

Special Events Committee Meeting  
November 12, 2020  
Video Conference Call

Member Representatives in Attendance:

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Representatives</b>	<b>Noted in Minutes As</b>
Citizen Representative	Tom Anderson	Citizen Representative
Department of Construction & Inspections	James Dasher	DCI Noise Abatement
	Jessica McHegg	SDCI
Department of Neighborhoods	Laura Jenkins	DON
Finance and Administrative Services	Brenda Strickland	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	Not Present	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, Victor Hopkins - WSLCB

Note: As always, these are “raw minutes notes” based on the discussion of the 11/12/2020 meeting and do not include every word spoken—not a literal transcript—merely a summary of ideas.

**Committee Discussion**

- Roundtable
- Meeting Minute Review and Vote
  - 9/24 meeting minutes
  - No edits received by email and no additional edits
  - Chair entertains a movement to approve minutes from 9/24 SEC Meeting; Brenda with FAS

- makes motion to approve minutes, Dominique with MO seconds
- With no Special Events Committee (SEC) objections; Meeting minutes are approved and will be distributed and posted to Special Event website

### **Committee Business**

#### *2021 Special Event Fee Increase*

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

#### Street/Bridge Use and Arterials Intersected Fee Adjustments

- Per SMC 15.52.070, portion of Special Event fees are adjusted by the Consumer Price Index (CPI); These fees include Street/Bridge Use and Arterials Intersected
- CPI increase for 2021 is 0.9%
- Chair makes a motion to approve the CPI increase of 0.9% as it relates to Street/Bridge Use and Arterials Intersected
- Voting as followed: MO, SFD, SPD, Parks, SDCl, FAS, Seattle Center, DON, Metro, Health, Citizen Representative – In Favor; WSBLC – Abstained; OED, SDOT, SPU – Not present
- Quorum met, in favor; Motion passes without objection

**DON** – Discussed in previous meetings, this looks like a small increase, but have we talked about impacts to event organizers? What is the downside for such a small increase especially with COVID impacts?

**Chair** – It is a downside, year to year it is an increase of fees; SEC has not discussed specifically overall downfall, since it is written into ordinance each year; SEC could dive deeper at annual events and compare fee projections

#### Other Fee Adjustments

- The SEC may determine whether to adjust application fee, vendor fee, alcohol area fee, or police department fee, but it may only do so once per year in conjunction with the administrative fee adjustment and shall not increase by more than ten percent from one year to the next
- SEC has not voted to change any of these fees historically since it is not tied to projected cost of living, but more tied to policy; There has been discussion in the past to change the police staff hourly fee
- Chair supports historical perspective not to adjust these fees, but would like to open conversation to SEC
- Chair calls for a motion on recommendation put up by SPD Lt. Nelson; Advocate for 10% increase in SPD staffing; Increase would align more with straight time paid now; Recommending increasing SPD staffing fees by 10%
  - SPD Lt. Nelson makes a movement; FAS seconds
  - After discussion, Lt. Nelson withdraws motion as long as meeting is set to increase understanding how fees and budget works with SEC and City leaders
  - Chair accepts rescinding motion to increase SPD staffing fees; SEO will assign standing subcommittee meeting to this issue and come up with a recommendation on how to present, what to present, and how to present to City Policy makers; Will look to invite CBO to meeting

**SPD Clenna** – Does Special Event permit fees go to general funds? As it relates to SPD budgeting and reimbursement, how can SEC advocate to Council that the amount be allocated for SPD overtime in 2021; may not cover all the staffing needs for events; As it appears now, we only have a certain amount of money to use for staffing for events and may run out of budget halfway through the year

**Chair** – Special Event permit fees go to general funds and do not go to departments as reimbursement; Funds are collected by SEO; Ordinance that supports SEO is specific to Major Events and since inception in 1991 has not been a cost recovery model; Continued work to update ordinance in 2015 – with the update there was a shift to fee for use and cost recovery based on type of event category; Intention was to recover more, but events were still seen as a value to the City, so it wouldn't be full cost recovery; SEC can adjust fees based on ordinance, but issue SPD is bringing up is a policy issue; There is a need for a different starting

point on this conversation; Currently permit fees are not reimbursing services, but fee for service; We would need to hear more information if that general fund money is allocated to departments

