



REQUEST FOR LEGISLATION
06/21/2022

For: Parks and Recreation Commission

From: Christopher Jacobs, Community Development Manager

Subject: Special Events Policy Update

SUMMARY & BACKGROUND:

The Freighthouse adopted a community events policy in August 2021. Since the policy was adopted, we have hosted blood drives, COVID-19 vaccination pop ups, a free thanksgiving community meal, the depot town tree lighting ceremony, the Frog Island Jazz Series, Ypsi Glow, a ten-week disc golf putting league, First Fridays, a resident organized holiday market, a city staff holiday party, and the daytime warming center between November and March. This policy has simplified the process for residents and organizers to hold public meetings and community events at the Freighthouse, especially compared to the hardship fee waiver policy we use in the parks system where each decision must be taken to City Council.

As we consider the best use of our limited financial resources in lieu of a parks and recreation department that can internally develop community programming, the free use of our parks system and city facilities becomes one of the most effective tools we have at our disposal to encourage such programming with external partners.

The City Manager has established the following criteria to waive fees at the Freighthouse so to encourage community event programming:

1. The event is completely open and free to members of the public, an entry fee may not be charged under any circumstances.
2. If vendors can sell goods, the cost to participate may not be prohibitive. Priority must be given first to City of Ypsilanti residents and businesses. All opportunities to serve as a vendor must be advertised sufficiently in promotional materials and on the City website. The maximum rate at which vendors may be charged is \$10 per hour and a financial report must be provided to the City proving what funds were raised and for what purpose specifically from vendor fees collected.
3. A public event shall not engage in hateful or derogatory speech including symbols of racism, homophobia, or violence. Weapons shall not be sold by vendors or any merchandise or goods which depicts these symbols of hate.
4. Religious Services are not eligible community events under this policy.

Recently, City Council has directed staff to develop more community programming in the parks system and promote the events happening around the city with our community partners. This directive requires staff to consider how this important community event policy could be applied in our parks system to better meet this directive. If this policy is adopted and one of our community partners or a member of the public wishes for the City to promote their public event and it complies with our policy, the City Manager may choose to waive fees in the park system or City Facility, and we will share the event on social media and send out a newsflash on the City website.

If one or more of the criteria is not met per the policy, the event will still be listed in a central calendar on the Parks and Recreation Division page of the city website but the parks system or city facility will not be made free of charge. Moving forward, City Staff will seek to proactively develop additional community programming with our community partners and identify gaps in the calendar and types of events offered to ensure members of the community are informed and provided the opportunity to participate as attendees or organizers.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

ATTACHMENTS:

CITY MANAGER APPROVAL: _____ COUNCIL AGENDA DATE: _____

CITY MANAGER COMMENTS: _____

FISCAL SERVICES DIRECTOR APPROVAL: _____



RESOLVED BY THE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF YPSILANTI:

WHEREAS, the City wishes to encourage community event programming in our parks system and city facilities; and

WHEREAS, the City does not have a Parks and Recreation Department dedicated to developing such community event programming internally; and

WHEREAS, a community events policy has been successful in utilizing the Freighthouse for free community event programming developed by external partners; and

WHEREAS, the hardship fee waiver process has not been effective for reviewing these requests over the last several years; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Parks and Recreation Commission recommends amending the Special Events Policy section 1.3c to allow the City Manager to waive fees in the park system that comply with the community events policy.

OFFERED BY: _____

SUPPORTED BY: _____

YES: NO: ABSENT: VOTE: