

Special Events Committee Meeting Minutes

November 10, 2021

Via Video Conference

Member and Partner Representatives in Attendance:

Agency	Representatives	Noted in Minutes As
Citizen Representatives	Lisa Fraser	Citizen Representative
Department of Construction & Inspections	James Dasher	DCI Noise Abatement
Department of Neighborhoods	Ed Pottharst	DON
Finance and Administrative Services	Brenda Strickland	FAS
Mayor's Office	Michael Wells	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	Lt. Tom Heun	SFD
Seattle Police Department	Lt. Daniel Nelson	SPD Operations
	Lt. Bryan Clenna	SPD Traffic
Special Events Office	Chris Swenson	Chair
	Julie Borden	SE
	Randy Wiger	SE
WA State Liquor & Cannabis Board	Beth Lehman	WSLCB

Additional Attendees:

Rob Brown – SPD

Cara Payne – SPU

Annabelle Rosborough – Downtown Seattle Association

Lt. Keith Wyatt – Fire Prevention

David Doxtater – The Workshop

Karen Olson – Seattle Space Needle

Libby Dover – Dover Entertainment

Note: As always, these are "raw minutes notes" based on the discussion of the 11/10/2021 meeting and do not include every word spoken - not a literal transcript - merely a summary of ideas.

Introduction: Randy Wiger

New Special Events Coordinator Lead staff member for Special Events Office, filling the position that Meli Darby held, Randy brings 20 years of experience with the City, events, community building and convening

Introduction: Lt. Keith Wyatt

Taking over for Fire Prevention's Lt. Tom Heun, who is retiring; will be taking over position fully in January

Post-Event Evaluations/Comments:

DATE	EVENT
Oct 15, Nov 5	UW Husky Marching Band Rally

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No issues (SPD Traffic)
Oct 16	Ryther Marathon to Hope
Oct 16	Making Strides Against Breast Cancer of Seattle
Oct 16	October Night Market <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good job following written plan (Fire Prevention)
Oct 17	I Can and I Will Run
Oct 22	2040 is Too Late <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did not activate on Seattle Center campus “Flash mob” style, appeared during arena opening ceremony Otherwise activated as expected
Nov 6	November Night Market <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good job following written plan (Fire Prevention)
Nov 7	Head of the Lake

Meeting Minute Approval

- Vote to approve September and October 2021 minutes
- No changes or edits to the minutes
- Meeting minutes approved; All in favor, none opposed

2022 Permit Fees

- Per ordinance, administrative fees are required to be adjusted annually according to change of Consumer Price Index
- Larger than typical increase to CPI – 5.5%
- Additionally, committee may adjust other fees once yearly in conjunction with other fee changes
- OED expecting to undertake fee examination and reform in 2022 for special event permits
- Committee vote: Approve 2022 permit fees as stated; all in favor, none opposed

Post-Vote Discussion

- Overtime average is \$92.50 for SPD staffing; urge reconsideration of maintaining fee as is
 - Concern that it appears that to the public it may appear that we are not being fiscally responsible given the gap between fees collected and actual expenses
- OED has included in its 2022 budget special event permit fee review and reform; expected that this will be part of 2022 discussion
- Reminder that all fees are directed to the general fund and so do not directly offset any particular department’s costs; current fee structure was built on City of Seattle’s values to support major permitted special events by not requiring full cost recovery for City services and resources
- Several committee members have expressed interest in continuing this discussion; important to make sure leadership understand how the fee system is structured and what actual costs are in order to make fully informed decisions

Pre-Planning for 2022

- Survey to annual event organizers to gather information on plans for 2022
 - Responses are incorporated into a planning calendar for internal use
 - 99 responses received; approximately 35% response rate
- Calendar has transitioned from pdf document with monthly update to online SharePoint calendar
 - Special Events staff will add access for all committee members and partners and will send an email announcement

Vaccination Verification Plans

Overview

- In response to King County health order for events to verify attendee proof of vaccination against COVID-19, the Special Events Committee has developed a process to collect event organizers’ compliant plans
- Order applies to events of 500 people or more if outdoors, and any size indoor event
- Exemptions include "free flowing" events such as outdoor street fairs, night markets, or farmers markets

Established Definitions

- Static:
 - Event with long-format, single-focus programming which encourages or requires attendees to remain in one place, such as a concert or extended performance.
- Free flowing:
 - Event where programming encourages or requires attendees to continue moving, such as a vendor fair.
 - Event where there is no long-format, single-focus programming.
- Contained:
 - Event that is gated, fenced, or has other restricted containment.
 - Event that has restricted ingress or egress.
 - Event that requires tickets or reservations to participate, such as a run/walk/ride/swim event.
- Uncontained:
 - Event with no boundaries or fences.
 - Event with no restricted ingress or egress.

Determinations that Special Events Committee will make

- Approved:
 - Event organizer’s plan **meets** the Public Health – Seattle & King County Health Officer vaccination verification order requirements.
- Denied:
 - Event organizer’s plan **does not meet** the Public Health – Seattle & King County Health Officer vaccination verification order requirements.
- Exempted:
 - Event does **not meet the thresholds** of the Public Health – Seattle & King County Health Officer vaccination verification order requirements.
 - Event will **not have 500 or more attendees** at one place at one time.
 - Event is defined as **free flowing**.

