



*CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS*

# **ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY**

NUMBER: 89-01	DATE: 1/20/89
REVISIONS: 1/9/91; 11/16/92; 12/14/13	
ISSUED BY: City Manager	SIGNED: <i>Gregory A. Sundstrom</i>

**SUBJECT: SPECIAL EVENTS**

**PURPOSE:** To establish a consistent City-wide general approach to special events by developing guidelines for the manner in which departments will coordinate efforts in processing and implementing special events as well as allocate responsibilities among departments and determining co-sponsorship levels.

**POLICY:**

## **I. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The City of Grand Rapids recognizes the substantial community benefits that result from special events. These events provide cultural enrichment, promote economic vitality, enhance community identity and pride, and provide opportunities for the City to partner with community's nonprofit agencies. To promote these objectives, the City's role is of creating a platform that promotes special events as well as establishes regulations. Although special events may be distinguished from continuing service functions for some departments, special events constitute an integral component of departments' overall support service obligation.

## **II. DEFINITION OF A SPECIAL EVENT**

A special event is a non-routine happening or social activity bringing people together in a defined area on City facilities, right of way, or private property which requires City services to ensure safety and coordination. Special events include activities such as parades, walks and runs, festivals, concerts, sporting events, etc.

## **III. CATEGORIZATION OF SPECIAL EVENTS**

Special events are classified into three major categories: City Sponsored Special Event, City Co-Sponsored Special Events, and Non-Co-sponsored Special Events.

## **City Sponsored Special Events**

Currently there are three patriotic and national observance events approved by City Commission. Each of these events provides an opportunity for families to commemorate the price of freedom. Costs (fees and charges) associated with City services for Veterans Day Parade, 4<sup>th</sup> of July Celebration, and Memorial Day will be waived.

## **City Co-Sponsored Special Events**

The goals of co-sponsorship are to support events of significant economic and social value to the community; foster productive relationships with community groups; and participate in the direction of significant events toward goals serving the public interest.

1. After review and recommendation from the Special Events Review Committee, a list of co-sponsored events will be presented to the City Commission for final approval. Given the implications of resource commitment, co-sponsorship will be limited. The annual roster, including classification of co-sponsored events among sub-categories, will be made available to other departments by the Office of Special Events.
2. The Purchasing Department will establish contracts with vendors to provide tent rental, fencing, restrooms (portal potty), and cleaning services. Organizers of events co-sponsored by the City will be able to use these vendors and receive the agreed prices.
3. The Office of Special Events will maintain policies specifying eligibility criteria and obligations of sponsoring parties for each sub-category of co-sponsorship.

Co-sponsored events are further classified among sub-categories. City services and equipment will be available for rent for both major categories of events; however, the City's role and level of service provision will be more extensive for co-sponsored events.

The Special Events Review Committee made up of representatives of Police Department, Fire Department, Clerk's Office, Traffic Safety, Parking Services and Parks and Recreation Department will review, as needed, requests for new events, modified events and existing events (co-sponsored and non-co-sponsored which take place on City property or affect City resources). The Special Events Advisory Council will take on the role of reviewing new major event requests (for the Downtown specifically). The existing "Special Events Review Committee" as mentioned above, should be retained as they are directly impacted by the fee and service concessions given to Co-sponsored events.

### **A. Co-sponsored Events**

B. Non co-sponsored Events

The City becomes involved with events that are not co-sponsored if they are held on public, City-owned, property.

IV. DEPARTMENTAL POLICY

Departments must maintain policies by which to implement the guidelines of this Administrative Policy and of City Commission Policy No. 1100-05.

A. Departmental policy should particularly address the following issues:

1. Resources to be provided for special events

- a. Services
- b. Labor
- c. Equipment and materials
- d. Facilities

2. Conditions for provision of resources

- a. Event classification
- b. Reciprocal sponsor obligations
- c. Fees, or waiving thereof
- d. Constraints necessary to protect public health, safety, and welfare
- e. Existent ordinances and policies

3. Timelines and deadlines for departmental review, processing, and disposition of event requests for activities reviewed by the department.

