



MUSIC COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION 20180507-5a

Date: May 7, 2018

Subject: Recommendation to table further action by Council on the Special Events Ordinance as currently drafted.

Motioned By: Vice-chair, Rick Carney Seconded By: Stuart Sullivan

Recommendation

To table any further action by council on the Special Events Ordinance as currently drafted. To engage a community-led taskforce to:

- Identify administrative and procedural changes that can be enacted in lieu of the Special Events Ordinance;
- To find workable solutions to the issues plaguing the Special Event permitting process; and
- In the interim relying on existing code that adequately addresses public safety and other critical issues.

Description of Recommendation to Council

Based on continued public feedback and commissioner comments, the Music Commission feels that the Special Events Ordinance as drafted poses a serious setback to the ongoing efforts to foster and support live music in Austin. Moreover, the ordinance as considered fails to meet the objectives as set forth by Council resolution #21020524-089, and lacks clarity of process and administrative procedure that is critically needed for events in Austin.

We commend staff on their efforts to streamline the process for event permitting over the past 5 years and the continued dedication of the Austin Center for Events in supporting special events.

The draft ordinance, however, presents several major shifts in City policy that are inherently detrimental to live music and special events if the following foundational issues are not addressed:

- Ensuring that adoption of rules related to special event permitting are brought before the Music Commission for public input to gauge the effect that such rules will have on the live music ecosystem, and are approved by City Council.
- Ensuring that any changes to the notification process do not include requirements to provide notification by applicants seeking temporary sound permits or temporary use permits.
- Creation of scalable fee and insurance requirements commensurate with the scope and scale of events.
- Further clarification of deadlines and deliverables, both for applicants and for City staff.
- Further clarification of all applicable special event permits and the department(s) responsible for reviewing, approving and inspecting applications for each.
- Greater transparency and clarification for the appeals process and the inclusion of the City Council as an alternative for appeal by applicant.

- Implementation of a 'case manager' system for applications that helps to usher applicants through the inter-departmental permitting process.

In summary, the Commission feels strongly that this ordinance leaves too much of the policy created through the much-less-transparent Rules process and, as presented, does more to harm cultural events and live music in Austin than it does to foster the events that do so much for our community and economy. To echo the sentiment of the [Music Commission in 2014](#), we are disheartened that it has come to this, but see almost universal agreement that this ordinance, as proposed, is not workable.

Vote

For: 7 (Chair – Gavin Garcia, Vice-chair – Rick Carney, Al Duarte, Revlynn Lawson, Paul Pinon, Oren Rosenthal, Stuart Sullivan)

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Absent: 3 (Liz Land, Elizabeth McQueen, Graham Reynolds)

Attest: Kim McCarson, Liaison


