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# CITY OF CONCORD

## REPORT TO MAYOR AND THE CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** Police Chief Robert Barry  
**DATE:** August 15, 2008  
**SUBJECT:** Trick-or-Treating Dates and Hours for Celebrating Halloween

### Recommendation

Accept report as information and maintain the status quo concerning Halloween.

### Background

Recently the City Council received a request from a citizen to consider changing the traditional dates for Halloween so that both Concord and Penacook celebrate this event on the same day. Similar type requests, albeit focused on the time of trick-or-treating, have been made in 2001 and 2004. Currently, Concord recognizes this event on the traditional date of October 31<sup>st</sup>. Penacook youngsters trick-or-treat along with Boscawen on October 30<sup>th</sup>.

It also should be noted that this event has a significant commercial aspect as well. Halloween is one of the major candy sales events annually. Additionally, Halloween Howl has turned into a major downtown promotional event here in Concord. This year, the Halloween Howl event is scheduled for Friday, October 31<sup>st</sup>.

Penacook and Boscawen have celebrated Halloween on October 30<sup>th</sup> at least since the mid-1900's. In those days the communities would have a community celebration including events at the Palace Theatre and a parade on Halloween. To accommodate the young people, trick-or-treating was moved to the 30<sup>th</sup> so that they would not miss either event. As time has passed, this timing for trick-or-treating remained and has been long standing tradition for both communities.

### Discussion

Although it has long been believed by many in Concord that the City legally controls the dates and hours for the celebration of Halloween, in reality it is only this long-standing tradition that residents of Penacook celebrate Halloween on October 30<sup>th</sup> and that the residents of Concord celebrate Halloween on the traditional date of October 31<sup>st</sup>. A quick search of state law and city ordinance also shows there to be no statutory authority mandating when this event is celebrated.

The request prompting this report makes the suggestion to combine the two celebrations on one day. There is not attached, however, an underlying reason as to why it should be done. For safety reasons, the Police Department has long expressed the opinion that a responsible adult

should always guide young children on their rounds and that all trick or treaters wear reflective clothing and use flashlights to assist in being seen by vehicular traffic. We also strongly urge the use of sidewalks whenever possible, although we readily acknowledge that this is not always the case. The young people of the Concord have safely trick-or-treated in this manner for years.

The Police Department can shift and reassign resources effectively with two different evenings set aside for Halloween. This allows the Police Department to enhance police coverage in Penacook one night and then downtown the next without incurring great expense doing so. Having to provide focused coverage citywide would cause additional demands and could increase the need for officers which may result in increased staffing costs.

Ultimately, for two reasons, the Police Department would not recommend changing the dates and times traditionally used by Penacook and Concord residents for trick-or-treating. Firstly, tradition has dictated the dates and times and a change would disrupt the routine of many and potentially separate Penacook from Boscawen as they currently celebrate together on the same evening. Secondly, the Police Department can shift and move resources in an economically responsible manner with two different dates.

Should the City determine that they would alter the traditional dates and times to combine both Penacook and Concord, it would be just a recommendation since there would not be any penalties associated with someone contradicting that action.

## Bonenfant, Janice

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**From:** Aspell, Thomas  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 13, 2008 2:49 PM  
**To:** Barry, Robert  
**Cc:** Bonenfant, Janice; Gill, David  
**Subject:** FW:

Chief – Would you please prepare a consent report to Council for the September meeting regarding this item. Call if you have any questions.

David – any thoughts are appreciated.

Thanks,

Tom

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**From:** Jim Bouley [mailto:jpbouley@comcast.net]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 13, 2008 2:21 PM  
**To:** Aspell, Thomas  
**Subject:** FW:

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**From:** Buz malay [mailto:buz.malay@excite.com]  
**Sent:** Friday, June 20, 2008 9:18 AM  
**To:** jpbouley@comcast.net  
**Subject:**

Dear Mr. Mayor,

I realize you are pretty busy with administering Concord's needs and budgetary requirements, but I felt I had to send this e-mail as a reminder of the e-mail I sent you in September of last year. You did say it was too late to initiate any action on my request because plans had already been made by the Recreation Department for Halloween activities..

I suggested that Trick or Treat in Concord night either be moved up to be celebrated on the same night as Penacook and some other surrounding communities or that Penacook be moved to the same night as Concord's.

I am sure that many other community members as well as myself would appreciate some positive action on this request. .

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