B. Departmental policy for provision of resources should reflect the following guidelines based on categorization of events:

1. Co-sponsored Events

a) Patriotic Events

Costs (fees and chargers) associated with City services for the Veterans Day Parade, Fourth of July Celebration, and Memorial Day Parade will be waived.

b) "Normal" Co-sponsored Events

**These events will pay ½ of GRPD overtime, no barricade costs, ½ off meter hooding costs, no cost to rent City venue.**

i.e.: NYE, Laughfest, Local First Street Party, Festival of the Arts, Blues on the Mall, GR Jazzfest, ArtPrize, Santa Parade.

- c) Ethnic/Heritage/Neighborhood Association Co-sponsored Events  
**These events will pay ½ of GRPD overtime, no barricade costs, ½ off meter hooding costs, no cost to rent City venue.**  
i.e.: St. Patrick's Day Parade, Cesar Chavez March, Three Fires Pow Wow, Polish Festival, Hispanic Festival, Mexican Festival, Grand Valley Pow Wow, Pulaski Day Parade
- d) Neighborhood Association Co-sponsored Events  
**These events will pay ½ of GRPD overtime, no barricade costs, ½ off meter hooding costs, no cost to rent City venue.**  
i.e: Eastown Street Fair, Garfield Arts and Crafts Fair, National Night Out, Beacon Hills 5k, etc.

- 2. Non-co-sponsored Events - Normal fees, charges, and service levels will apply, as based on departmental policy and resource availability.

## V. COORDINATION AND PLANNING

A. All public inquiries relating to special events will be routed to the Office of Special Events. The Office of Special Events will act as the lead liaison for coordinating City services, permitting and scheduling regarding use of City-owned public space (Parks, Streets, Alleys, Bike Paths, Sidewalks, Pedestrian Bridges).

- 1. The Parks and Recreation Department will serve as lead coordinator for:
  - co-sponsored events; and
  - events occurring solely on park and related property<sup>1</sup>

The Traffic Safety Department will serve as lead coordinator for:

- non-co-sponsored events involving use of public right-of-way and related property<sup>2</sup>

For any other events, the Parks and Recreation Department will attempt to direct the inquiry to the appropriate department(s) or outside organization.

- 2. The nature of coordination activities carried out by the lead department may vary according to the nature and categorization of the event, as detailed in departmental policy. Generally, these activities will include at minimum a review of event plans and advisement of the sponsoring party as to what approvals and permits are required. In cases of special events involving street use, or very extensive co-sponsored events, an interdepartmental coordinating meeting may be conducted.

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<sup>1</sup> All property designated in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan

<sup>2</sup> Streets, sidewalks, City parking lots

- B. Any new events, modified events or existing events may be referred to the Special Event Review Committee. This committee will review the event in terms of availability of City resources, City policy, department policy and those conditions noted in IV.A.2. The committee will approve, deny or suggest necessary changes for approval in writing. Appeals of the committee's decision may be made to the City Manager a minimum of ten (10) working days prior to the desired event date.
- C. Event Plans and Timelines – The party must provide lead City departments with an event application regarding the proposed event within the timeframes designated by the departments.

Ample notification time is needed to process all permits and insurance, and to make arrangements for City services (street closings, parking arrangements, security, equipment, facilities, public information dissemination, and the like.) Event requests must be submitted as far in advance as possible, but generally at least:

- 1. one month in advance for small events, such as a block party
  - 2. six months in advance for major events, such as a parade or a park event drawing 200 or more people
  - 3. one year in advance for very extensive events, such as a Level II event.
- D. Departments that have frequent and typical involvement in special events, as identified in Section F, will perform the following functions. Other departments having special involvement for particular events should operate in like manner for those events.
    - 1. Designate a staff person to serve as liaison for event planning and coordination.
    - 2. Ensure the liaison or appropriate replacement attend all event meetings called by the lead coordinator.
    - 3. Respond within requested timeframes to the lead coordinating department for event plan review and apprise the lead coordinating department of any potential problems as they become known.
    - 4. Notify the two lead coordinating departments of any policy changes which affect special events, prior to application to subsequent non-co-sponsored event requests, and prior to January 1st for application to co-sponsored events in the following year. Exceptions may occur in such circumstances as action by the City Commission or City Manager.
    - 5. Assume responsibility for activity areas identified in Section F. Departmental policy may define the manner of execution of activities. In particular, such policy may determine the extent to which, and conditions under which,

departmental services are offered; and the extent of assistance required of sponsoring parties.

