



Legislation Text

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: NOVEMBER 6, 2019

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: MARK B. JINKS, CITY MANAGER /s/

DOCKET TITLE:

Public Hearing and Final Consideration of a Recommendation to extend the waiver from the Special Events Policy to allow for programs and events on consecutive weekends at Waterfront Park in support of the City's King Street Corridor Initiative.

ISSUE: Consideration of a recommendation to extend the waiver from the Special Events Policy to allow for programs and events on consecutive weekends at Waterfront Park in support of the City's King Street Corridor Initiative.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council hold a public hearing on Saturday, November 16, 2019, and after closing the public hearing, approve the recommendation to extend the waiver from the Special Events Policy to allow for programs and events on consecutive weekends at Waterfront Park in support of the City's King Street Corridor Initiative

BACKGROUND: On January 23, 2010, City Council approved the City's Special Events Policy which limits the number of event occurrences in Old Town.

The Special Events Policy states that "Events in Old Town with anticipated attendance over 500 are limited to no more than one such event every other weekend in a calendar year. A weekend is defined as beginning Friday, 5 p.m. and continuing through Sunday, 6 p.m."

On January 21, 2012, City Council approved the Waterfront Small Area Plan which calls for programming public spaces and promoting the waterfront as a cultural destination. In Spring of 2018, the King Street Corridor Initiative, a coordinated effort between Visit Alexandria, Department of Recreation, Parks & Cultural Activities, Office of Historic Alexandria, Department of Transportation & Environmental Services, and the Department of Project Implementation was created. This initiative is designed to enhance Alexandria's quality of life and economic competitiveness through programming, beautification and marketing. The initiative is

timed to capitalize on the opening of the interim Waterfront Park to shine a spotlight on Alexandria and its evolving waterfront. The programming portion of the initiative is essential to maintaining market share as waterfront destinations like The Wharf, National Harbor and other well-funded local waterfront destinations upgrade their offerings.

On June 13, 2018, City Council approved a waiver of the Special Events Policy from October 1, 2018 to September 30, 2019, anticipating that the new Waterfront Park would open in October 2019 (Attachment 1). Visit Alexandria received funding in FY 2019 to coordinate with City Departments to implement the King Street Corridor initiative anticipating the programming of activation activities and special events in the new Waterfront Park beginning in August 2018. Record rainfall and related frequent flooding of the park construction site caused the park's opening to be delayed until March 30, 2019, with construction activities continuing through August 2019. Due to the construction delays, events in the park were limited during the initial waiver period of October 1, 2018 through September 30, 2019. Therefore, the City, in partnership with Visit Alexandria, is recommending extending the waiver through December 31, 2020, to provide an opportunity to plan and program events in Waterfront Park.

DISCUSSION: The new area of Waterfront Park provides a public space that transforms throughout the year with seasonal programming including history programming, tours and events; rotating public art and related programming; live music featuring regional artists; pop-up markets that highlight the region's makers and creators; and programs featuring local foods and culinary traditions.

The majority of King Street Corridor Initiative programs are events attracting more than 500 participants, as opposed to small-scale activations, that the not-on-consecutive-weekends policy was created to address. City protocol will be followed, and special event applications will continue to be reviewed, approved, and permitted by the Special Events Committee in accordance with the Special Events Policy. The requested extension of the waiver would allow for the Committee to approve up to 10 events on consecutive weekends with more than 500 participants in attendance that are produced by Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities, Office of Historic Alexandria, or Visit Alexandria during this extension period.

The extension of the waiver would only apply to 10 events occurring in the new portion of Waterfront Park with an anticipated attendance of over 500 people that Visit Alexandria, Recreation, Parks & Cultural Activities, and Office of Historic Alexandria produce. Special event permits will only be issued to these three departments for the new portion of Waterfront Park through December 31, 2020.

The Waterfront Commission (September 17, 2019) and the Park & Recreation and Waterfront Commission (September 19, 2019) endorsed the staff recommendation to extend the waiver through December 31, 2020. In addition, City staff provided a written update to the Old Town Civic Association and Founders Park Community Association on September 4, 2019 (Attachment 2).

City staff and Visit Alexandria will monitor and report findings to City Council of any impacts directly associated with the extension of the waiver as outlined above in January 2021.

FISCAL IMPACT: None. The City's King Street Corridor Initiative and departmental budgets will compensate for direct related to events.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Docket Memorandum from June 13, 2018
2. Civic Association Update

STAFF:

Debra Collins, Deputy City Manager

James Spengler, Director, Department of Recreation, Parks & Cultural Activities

Diane Ruggiero, Deputy Director, Department of Recreation, Parks & Cultural Activities

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Patricia Washington, President & CEO, Visit Alexandria