Administrative review

- Special Events office staff will identify events that are clearly exempt based on definitions
- If event meets thresholds set by King County, will be required to submit a plan for review

Recommendations from administrative review as of 11/9/2021

EVENT	RECOMMENDATION	NOTES
UW Marching Band Rally	Exempt	<500 attendees in on place at one time
November Night Market	Approve	Entry verification plan meets order
Menorah Lighting Celebration	Exempt	<500 attendees

Meadowbrook Pond Luminaria Walk	Exempt	<500 attendees
South Lake Union Winter Market	Exempt	Outdoor market

Subcommittee Review

- As available, plans will be examined in subcommittee, with a recommendation made for committee’s determination
- Final determination voted on by full committee

Recommendations from 11/4/2021 subcommittee

EVENT	RECOMMENDATION
Seattle Tennis Club NYE	Approve
Head of the Lake Regatta	Exempt
New Year’s at the Needle	Tabled for further discussion
Downtown Seattle Tree Lighting	Tabled for further discussion

Committee Review of Additional Plans

Downtown Seattle Holiday Tree Lighting

Background

- Made adjustments to normal program and communications to reduce potential exposures
- Eliminated fireworks to reduce crowding
- Abbreviated program
- Communication will announce vaccinations required
- Will have a booth with free masks
- Will have ambassadors in crowd to remind about facemasks and pass out as needed
- Feel that it is safer to have a free-flowing event with no enclosures
- Event is important to support downtown businesses and encourage shopping
- Street closures will allow pedestrians to move freely and distance themselves, eliminate potential distraction to drivers from light show
- Attendance estimate is difficult to make, but expecting around 4,500-500 people who spend 15 minutes or so in one spot
- Light “show” is not choreographed but rather more to create ambiance; no specific stage area
- Security staff will include around 7 people roving and posts at each street closure

Discussion

- SPD – Even with more explicit communication about ceremony time, there may be a good number of people who still show up early and congregate

Determination recommendation: Exempt

Vote: Recommendation approved by majority with 2 nays

New Year’s at the Needle

Background

- Similar site plan to previous years
- Show components: Pyro, lighting, augmented reality, music
- Pyro and lighting are necessary for artistic sense of reality with layers and depths to support broadcast
- Considering this a broadcast experience, not encouraging or inviting people to attend in person
- No seating, no programming or parties at Seattle Center or the needle
- Pyrotechnic display shortened to six minutes

- Will have mask distribution for those who do come in person
- Messaging will focus on watching broadcast at home

Discussion

- Seattle Center – The messaging and the change in program meets the intent to lower the risk for COVID transmission; supports the plan; important to balance risks with importance of events and in comparison to other everyday activities
- SPD – Expect there will be some people who come in person despite discouragement
- Public Health – Seems that many people will want to view from indoor spaces such as restaurants or bars, where vaccinations are required
- Fire Prevention – Experience shows that people come out to see fireworks display; estimate 5-10,000 people will still come to Seattle Center

Determination recommendation: Exempt

Vote: Recommendation approved by majority with 3 nays

Emerald City Comic Con

Background

- Attendees must go through vaccination verification and obtain wristband before entering queue

Determination recommendation: Approve

Vote: Recommendation approved unanimously

Winter Beer Festival

Background

- Restricted entry event at Magnuson Park Hangar 30
- Plan shows staff will review and verify vaccination/test documentation at entrances
- Plan includes layout and communication plan
- Organizers have recently produced a similar event with vaccination verification that was successful

Discussion

- Public Health – All events must have onsite signage of the requirements

Determination recommendation: Approve with signage added

Vote: Recommendation approved unanimously

Jingle Bell Run

Background

- Expecting around 500 participants
- Staffing plan includes six locations and twelve staff members
- Present entry/exit plan for vendors and attendees
- Will include signage

Determination recommendation: Approve

Vote: Recommendation approved unanimously

December Night Market

Background

- Event at Madison Park Hangar 30
- Same plan as for the November Night Market

- Two points of entry with vaccination verification
- Ticketed entry

Determination recommendation: Approve

Vote: Recommendation approved unanimously

Resolution Run and Polar Bear Dive

Background

- Will have supervisor to oversee process
- Vaccination verification review is at packet pick up
- Include plans for crowd management and pre-event communication
- Will have signs at event

Determination recommendation: Approve

Vote: Approved unanimously

Committee vote: Approve recommendations as presented and discussed

EVENT	RECOMMENDATION	SPECIAL EVENT PERMIT
UW Marching Band Rally	Exempt	Issued
November Night Market	Approve	Issued
Menorah Lighting Celebration	Exempt	In Process
Meadowbrook Pond Luminaria Walk	Exempt	In Process
South Lake Union Winter Market	Exempt	In Process
Seattle Tennis Club NYE	Approve	In Process
Head of the Lake Regatta	Exempt	Issued
Downtown Seattle Holiday Tree Lighting	Exempt	In Process
New Year's at the Needle	Exempt	In Process
Emerald City Comic Con	Approve	In Process
Winter Beer Festival	Approve	In Process
Jingle Bell Run	Approve	In Process
December Night Market	Approve	In Process
Resolution Run and Polar Bear Dive	Approve	In Process

Roll call vote: 12 yea; 0 nay
Approved unanimously