



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Council

FROM: James Russell, SETF Co-Chair and Jeff Smith, SETF Co-Chair

DATE: 3/25/2021

SUBJECT: Special Events Task Force Interim Report

The purpose of this memo is to provide Mayor and Council with an interim report on the progress of the Special Event Task Force, as required by Resolution No. 20210902-049.

The Special Events Ordinance instructed for the creation of a Special Event Task Force (SETF) to assess the efficacy of the ordinance, the associated rules, and ACE processes. The task force consists of 11 voting members appointed by Mayor and City Council, as well as City staff that participate in the Austin Center for Events serving as ex officio members.

Meetings began in June of 2019 and continued through February 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic caused the SETF to take a hiatus. A total of eight meetings took place during this time frame. During those meetings there were no votes taken to move specific recommendations forward to City Council. However, the following are potential recommendations and other topics for consideration that the SETF will revisit in its coming meetings.

Potential Recommendations

- Change definition of Special Event to “50 or more attendees at any time” from 100 attendees per day. *Section 4-20-1(14)(a) and (c)*
 - This change would bring the SEO definition into alignment with the fire code definition of an event, AFD does the same amount of work for either. This would also expand the protections in the SEO for applicants with event attendance from 50-99 people.
- Change event length in definition of Tier 3 events to “is an assembly lasting five days or less...” *Section 4-20-21(B)(2)*

- One key difference between an event lasting 4 days versus 5 days or more, is the application deadline. In instances where the only difference is the number of days and the site plan is the same, ACE has been waiving the application deadline down to 30 days. Sound can only be permitted for 4 days in a 30 day period.
- This may impact Tier 3, would need to discuss further.
- Change the number of attendees required for all Tier/deadline classifications to be reflective of a venue/location's peak capacity
 - City staff has added a question to the AB+C portal application that asks to estimate the max daily attendance and the max anticipated attendance at any one time. Now both are captured which gives AFD a better picture of the anticipated occupancy.

Topics for Additional Discussion

- Change requirement that notification goes out within 10 days after ACE issues a preliminary recommendation *Section 4-20-33(C)*.
 - Means the notification has to be sent out right away, sometimes applications come almost a year out.
 - Need to find way to give appropriate time for notices while also avoiding bringing conflicts to City Council within 30 days of the event.
- Add preliminary recommendations within 10 days for Tier 2 events
 - Staff have indicated that this may not be logistically feasible
- Create a more streamlined, comprehensive special events application with all potential forms and prepopulated information from previous applications
 - City staff are currently working to consolidate and improve the application and forms with an emphasis on electronic submittal for all documents.
- Review and potentially modify requirements for sustainability reports
- Have a post-event AMANDA form filled out by applicant and ACE departments to provide more comprehensive data/reports.
 - City staff are currently working to create post event evaluations for both City staff and applicants. The City evaluation will contain the consolidated notes from ACE departments and be available to the applicant.
- Determine what after-event data SETF thinks should be collected for reports
 - City staff will create automated reports based off this discussion.

- Implement a “late”, “expedited”, or “additional resource” fee for special event applications in the Tier 3 category
- Offer more educational tools/resources for organizers to follow notification best practices.
 - City staff are working to develop additional guides and tutorials
- Streamline the waste reduction/management requirements to allow exemptions for events in venues/locations in compliance with the URO or other City approved waste management/diversion plans.
- To return the task force’s final report and recommended changes by October 31, 2022, the SETF has adopted the following meeting schedule and proposed agenda topics.
Monthly schedule is subject to change based on progression

October 2021

- Initial meeting
- B&C training, Robert’s Rules, attendance requirements
- Review purpose to review efficacy
- Review timeline
- Share interim report

November 2021

- Interim report – review and vote
- Public safety (including fire)

December

- ****No Meeting****
- Note - Interim report due to City Council by December 31st

January 2022

- Live music venue permits
- Sound equipment use

February 2022

- Review sections: Temp road closures, including block parties
- Review enforcement

March 2022

- ****No Meeting****

April 2022

- Review sections: Waste planning

- Review permit denial / appeals process / revocation process
- Review sections: Sale of goods

May 2022

- Review ordinance performance post spring festival season

June 2022

- Review ordinance performance post spring festival season

July 2022

- Resolve outstanding issues
- Review all recommendations for SEO changes

August 2022

- Review draft report for City Council

September 2022

- Submit final Report and Recommendations to City Council
- Determine next steps (close out) for SETF

October , 2022

- Final Report Due to Council
- Celebration event

Please let us know if you have any questions.

Cc: Spencer Cronk, City Manager
Rodney Gonzales, Assistant City Manager
Denise Lucas, Director, Development Services Department
Jessica King, Interim Director, Communications & Public Information Off