PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD RECOMMENDATION YYYYMMDD-XXX

Date:

Subject: SXSW Fair Pay

Motioned By: Seconded By:

Recommend that the City of Austin Council Support Fair Pay for SXSW Performing Artists

WHEREAS, "Austinites share a sense of community pride and a determination that the City's vision of making Austin the most livable City in the country is not just a slogan, but a reality"[1];

WHEREAS, The City of Austin is the Live Music Capital of the World[2] and "[l]ive music, and music in many other forms, is everywhere in Austin. Musicians play everywhere from the airport terminal to grocery stores. They play outdoors at seasonal live music series and at world-famous festivals."[3];

WHEREAS, South By Southwest ("SXSW") is an "annual March event featur[ing] sessions, music and comedy showcases, film screenings, exhibitions, professional development, and a variety of networking opportunities"[4] and is an "essential destination for global professionals."[5];

WHEREAS, The City of Austin waives fees associated with Vic Mathias Shores (aka Auditorium Shores), for use by SXSW and where such fees amounted to $23,430 in 2023[6];

WHEREAS, SXSW also regularly rents out Krieg Softball Complex ("Krieg Fields"), Waterloo Park, and Brush Square Park[7] [8];

WHEREAS, in 2022, artists were required to pay a non-refundable $55 application fee to SXSW to be considered for selection to the festival artist roster[9];

WHEREAS, in 2022, SXSW pays domestic artists $100-$250[10] or compensates artists with a festival wristband[11];

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[1] *https://www.austintexas.gov/department/vision-and-values*
[2] *https://www.austintexas.org/music-scene/*
[3] *Id.*
[4] *https://www.sxsw.com/about/*
[5] *Id.*
[6] PARD Event Contract SXSW 2023
[7] *https://www.austintexas.gov/department/parks-special-events-picnicfacility-reservations-and-filming*
[8] Brush Square Park was not rented by SXSW in 2023 due to construction. Brush Square Park has been used in previous years.
[9] *https://www.npr.org/2023/03/16/1164053499/bands-at-sxsw-are-calling-for-better-pay*
[10] Solo artists are paid $100. Bands are paid $250.
[11] *https://www.kxan.com/news/sxsw/musicians-union-launches-fair-pay-campaign-against-sxsw-says-artists-paid-as-low-as-100/*

WHEREAS, compensation by SXSW to artists has not changed in over a decade[12];

WHEREAS, working artists depend on income from shows and events for their livelihood;

WHEREAS, it is within the purview of the City of Austin to tackle issues relating to fair pay and work with dignity;

WHEREAS, the City of Austin has established a precedent for enforcing living wage compliance with its capital contracting program, which requires all City-contracted construction projects to pay their workers at least the prevailing wage for their trade as set by the US Department of Labor, or the City of Austin minimum wage as established by City Ordinance, whichever is higher[13];

WHEREAS, the City of Austin should be concerned about the type and amount of compensation offered to artists by SXSW;

WHEREAS, the type and amount of compensation paid to artists by SXSW reflects our City's values and vision due to the City of Austin's strong collaboration with SXSW and it's subsidization of SXSW; and

WHEREAS, SXSW uses City of Austin park space for volunteer, ticketed, and community events, often free of charge.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Parks and Recreation Board:

1) Recommends the Austin City Council direct the City Manager, Legal Department, and the Parks & Recreation Department ensure that any contract negotiation between the City, PARD, and SXSW include provision requiring fair pay for domestic artists performing at City of Austin parks, park facilities, and city owned property; and

2) Recommends that the Austin City Council require changes to artist pay and compensation by SXSW before waiving any future fees at Vic Mathias Shores, or at other parks, park facilities, or city owned facilities.

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[12] *https://www.npr.org/2023/03/16/1164053499/bands-at-sxsw-are-calling-for-better-pay*
[13] https://www.austintexas.gov/department/wage-compliance

Vote

For:

Against:

Abstain:

Absent:

Attest: *[Staff or board member can sign]*

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