## E. Departmental Responsibilities

### 1. Parks and Recreation Department

- Plans with outside organizations for all City co-sponsored events
- Coordinates City departments for all services, permits, etc. for co-sponsored events
- Issues park permits
- Provides equipment such as stages, sound systems, bleachers, tents, chairs, tables
- Makes provisions for electrical access
- Assists with set-up and take-down
- Arranges for trash removal in Parks
- Assist co-sponsored events with media communication by maintaining master file of media and sample news releases

### 2. Traffic Safety

- Coordinates banner permits and procedures (light poles & over street)
- Issues street closing permits and related special event right-of-way permits (sidewalks)
- Plans with outside organizations for all special events on the public right-of-way that are not co-sponsored events
- Coordinates City departments for the provision of services, permits and equipment for non-co-sponsored events on the public right-of-way and plans with Parks and Recreation for co-sponsored events in the public right-of-way
- Ensures the right-of-way is available for special events
- Arranges for street barricades to be set up and removed
- Informs media, utilities, and others of major street closings

### 3. Police

- Provides a plan for security at special events

- Provides traffic (vehicle and pedestrian) control and direction
- Informs event organizers of public safety requirements for a special event
- Provides for crowd control
- Informs adjacent property owners of street closings
- Reviews and approves/disapproves requests for special alcoholic beverage permits and submits to state Liquor Control Licensing Bureau
- Enforces State law and City ordinances

#### 4. Parking Services

- Plans for patron and organizer parking service
- Provides facility rental (for usage other than parking) and arranges for parking lot use for event sites
- Hoods parking meters
- Provides rates and operational information to organizers and the public

#### 5. Engineering

- Reviews street closing permits to assess potential conflicts with construction and encroachment permits
- Responds to questions regarding structural capacity for special event activities (e.g. bridge loads)

#### 6. Risk Management

- Reviews event plans to determine needs for insurance
- In consultation with City Attorney, assesses potential City obligations and liability arising from special events
- Approves insurance forms
- Responds to questions regarding safety

#### 7. City Clerk

- Issues permits and licenses for the following activities:
- Amusements - Mechanical Rides
- Dance - Public Dance Permits

- Second Hand Dealer
- Transient Merchant
- Fireworks
- Noise Variance Permit
- Special Event permits on non-park property
- Insures permit applications are reviewed by appropriate City departments

#### 8. Fire

- Establishes communication system to coordinate with City departments, event sponsors, weather service and fireworks company on fireworks hazards with particular attention to weather hazards.
- Communicates fire safety and prevention requirements to groups organizing special events (requirements for fire lanes, tent lighting, crowd capacity, exits, propane use, etc.)
- Administers fireworks ordinance and concomitant safety measures, including engine stand-by
- Fills tent barrels for large events

#### F. Post-Event Review

1. Following all events, departments should notify the involved coordinating department by written communication of any significant problems experienced that indicate the need for future response.
2. Departments should determine costs and revenue accruing to each event, for purposes of assessing the City's overall cost for special event activities and for annual budget preparation. For the most major co-sponsored activities (Festival, Fourth of July Gala, and Celebration on the Grand), departments should return to the Parks and Recreation Department a completed critique form which generally includes:
  - a. Labor costs for planning, review, and direct service
  - b. Equipment time and materials expended
  - c. Lost or waived revenues and fees
  - d. Other service costs (advertisement, etc.)
  - e. Revenues generated or costs recovered
  - f. Intangible benefits produced
  - g. Critique comments

#### G. Event Cancellation



1. An event may be cancelled due to the existence of security, safety, or weather hazards. The Staff representatives designated below have responsibility for event cancellation decisions, and communication of such to event sponsors, for the hazards specified:

Police Command Officer: security hazards; weather and other hazards for parades, runs, and non-co-sponsored events<sup>3</sup>

Fire Chief: fireworks-related hazards<sup>4</sup>

Senior Parks and Recreation Department employee when on-site: weather hazards for co-sponsored events.

2. Should a general emergency occur in which the City's Emergency Management Plan is activated, terms of that plan will supersede any described here.
3. Additional criteria and procedures are found in the City Emergency Management Plan, Parks and Recreation Department's severe weather plan, and Fireworks Ordinance.

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<sup>3</sup> Following consultation with the Parks and Recreation Department Staff for co-sponsored events.

<sup>4</sup> Following consultation with the Parks and Recreation Department Staff for co-sponsored events.