



# CITY OF CONCORD

*New Hampshire's Main Street™*

## REPORT TO THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** Ad-hoc Events Committee  
Councilor Byron Champlin, Chairman

**DATE:** January 23, 2017

**SUBJECT:** Recommendations to Council

### **Recommendation**

Accept this report.

### **Background**

The Ad-hoc Events Committee sought to examine the City's events permitting process to assess its effectiveness, efficiency and customer service. The committee was comprised of Councilors Champlin, Todd, Nyhan and Mayor Pro-Tem St. Hilaire.

The committee met on May 16<sup>th</sup>, June 29<sup>th</sup>, August 30<sup>th</sup>, and October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2016. Its final meeting was held on January 4, 2017.

The committee was provided staff support by Deputy City Manager for Development Carlos Baía, Police Chief Brad Osgood, Fire Chief Dan Andrus, Director of Parks & Recreation David Gill and Health & Licensing Officer Gene Blake.

### **Discussion**

The committee learned that no two special events are identical which makes creating a "one size fits all" approach challenging. Nonetheless, the committee's expectation was that some level of basic information, such as where to start the permitting process, what authorizations might be necessary, and what costs potentially might be incurred, should be uniformly, and easily, available to the public. The committee also felt that customers' satisfaction with the permitting process should be measured to ensure that the public's needs are being fully met.

In testimony from event organizers, the committee found City staff to be well-regarded by applicants but questioned the rationale for the assessment of certain fees. For example, during Market Days, individual vendors were assessed fees, some of which were different based on whether a vendor was local or from out-of-town, while for the Farmers' Market the

organizers were assessed a fee for the entire event dispensing with the requirement for individual vendor fees. The committee felt that greater coherence, consistency, and simplicity in the City's permitting practices was needed to ensure that the process was transparent to all involved.

The committee suggested "dissecting" the permit process from start to finish utilizing the LEAN model from private industry. This multi-day exercise—with the participation of all internal stakeholders and select external participants as well—should be able to identify outdated and/or redundant ordinances, regulations, and procedures.

The committee also observed that the existing Code Administration staff responsible for issuing permits, inspecting food vendors and coordinating the pertinent stakeholders are all part-time employees. Two of those four staff have over 36 and 42 years apiece with the City. This is reflective of the overall Code Administration Division where the average staff tenure is approximately 21 years and the division has the highest proportion of retirees working in a part-time capacity of any City department. The committee understands that this organizational structure is a legacy of the changes that were made post-Great Recession to cut costs and maintain service and the employees in these positions have done excellent work. However, the committee feels that a succession/re-organization plan should be contemplated to minimize potential gaps in institutional knowledge when any of the current employees "re-retire."

The committee's work also focused on creating an environment that would be fertile for the growth of new events. The committee suggested that the City Council identify a select group of community-wide special events for some type of sponsorship or partnership opportunity. This is a detail that would need to be addressed during the FY 18 budget process.

Finally, the committee strongly recommends that any City branding or marketing campaign highlight Concord's opportunities for more special events.

## **Recommendations**

### SHORT-TERM CHANGES (1-3 months)

1. Distribute new permitting FAQ handout
2. Provide all permittees with customer satisfaction survey
3. Create a prominent Code permit web page with links to Parks & Rec.
4. Hold LEAN event to streamline permit process—include Code, Parks & Rec, Fire, PD, GSD, and key stakeholders

### MID TERM CHANGES (3-6 months)

1. Implement LEAN changes
2. Amend event permitting and food license ordinance (eliminate archaic categories/clarify when permits are needed/avoid imposing multiple fees for same service/increase consistency and ease of understanding for public)

3. Consider Code staffing succession changes in the FY 18 budget (if necessary)
4. Consider establishing defined “Partnership Agreements” in the FY 18 budget with key special events that generate widespread community participation/interest and add significantly to the local economy.

**LONG TERM CHANGES (6 months to 1 year)**

1. Implement City branding/marketing campaign—include component to foster more special events.