**SPD Nelson** – Advocate for 10% increase in SPD staffing; Increase would align more with straight time paid now; Recommending increasing SPD staffing fees by 10%

**Seattle Center** – Understanding the fee doesn't relate to how SPD is reimbursed; Permit fees are deposited to general funds and there isn't reimbursement for the labor is new information; There is an equity and accessibility issue for event organizers that we need to keep in mind as we consider reimbursements for SPD; Sees need for better understanding what this fee is for and how it can be contribution for officers

**Citizen Representative** – Why would we raise this, this year, if it doesn't have direct impact to SPD budget or officers there? Is it an administrative fee? If charging for alcohol areas, is it for administration or oversight? Is there reimbursement there for WSLCB or SFD if officers are assigned to event, it doesn't matter if one beer garden or two since officers are going out to the event

**Chair** – When Special Event ordinance was build in 1991, was built to encourage event activity; Developed and built so City had some fee for service based on number of attendees and if ticketed event; There was about 10% in reimbursements; The new structure in 2015 was built to address reimbursement of the fee for service, but it was specific that there would not be a MOU for SPD cost

**Parks** – We're trying to figure out impact for SPD to be involved with a budget that has drastically been reduced and still want to have events; From RSJI perspective, can still move to Parks and won't require SPD support

**Chair** – Officers only charged to athletic, commercial, and ticketed events; Organizers are only charged for officers on site supporting events; Fee is not tied to actual SPD cost and doesn't go to SPD for reimbursement; Fee for services and goes back to cover some cost for the services

**SPD** – Hourly cost is based on event start and end time; It does not involve pre/post event staffing; How can SEC express the disconnect between the ordinance and how City budget operates in order to continue to participate or offset cost for organizer to have events for good of community? Suggesting SEC advocate on behalf of event organizers to City Council on impacts of decisions

**MO** – Deeper conversation with CBO

**Chair** – Other fees are general fund, so no budget that needs to be met; SEO given projections on if events are to happen or not; SEO has data to fees for alcohol areas – i.e. If SEO collects \$5,000 a year for alcohol areas, and if we reduce that to \$0, then would that be a benefit for event organizers? Need for education on fee process in order to bring recommendations to decision makers; SEO will use next subcommittee for deeper development

**Chair** – Motion and second to increase SPD hourly rate earlier in meeting prior to conversation now still stands, part of the broader and deeper conversation about fees and process is education about ordinance and how it works would be beneficial to SEC in this decision

**SPD Nelson** – With budget talks, one of the key concerns is overtime use; Worth it to demonstrate, based on fee structure, recouped "X" amount of dollars for staffing, under project code spent "X" amount on overtime; Intent with proposal is to more closely align what money spending vs what City is recouping; SPD spend "X" amount on event support and City received "X" amount in fees for use for the City

**DON and Health** – Would need more information prior to voting

### *2021 Event Survey*

#### *Julie Borden, Special Event Office*

- SEO reached out to event organizers with a survey for plans for 2021 events
  - o 225 annual events surveyed
  - o 102 responses
  - o 15 events not planning for 2021 – Facebook Corporate Picnic, Georgetown Carnival, Greaseball, Great Figgy Pudding Caroling Competition, My Better Half Marathon, Polar Plunge Seattle, Seattle AIDS Walk, Bike N Brews, Seattle Night Ride, Seattle Seafair Pirate Landing, Van Haven, Walk/Run MS, West Seattle Harvest Festival, West Seattle Hometown

- Holidays, and West Seattle Summer Fest
  - Seattle AIDS Walk is planning to reformat event which may not trigger SE Permit
  - Other events plan to come back in 2022 or when they can
- Response rate is similar to what SEO would receive in years past; Few issues that contact person may have left or company may not be in business anymore

#### *2021 COVID-19 Event Impact Considerations*

##### *Meli Darby, Special Events Office*

- Currently, SEO is aware of 15 events not planning for 2021 and likelihood that we will see more events that will be delayed
- SEO proposes that 2021 events postponed or cancelled due to COVID impacts or State Guidelines, SEO would like to honor annual dates in 2022

**Seattle Center** – Current annual events not planning for 2021 are not Seattle Center events; For Seattle Center events, no problem projecting dates to 2022; Open to have conversations with event organizers if another event is looking at a historical event date; Don't want to restrict events in 2021 and 2022 based on date projections

**Parks** – Don't have problem throwing them on the books; If new event in 2021, not promising can have same event date in 2022 if falls on same weekend as an annual event

**SE** – Available 2021 dates due to cancelled events could be considered for new/historical events with the caveat that the original historical events would take precedence and have first right of refusal in 2022.

