

Special Events Committee Meeting
12/10/20
Video Conference Call

Member Representatives in Attendance:

Agency	Representatives	Noted in Minutes As
Citizen Representative	Tom Anderson	Citizen Representative
	Lisa Fraser	Citizen Representative
Department of Construction & Inspections	Dan Powers	DCI Noise Abatement
Department of Neighborhoods	Laura Jenkins	DON
Finance and Administrative Services	Not Present	FAS
King County Metro Transit	Glenn Bartolome	Metro
Mayor's Office	Domonique Stephens	MO
Parks and Recreation	Carl Bergquist	Parks
Seattle-King County Health Department	Rosemary Byrne	Health
Seattle Center	Gretchen Lenihan	Seattle Center
Seattle Department of Transportation	Mike Shea	SDOT
Seattle Fire Department	Tom Heun	SFD
	Lt. Bryan Clenna	SPD
Seattle Public Utilities	Pat Kaufman	SPU
Special Events Office	Chris Swenson	Chair
	Julie Borden	SE
	Meli Darby	SE
	Jonelle Mogi	SE
WA State Liquor & Cannabis Board	Tom Dixon	WSLCB
Special Events Committee		SEC
Special Events Office		SEO

Additional Attendees: Sgt. Chris Kelley – SPD, Lt. Dan Nelson – SPD, Meredith Stone – FAS

Note: As always, these are “raw minutes notes” based on the discussion of the 12/10/2020 meeting and do not include every word spoken—not a literal transcript—merely a summary of ideas.

Committee Discussion

- Meeting Minute Review and Vote
 - 10/22/2020
 - No edits received by email and no additional edits
 - Chair entertains a movement to approve minutes from 10/22 SEC Meeting; Gretchen with Seattle Center moves to approve, Lt. Tom Heun with SFD seconds
 - With no Special Events Committee (SEC) objections; Meeting minutes are approved and will

- be distributed and posted to Special Event website
- Motion passes with quorum

Committee Business

WSLCB Updates

Sgt. Victor Hopkins WSLCB

- Lt. Victor Hopkins and Capt. Tom Dixon will be SEC representatives as Lt. Robert Rieder is on assignment
- WSLCB has been working with educational and enforcement components during COVID-19; WSLCB is in charge of making sure business that falls in their jurisdiction (liquor, marijuana, vapor, tobacco, etc.) are complying with Gov. Inslee orders and proclamations
- COVID-19 issues include what is included as an outdoor area
- Encourage officers are work closely with communities and community groups on licenses, law enforcement, etc.
- Suggestion that a member from licensing team, who does all Special Occasion Licenses, be apart of the group as a subject matter expert or attendee
- SEC function is regulatory and helps to identifying issues in advance and when they happen; SEC is welcoming to additional member from licensing team to be apart of meetings, but WSLCB is only allowed one vote per agency

MLK Marches and Rallies and Ethiopian Orthodox Churches Epiphany Celebration March

Chris Swenson, Special Events Committee Chair and Meli Darby, Special Events Office

- Recently Gov. Inslee’s office released new guidance for Religious and Faith-based Organizations for outdoor gatherings for up to 200 people
- Original guidance allowed church gatherings outdoors to be on church property or adjacent to church properties; Now religious and faith-based organizations can gather in public places with a maximum capacity of 200 people; No singing or choir allowed and must maintain physical distancing and guidelines
- Summary of December 21, 2020, update
<https://www.governor.wa.gov/sites/default/files/COVID19%20Phase%201%20to%203%20Religious%20and%20Faith%20Based%20Organization%20Guidance.pdf>
 - Removes the indoor and outdoor capacity limits of 200 people and makes 200 individuals the recommended maximum capacity.
 - Clarifies that the December 10, 2020, restriction on singing applies only to indoor singing by congregations. Soloist performers indoors and outdoor singing by the congregation is permitted so long as every singer wears a face covering. Removes reference to “cloth” face coverings.
 - Removes the requirement to control access to restrooms.
- SEO proposing to SEC - Should we consider religious or faith-based organization events and/or do we need to consider revisiting our permit administrative ban?
- In order for SEC to review application, there will need to be an operating plan to show how organizers will be able to limit participants and spectators to follow State guidelines
- If SEO receives request from organizers to hold annual free speech or expressive activity event, we will confirm with organizer; Many marches and rallies have happened without a permit, if an event happens, we will need to address the SEO permitting process for future permits by organizer/groups; SEC here now to be proactive to reach out to the groups
- MLK events are not considered religious; Epiphany is tied to a date for religious event; SEO has not carved out a category for religious events within SMC, so it falls under free speech
- *Ethiopian Orthodox Churches Epiphany Celebration March*

