

***City of Venice***  
**Office of the Manager**

5-15-2017

TO: Mayor Holic & Members of the City Council

FROM: Ed Lavallee

RE: Special Events Policy Update

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The City Council directed staff to examine the fee schedules and related administrative rules related to the administration and oversight of special events; and to work with the Economic Development Advisory Board (EDAB) to identify and recommended appropriate policy changes. Attached are recommended changes. Notably, the changes include:

- Specific recognition of “Heritage Events”, as long-standing successful special events
- Establishment of a fee schedule for the rental of public space
- Adjustments in the schedule of allowable concessions of cost for City services during special events

Council approval is requested for the enclosed policy changes. With adoption of the recommended changes, staff will continue to coordinate with EDAB on the reviews and support of special events

## SPECIAL EVENTS FUNDING POLICY

In response to a City Council directive to review the current policy governing costs and the provision of subsidies to special events occurring in the City, the City Manager, Planning Department staff, and members of the Economic Development Advisory Board (EDAB) collaborated to analyze the current rate structure and develop recommended policy changes.

Following is a summary of the analyses and proposed policy changes:

Heritage Events (definition): Annually, the City hosts an estimated 30 special events. Some events occur once or twice and then cease or move to other sites while other special events take place every year. Some of the recurring events have established a reputation for success and generate a substantial public following. To distinguish the long-standing successful events from others, the term “**heritage event**” is applied to an annual event that has been *successful* in Venice for ten (10) consecutive years or longer. The predictable success and positive impact these events have on the community warrant their select designation and consideration for enhanced community support.

The term “successful” is applied to a special event that meets three criteria: (1) has no outstanding debt or obligations from previous years; (2) has no unresolved public safety or health issues related to the event; and (3) was generally enjoyed by the community.

Special events often create a cost to City services. Primarily in the form of personnel overtime assignments, the cost to provide necessary police, fire, and public works support can typically range from \$200 to \$7-8,000. Additional costs may apply for the provision of trash and recycling services, and other municipal fees. The City has an established policy of allowing special event applicants to apply for relief on 50% of the cost of City services, not to exceed a total of \$2,000 per event. The provision of cost relief is dependent upon the following:

- The special event has a rating of “*successful*”, from the previous year. First year applicants are not eligible for a subsidy
- The applicant is a 501 (c) – type organization
- The organization demonstrates that it “gives back” to the community a reasonable share of its net proceeds
- The organization provides marketing benefits to the city in its event advertising

A policy amendment is proposed to establish a new cost subsidy tier for “heritage” events. Applicants meeting this criteria may apply for a subsidy on the cost of City services up to \$5,000. The 50% of total criteria does not apply to this funding tier. For events not meeting the heritage event criteria the existing standard of eligibility for cost relief will remain unchanged (50% of City costs to a maximum of \$2,000)

Special events that occur on public space create wear-and-tear of public facilities, as well as consuming preferential use of the space and facilities for designated periods of time.

A policy amendment is proposed to add a fee for the use of public space. The rental fee structure is as follows:

- Centennial Park - \$1,500 per day
- City streets - \$500 per day per City block

- Other public space - \$35.00 per hour for every 10,000 square feet
- In addition to applying a rental fee for occupying public space, certain types of events create an increased risk of damaging public property, including trampling vegetation, damaging aesthetic landscaping, and creating measurable wear-and-tear. Accordingly, for event types creating a risk of incurring property damage to a public site, the City may require a pre-event security deposit, or appropriately articulated insurance coverage

Special event applicants can apply for relief of public space rental costs. Criteria for granting rental cost relief include the following:

- The applicant is a non-profit, 501(c) –type organization
- The applicant provides the following financial data to the City:
  - (1) event gross revenues from the previous year
  - (2) event gross expenses from the previous year. (*First time events are not eligible for cost relief*).
- The applicant indicates the percentage of net proceeds from the event that are returned to the Venice community in: cash, services, or other community support
- Based on post-event staff reviews, the event has a Venice history of being “*successful*”

Assuming the applicant meets the primary eligibility criteria for rental cost concession, recommendations for relief by EDAB for some or all of the rental cost of public space may also consider:

- Geographic location of the event (specific public site)
- Time of year the event is held
- Marketing benefit provided to the City through the event advertising

The permitting process for special events occurring on public property includes the following steps:

- Applicant contacts the City’s Department of Developmental Services to obtain application and permitting details
- Applicant provides City staff with event details.
- City staff reviews event plan and determines City services needed to support and oversee event
- Applicant completes and submits Special Events Application to City staff
- City staff reviews proposed event details and determines whether to recommend event to City Council for approval
- *First-time* applications are referred to EDAB for review and recommendation following staff analysis, then submitted to the City Council for approval.
- Other applications for recurring events are reviewed and approved administratively, unless the applicant seeks additional concessions and benefits not supported by the ADAB and Administrative staff; in which case the applicant may appeal to City Council for approval
- City Council approves or disapproves proposed event

The process for receiving cost relief on city costs associated with a special event are as follows:

- Applicant completes an application providing the event details, identified the projected City costs, and stating the requested cost relief. The application is submitted to the EDAB
- The EDAB reviews the cost relief request and makes a recommendation, followed by:

- If recommended cost relief is within the defined policy guidelines, the relief is administratively approved by the City Manager
- If the recommended cost relief is outside of the policy guidelines, the EDAB recommendation is forwarded to the City Council for approval or disapproval
- If the applicant is dissatisfied with the EDAB recommended cost relief, the applicant may appeal to the City Council