**Seattle Center** – With new arena coming up may have to shift event locations further on campus, but will work with organizers

**Parks** – This will be for existing events pushing to 2022, Parks won't be accepting applications for 2022 until the month based on rolling calendar

**SE** – SEO will take time to come up with recommendation if we want to make changes on website/handbook or if it would be language in response to application received

#### *Recommendations for Phase Reopening of Events*

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

- During October 22<sup>nd</sup> SEC Meeting, we reviewed Governor Inslee State Phase 2 and 3 re-opening guidelines for Outdoor Recreation (running/bicycling, etc.) and Retail Events (craft sales shows, etc.)
- Recommended that SEC put together memo/proposal for Special Event reopening to be delivered to Mayor's Office
- Since then, there has been a spike in COVID cases; It is understood that the City can be more restrictive than what the State is recommending; City and King County is denser than other areas in the State
- Received feedback from Parks and SDOT on number of participants allowable or not allowable; Intent is to get recommendations in response for events to reopen in Seattle

**Health** – Number of COVID cases going up dramatically, update from Governor today and we'll see if there are any updates to restrictions

**Citizen Representative** – No organizer information that anyone is trying to do a running event bigger than this; 600 person event is a reasonable opportunity for event organizer to hold event, make a profit, and provide event for community; Things that come up is affecting Seattle Center - is it cost effective to use Seattle Center or will events be moved into Parks for 600 participants?

**Parks** – As of now, no updates to current Parks restrictions - only 5 people at start line, 10 mins between waves, people waiting in cars, minimal touch points, etc.; There are no restrictions on total number of participants or start line time limits, most events have gone longer than what is outlined in Governor's guidelines i.e. 5 hr. start line instead of 3 hr. as outlined; Have not seen a lot of motion to change that quickly

**Chair** – Anything considered must be considered without officer support or can we consider SPD support? Currently there is no SPD support for events, should the memo include recommendation that events will

need to be performed without officer assistance?

**SPD** – Not necessary to say specifically, since that wouldn't be the case for run/walk event; If event starts in Park, goes on path, and then crosses a busy intersection there may be the need for SPD support

**Chair** – Would SPD consider that overtime? Or would SPD need a waiver in place?

**SPD** – Case by case basis; SPD will have some sort of budget for events, but not sure what it will be; Higher level of discussion for SPD support at events and if it would be considered on a case by case basis

**SDOT** – Historically 500 person threshold for use of street, but that didn't restrict since organizers could get a SDOT Street Use Permit, however for arterial use under 500 participants we would not recommend; The numbers allowed in Phase 2 and Phase 3 are workable especially talking with Citizen Representative and knowing the whole street won't need to be used

**Chair** – Introductory paragraph of Memo will lay out concern for events to open up, address the increase of COVID cases currently, and the fact it is hard to predict and project reopening guidance with current case numbers; Right of way use there is a scenario that the guidance the City could consider is a tiered approach or align closer to Parks

**DON** – Taking into consideration the larger events, people will be traveling from one neighborhood to another; Having people come through neighborhoods with the risk of COVID could spread; Would want to integrate in notification language awareness and responsibility of event organizers

**Chair** – Thinking of impact tiers, would it be advisable from DON to look for locations that don't require deep neighborhood notification – i.e. Closing Alki Ave may include deep notification, but using the trail may not

**DON** – Need to think deeper with the team; Even spaces that are industrial and not as many residents need to be mindful of businesses and people there

**Seattle Center** – Acknowledge that would take long and thoughtful process to permit events through SEC process, but that doesn't impact Seattle Center and Parks ability to permit non-SEO activity/permitting

**Metro** – We need to emphasize how participants get to event and leave event in both Phase 2 and Phase 3