- Seattle Center – Religious activity is approved at State level but not expressive speech
- If we were to consider events along the lines as the epiphany events in January, how would the organizers control the attendance and have physical distancing? The maximum of 200 people also includes spectators
- What is the amount of SPD support that is historically needed?
- SPD – One event goes around the block and is staffed by precinct; Another event goes from one church down MLK to another church; Historically each event has had more than 200 people; Unsure how to have organizers limit participants and spectators and how are we able to enforce if there are more than 200 participants and spectators; Resources would remain the same even with the 200 maximum participate guidelines; Resources will stay the same and if spread out and don't know what to expect; Once you reach a certain number of participants, the number or resources needed is at a set
- There would be some people at the church to receive marchers; Estimates could have 500 marchers and 200 people awaiting at the church
- DON – Has SEO reached out to organizers to see if events will happen or is this preventive? Could this possibly be an event that could happen without a permit?
- SE – SEO discussed potentially doing outreach to the organizers to ask about plans and intentions to move forward; Identified that there is some language within SMC that prompted us to have discussion if we should make a consideration or exception for our administrative ban
- Seattle Center – Categorized as free speech/expressive activity which is currently not allowed under State guidelines; Religious activity and faith-based organizations have guidance
- Chair – SEO has not carved out a category for religious events within SMC, so it falls under free speech; Making sure we hear from SEC for any recommendations for an exception; The State guidance is an exception for an exception; If SEC is to consider an exception, it will be restrictive
- Chair – Language will need to be specific to religious activity and not expressive speech as we can't supersede the State; SEC will need to set a bar on religious activity that organizer will need to meet in order for SEC to permit; Chair recommend SEO to get language together that might work for an exception for religious activity, vet language through Law, then back to SEC for review; Any concerns as we are in the next consideration for permit ban?
- DON – If there is a plan in place to follow social distancing and other guidelines, but organizers have more than 200 people, is there anything that we can do in that instance?
- SE – SEO will start conversations with Law and SPD for enforcement
- Health – Crowd control and monitoring attendance should be a part of plan; Plan should cover what to do with crowd and additional attendees
- SPD – There are monitors to assist Epiphany event with people along the route, but not enough monitors and it isn't very organized; Little control over the people
- Seattle Center – Based on past experience, once participants are onsite there isn't something one can reasonable do to help disseminate groups of people
- Chair – Process will need to address this guidance as this may require SEC guidance or coordination; If the history of this specific event does not support a claim they can support or follow State guidelines, SEC can use that for future event proposals to support or deny
- SDOT – If we do permit, would SPD escort?
- SPD – Historically, SPD have escorted; Need to be vetted through SPOC to see if resources are available and could support event
- SDOT – SEC haven't permitted anything for 10 months now, protests on streets that SPD has not supported; If we are permitting events and there is no SPD support to monitor and control an arterial street, that is a concern; Using the sidewalk for 200 people, could be more reasonable, but unsure if organizers would want to use sidewalks
- Chair – SEC could put guidelines on restrictions to stay on the sidewalks and need to follow State guidelines

- SPD – Currently can't commit to SPD support, but can go through process to see if there are resources available
- SE – Stay Healthy Streets and the Halloween Open Street closures permitted through SDOT; Wondering if there were participant limitations for the event? Understanding not regulated or capped at participant
- SDOT – Healthy Streets have happened on a closed non arterial streets, unsure if had restrictions since permitted through Public Space Management; Community event, so may not have had restriction
- Chair – Intent was for families and communities to come together to get into the street; There were some requests for activations that were denied based on the fact that would draw a crowd
- SDOT – In general on a non-arterial with more than 500 participants, SDOT would push to SEO; 500 participants would trigger Special Events Permit
- Seattle Center – If organizers are proposing event - what are they proposing? What is the impact to the neighborhood? Especially since it is a free speech event – there are enough factors to consider, but there is a high threshold to meet before we would consider
- Parks – Currently, Parks would not be considering; Halloween proposal wanted to have a small gathering in the Park, but was denied; Parks is not making differentiation on type of group or activity
- Seattle Center– Currently would not expect to permit at this time; Seattle Center looking primarily at misc. venues guidance and staffing needs
- Chair – Right now, not hearing there is enough support, staffing, etc. to create an exception from permit ban; SEC will not create an exception to accommodate guidance from State
- SE – For MLK March, can the City provide any support for a large march?
- Chair – There are no resources available currently for traffic control, and with the permit administrative ban, Chair does not see free speech march or rally to be permitted by SEC in January
- SPD – Besides SEC, if there is a life safety situation apparent due to the crowd, SPD would respond to protect life and safety, weather event is permit or not; For unpermitted events, would monitor with on duty resources, if there is a need for police intervention, SPD would intervene
- Chair – Phase 2 and 3 Run/Walk guidance and any new guidelines from the State, needs to be worked through SEC committee and permitting process

Recommendations for Phase Reopening of Events

Chris Swenson, Special Events Committee Chair and Meli Darby, Special Events Office

- In last meeting, SEO posed Memo for recommendations for Phase Reopening of events to be delivered to Mayors Office before end of the year
- SEO and SEC used 12/3 Subcommittee meeting to develop draft of memo and format; SEO sent draft to SEC to review
- Intent of the Memo is for SEC to recommend to City Leadership ways and proposals to begin reopening and events again
- Memo reflect as a region how we address the process, current issues, and resource support; We want to make sure the specific question about budget constraints and SPD support is called out
- Internal format for Memorandum, but can also be shared with advocacy agencies as a whole
- Memo
 - Introduction
 - Background
 - Function of City support for Major Special Events
 - Identify historical role of department and address current or forthcoming changes with department or SEC member's role
 - Seattle Center – One change to keep in mind is the change in staffing to PEO
 - Future State
 - SPD – As we are reimagining SPD, there will be some possible legislative action that

- will be required for ordinance
- Recommendations
 - Tiered approach
 - Phased approach to historic SPD support - may need to be updated where conversations are currently
 - Procedural updates
- In addition to our request for agencies to add to addendum, SEO is looking for specific feedback on language and Memo itself; SEO will provide timeline and would like to have time to go over Memo with SEC before finalizing

Upcoming Meetings

- 12/17/20 - Subcommittee Meeting
- 1/7/21 - Subcommittee Meeting
- 1/14/21 - Special Events Committee Meeting
- 1/21/21 - Subcommittee Meeting
- Reminder: 2021 meeting schedule
 - 1st Thursdays: Subcommittee Meeting (50 minutes)
 - 2nd Thursdays: Special Events Committee Meeting (120 minutes)
 - 3rd Thursdays: Subcommittee Meeting (50 minutes)