



Department Source: City Manager
To: City Council
From: City Manager & Staff
Council Meeting Date: February 20, 2017
Re: Special events ordinance and processes

Executive Summary

Staff has prepared for Council a report on the ordinance and processes related to Special Events held in the city of Columbia.

Discussion

Columbia is host to many special events; road races, festivals, neighborhood block parties, marches, weddings, concerts, etc. Just as the city has seen population growth, so has the event world. With this growth, the process has had to adapt.

The system that was in place prior to an overhaul of the process had worked for years, but as the city grew, we began seeing communication gaps throughout the process. Organizers were confused on where to go, what paperwork to fill out, whom to contact, and which processes to follow. Street closures were required to go to Council for approval and if applications were not submitted in time for Council meetings on the first or third Mondays of each month, they were not allowed to have their event; we heard many complaints due to this. After research into the procedures and policies of other cities across the country, city staff worked to develop new ordinances for Council consideration.

In January 2014, Council adopted these new ordinances to govern how special events were handled by the City. These ordinances set forth an application fee, a new process, deadlines for applications, along with criteria for issuance and denial. To coincide with this new ordinance, staff developed an online portal and application to streamline and simplify the process for event organizers. The goal of the ordinance and new online system was customer service for external and internal customers alike. This new system made one point of contact for organizers.

The ordinance approved by Council in 2014 governs how special events are handled in the City of Columbia:

- Article VI. – Parades: Sec. 24-101. When permits required.
- Article IV. – Use Permit: Sec. 24-71. Required; application; conditions for issuance.
- Article IV. – Use Permit: Sec. 24-73. Special event permits.

Each organizer begins the process the same way – an application. The application is submitted through the online portal and, based on the type of application received, the application is sent to the Columbia Police Department, the City Event Committee, or remains in the City Manager's Office for review. (See Process Overview)



City of Columbia

701 East Broadway, Columbia, Missouri 65201

Applications received through the system and filtered through as a parade are sent to the Columbia Police Department representative for review and approval. Through the review process, Police representatives may seek review from other Committee representatives such as traffic engineers, but the approval decision remains with the Police Department. Once the Police Department has entered comments of approval or denial into the system a formal application issuance or denial is issued through the online portal. (See Parade Workflow)

If the application is deemed a special event by parameters set forth in Sec. 24.73 of the City Code, the application is sent to the City Event Committee for full review. The City Event Committee is comprised of City staff members from the following departments: City Manager's Office, Columbia Police Department, Columbia Fire Department, Business License Office, Risk Management Office, Public Works (Street Division, Solid Waste Division, Transit and Parking), Building and Site Development, Parks and Recreation and the Columbia/Boone County Public Health and Human Services Department. (See Special Event Workflow)

The City Event Committee meets the third Wednesday of each month if there are applications that need full committee review that cannot be addressed through the portal or if organizers request a meeting with staff. At these meetings staff works with organizers to resolve issues with applications if necessary or work with organizers on pre-planning events. Applications of this nature require ninety (90) days advance application and additional documents and plans be submitted with the application.

Applications that fall under Sec. 24-71., stay in the City Manager's Office for approval. Applications may be sent to Committee representatives for review and comment, but approval decision remains with the City Manager's Office. (See Special Use Workflow)

Any event organizer, no matter which ordinance they fall under, has the option of attending an Event Committee meeting and asking questions about their event and obtaining recommendations on what will work and what may not. We open this up to everyone to ensure quality, successful, and safe events in Columbia.

In addition to the ordinance established by Council, the City Event Specialist receives a large number of walk-in and phone inquiries regarding First-Amendment activities and/or activities taking place on sidewalks. Activities can take place without a permit on sidewalks as long as they do not interfere with traffic and all traffic laws are obeyed. The city offers high-visibility vests to individuals holding these events to ensure safety for all involved.

Fiscal Impact

Short-Term Impact: There are fees of either \$25 or \$100 associated with applications.

Long-Term Impact: unknown



Vision & Strategic Plan Impact

Vision Impacts:

Primary Impact: Community Character, Secondary Impact: Community Pride & Human Relations, Tertiary Impact: Arts & Culture

Strategic Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Public Safety, Secondary Impact: Economy, Tertiary Impact: Not Applicable

Comprehensive Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Livable & Sustainable Communities, Secondary Impact: Not applicable, Tertiary Impact: Not Applicable

Legislative History

Date	Action
January 6, 2014	Council approved Ordinance 21948 to set guidelines for issuance and denial of special event permits. These guidelines set a minimal application fee for events and a timeline for submission of an application.

Suggested Council Action

At the January 17, 2017 Council meeting, Council person Skala requested a report on the city event application process. This report is informational.