are not required to file 45 days in advance.
5. Transition Special Event Funding – utilize 1/3 of the funding, or \$20,000 for traditional special event support, 1/3 or \$20,000 for new destination management activities, and 1/3 or \$20,000 for sustainability incentives.

City Council may choose to:

- Direct staff to make no changes and keep the status quo.
- Direct staff to modify the Lincoln Avenue venue policy, implement process improvements, and transition special event funding as proposed.
- Direct staff to modify the Lincoln Avenue venue policy, process improvements, and transition of special event funding as desired by city council.
- • Direct staff to bring all or part of the recommendations back to council for additional consideration.

III. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

City staff recommend that council modify the Lincoln Avenue venue policy, implement the process improvements, and transition the special event funding as proposed.

IV. FISCAL IMPACT:

No specific revenues or expenses have been identified, however it is anticipated that moving the 4th of July parade may allow Police and Fire/EMS to not have to provide duplicate staffing on each side of Lincoln Avenue during the parade. The late fee is not anticipated to create new revenue for the city, instead the goal of the late fee is to motivate event producers to file their permit applications in a timely matter. Similarly, the targeted enforcement is not anticipated to create new revenue for the city; instead, the goal is to ensure that events follow permit conditions. Finally, the parking and alternative transportation planning requirement may result in an extra cost to event producers in the initial year. The event producers may request destination management grant funding to support this new planning requirement.

V. LEGAL ISSUES:

The City code sections addressing special activity permits was updated in April 2019. The code acts in concert with special event policies which were adopted via resolution in April 2019 and April 2020. Staff recommend updating the special activity policies to reflect the Lincoln Avenue venue recommendation.

In order to address Covid, the City waived fines associated with late application submittals. These fees are proposed to be implemented in 2022. In addition, staff have not done enforcement, and are proposing targeted enforcement, with fines, in 2022.

VI. CONFLICTS OR ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES:

Changes to event administration were geared to make the system for efficient and effective for city staff and event producers, as well as to reduce community impacts. Overall, both city staff and event producers feel that the changes to the system are going in the right direction.

VII. CONSISTENCY WITH COUNCIL GOALS AND POLICIES:

This item directly addresses the city mission to provide superior services and a safe environment in our thriving authentic community. The sustainability incentives address council's priority for sustainability.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Special Activity Permit Update Powerpoint

2. 2019 Special Event Ordinance
3. 2019 Special Event Policies
4. 2020 Special Event Venue Policy
5. Chamber Special Event Funding Support guidance and grant application
6. Destination Management Event Funding Support guidance and grant application