



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Council

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

DATE: November 17, 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 that time frame. During those meetings there were no votes taken to move specific recommendations forward to City Council. However, after the re-authorization of the Task Force in September 2021, members met in October and November and voted to recommend the following three changes to the Special Events Ordinance for Mayor and Council's consideration.

Recommendations

1) 4-20-1 (14) SPECIAL EVENT means an event that

- (a) Has 50 or more attendees at any time at a city facility, other than the Austin Convention Center, Long Center, City Hall, or Palmer Events Center;
- (b) Impacts a city street, sidewalk, alley, walkway, or other city public right-of-way other than as permitted under Chapter 14-6 (*Temporary Street Closures*); or

(c) Is temporary, involves 50 or more attendees at any time; and

- (i.) Is inconsistent with the permanent use to which the property may legally be used, or the occupancy levels permitted on the property; and
- (ii.) Includes one of the following: set up of temporary structures, including, but not limited to, tents, stages, or fences; use of sound equipment in an area described in Section 4-20-43(A); or provision of food or beverages, including alcohol.

2) 4-20-21 CATEGORIES OF SPECIAL EVENTS

(B) A Tier 2 event is a special event that:

- (1) Is an assembly lasting at a city facility that estimates attendance at less than 2,500 attendees per day; or
- (2) is an assembly that is held primarily on private property, and that estimates attendances at less than 2,500 attendees per day; or
- (3) is stationary and impacts up to two blocks of a street sidewalk, or city right of way.

3) 4-20-21 CATEGORIES OF SPECIAL EVENTS

(B) A Tier 2 event is a special event that:

- (1) Is an assembly lasting at a city facility that estimates attendance at less than 2,500 at one time;
- (2) is an assembly that is held primarily on private property and that estimates attendances at less than 2,500 attendees at one time;
- (3) is stationary and impacts up to two blocks of a street sidewalk, or city right of way.

Topics for Additional Discussion

Below is a list of topics or potential recommendations discussed during the 2019-2020 meetings. The Task Force will continue these discussions in future meetings.

- Change the number of attendees required for all Tier/deadline classifications to be reflective of a venue/location's peak capacity
- Change requirement that notification goes out within 10 days after ACE issues a preliminary recommendation *Section 4-20-33(C)*.

- Means the notification must 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.

Meeting Schedule and Agenda Topics

To return to Mayor and Council the 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, all agendas will be posted in advance of meeting dates.*

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)
- Data tracking/reporting

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 permit denial / appeals process / revocation process
- Review enforcement

March 2022

- ****No Meeting****

April 2022

- Review sections: Temporary Road closures, including block parties
- Review sections: Waste planning and emissions
- 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

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