



**Special Events Task Force  
November 2021 Meeting Minutes**

Wednesday, November 17, 2021

Permitting and Development Center - Third Floor, Room 3205

2: 00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

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**Taskforce Members in Attendance:** James Russell, Jeff Smith, Heath Riddles, Frances Thompson, Mandi Thomas, Ingrid Weigand, Laurel White

**Staff in Attendance:** Sara Henry, Frances Hargrove, Jason Maurer, Kevin Parker, Mike Jones (APD), Robert Alvarado, Quentin Prior, Brain Oehler (AFD), Bill Manno, Brydan Summers, Brian Block, Iby Setzer

**Task Force Members Absent:** Bobby Garza, Cindy Lo, Shelley Phillips, Dan Carroll,

**Staff Absent:** Tony Hernandez, Bryan Walker

**Guests:** Christian Flores, CBS Austin

**CALL TO ORDER:** Co-Chair Russell called the taskforce to order at 4:10 p.m.

**1. APPROVAL OF OCTOBER MINUTES:** The taskforce unanimously approved the meeting minutes for October 2021.

## **2. STAFF BRIEFINGS**

### **A. Update on ACE reporting capabilities**

Mr. Summers presented on ACE reporting capabilities. ACE transitioned to the permitting system AMANDA (AB+C Portal) in 2019, the data available before this migration is limited.

Mr. Summers presented on history of data and data limitations for Austin Center for Events. He shared process improvements in the works including being able to track how quickly ACE teams can perform reviews. He explained ACE is looking to tighten up performance measures so we can give stakeholders an assessment for how we are doing. It will take several years to standardize all the ACE departments, so this is a long-term process.

Member Weigand explained that the taskforce is looking for post event data collection, Co-Chair Russell explained what they are looking for is something similar to what was implemented by the Parkland Taskforce, and would like to see this model extended beyond park events. Mr. Maurer suggested adding these core sections into the application process on the front end so that data can be collected systematically. Staff would need a clear understanding of the type of data requested from stakeholders to add it. It was determined to add this item to a future agenda for further discussion.

Member Weigand requested for 3-1-1 to be able to track events by events. Ms. Henry explained that would not be possible and described the current 3-1-1 Special Events SR process which is in place to support event questions in general and support emergency response where needed. ACE is able respond to 3-1-1 calls in real time for on-site emergency or logistics management, as needed, as well as aggregate the data in reports as needed.



### 3. OLD BUSINESS

#### A. Recommendations for Mayor and Council from 2019-2020 Meetings

The task force reviewed three recommendations for changes to language in the tier definitions of the Special Events Ordinance that were discussed in the October meeting. Co-Chair Smith moved to approved the recommendations, Member White seconded and there was unanimous consent to send these recommendations to Council and place them on the interim report. Members discussed the desire that there be red-line language for a fourth recommendation with the intent to “change the number of attendees required for all Tier/deadline classifications to be reflective of a venue/location’s peak capacity”. Staff searched to identify where these changes need to be made in the ordinance and were unable to do so but committed to bringing the Task Force redline language at the next meeting if any are needed.

#### B. Interim Report

Member White made motion to approve the Interim Report to be submitted to City Council in December 2021. Member Weigand seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimously approved.

### 4. NEW BUSINESS

#### A. Discussion on Public Safety Sections of the Special Events Ordinance

Mr. Manno reviewed the current requirements for a special event permit include the ACE application, Site Plan and currently the COVID-19 Health & Safety Plan. Once an application is submitted, each department may require additional submissions.

##### Austin Fire Department Special Events

Member White asked to consider development of a tent application process without going through the special events application process. Mr. Oehler explained this process currently exists if the event is under 50 people, and will now be under 100, and does not serve alcohol. An event over this threshold is by definition an assembly therefore a process to separate the Fire tent application from the Special Events Application will not be pursued further. For Fire Special Events, Chief Prior offered the critical component is for organizers to submit their application by the deadline.

##### Austin Police Department Special Events

Sergeant Jones provided an overview of the types of applications APD receives and for what they are reviewing. Sergeant Jones noted there is a discrepancy in the rules and Ordinance. Suggested changing the Rules to match the 4-20-50-D section of the SEO.

Mr. Summers will send the Rules to the SETF members for review. A decision for this request will be further considered in a future meeting. Co-Chair Russell noted that all efforts for this are made to ensure processes can be made easier for both staff and organizers.

##### Austin-Travis County Emergency Medical Services



Commander Parker provided an overview of the types of applications APD receives and for what they are reviewing.

#### Public Safety Staffing at Venues

Chief Prior expressed concerns with staffing reviews and the group discussed EMS and APD will need staffing increases for support on site at events. With new venues opening which require public safety staffing, there is a need for additional support. Mr. Maurer noted the volume of high capacity venues which have opened this year, venues scheduled to open soon, and existing facilities and the need to find the balance with public safety support.

Co-Chair Russell suggested the possibility of an intergovernmental agreement with Travis County to leverage assets during high volume periods. Sergeant Jones explained he has met with County Officials to determine how they could work events and be paid by the City. For larger events, the County was able to use a third-party vendor so that Deputies can be paid by the City. This process does not work if the event is City co-sponsored.

Currently, a venue could directly hire another law enforcement agency which has jurisdiction directly if APD staffing is not available. APD would approve the plans, but potentially another agency could staff the event. Discussion was tabled due to time constraints.

Member Weigand proposed a possible recommendation that City departments develop a criteria for determining if they are at capacity for supporting special events on any given day, at which point a moratorium would be imposed on any new events. Concern was expressed for the impact this may have on smaller events but could pressure City Council to focus on public safety staffing. Discussion was tabled for future meetings.

#### **B. Update from Event Organizers Planning Events Under the New Special Events Ordinance**

Chair Russell shared that his experience with event applications is going well. He noted the Office of Sustainability requires a pre and post event report out, but it is not clear for what this information is used for. This item is scheduled to be further discussed in a future meeting when waste planning is discussed in April.

#### **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

- Tasks for Staff Liaison:
  - Review ordinance language for attendance and send red line to task force members, if needed
  - Send City Council approved Interim Report and recommendations
  - Poll ACE managers with Rules Review and compile comprehensive list of changes
- January 2022 Agenda
  - Due to the importance of public safety, there was agreement to revisit this topic at the next scheduled meeting and move the live music and sound equipment review to another month. Staff will work with the co-chairs to modify the agenda schedule.



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Special Events Task Force  
Permitting and Development Center  
6310 Wilhelmina Delco Drive Austin, Texas 78752

**ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting adjourned 4:00 p.m with unanimous consent.

*Future Meetings: No SETF meeting will be held in December 2021.*

*The next Meeting is on January 19, 2022 from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Permitting and Development Center, Room 1401. For questions contact Brydan Summers at [brydan.summers@austintexas.gov](mailto:brydan.summers@austintexas.gov).*