

~ Council Communications ~

To: Northville Downtown Development Authority

From: Lori Ward, DDA Director

Subject: Special Event Review – Road Closures

Date: February 3, 2020

Background:

At the December 2, 2019 meeting, the Northville City Council adopted a 60-day moratorium on granting special event applications that required street closures. The purpose of the moratorium was to give the DDA staff an opportunity to develop a formal process for evaluating the quality and quantity of events that would be allowed to close streets in the downtown. The need was identified by the downtown business community and discussed this fall at several DDA Board meetings, Marketing Committee meetings, and Northville Central Business Association (merchant) meetings. At these meetings, merchants expressed concern for the negative impact the frequent street closures were having on their businesses and were frustrated with the inability of their customers to reach them with the streets closed and with the lack of traffic and sales on event days.

A Special Event subcommittee was assembled to gather information, research best practices, and make a recommendation to the DDA Board and City Council on how best to evaluate the frequent requests for street closures downtown. The subcommittee was made up of representatives from the DDA, Art House, Chamber of Commerce, event organizers, and retail merchants and restaurant owners (Attachment A). The subcommittee met 3 times (December 4, 18 and January 15) over the past month and discussed special events, street closure, and potential alternative venues to Main Street/Town Square.

DDA staff compiled a list of 2019 special events that required downtown street closures (Attachment B). In 2019 there were 16 events that closed down streets in downtown for a total of 34 days. The road closures included 4 multi-day events which closed down streets for 11 days, 3 one day events, and 20 events that range from 3-5 hours. In September and early October of 2019, Main Street was closed 4 out of 5 weekends for special events, including the 3-day Heritage Festival. In addition to compiling information regarding the number of special events in downtown that required street closures, DDA staff reviewed street closure policies in neighboring communities and vibrant downtowns throughout Michigan and around the country. This information was presented to the subcommittee and over the course of the 3 meetings, a set of criteria was developed that would need to

be met in order for a street closure to be allowed as part of a special event application (Attachment B). These criteria include:

- All Downtown events requiring street closures must contribute to the economic enhancement, cultural enrichment, and/or promotion of Downtown Northville;
- The proposed location must be suitable for the event, with consideration given to crowd size, traffic flow, parking, electricity, health and safety, and impact on the site;
- Applications should be received at least 90 days in advance of the event date;
- If the event is an annual event, the applicant may include the following year's requested date. This is intended to ensure that community events have the ability to reserve the same date year to year;
- There is a rolling deadline for special event applications. Applications are reviewed on a first come, first served basis;
- Events with full day (6 hr +) street closures downtown are limited to either 2 full day (6 hr +) per month or 1 multi-day event per month;
- Events schedule in consecutive weeks will not be permitted;
- Events have to be accessible and open to the public.
- City Council has the right to add or waive criteria when reviewing special event application requiring street closures.

The criteria were presented to the DDA Board at their January 21, 2019 meeting and with minor modification, were approved unanimously. In addition to the criteria above, the DDA recommends that the communication regarding special event applications be improved or expanded by sending out an email providing a link to the special event application and notifying the downtown merchants when the special event application will be considered by City Council in order to provide them with the ability to comment. An evaluation of each event, through a survey or other form of communication, should be developed in order to provide information to City Administration and Council on the success and impact of the event when they are considering a renewal of the special event permit for future years.

In order to distribute some of the special events to alternate venues in town and reduce the need for street closures, the DDA recommends that the City revisit the Ford Field Rental Reservation Policy (Attachment C) that requires special event organizers in Ford Field to pay a non-refundable Mill Race Closure Fee of \$735/day in addition to the park rental fee. Ford Field is often preferred by vendors but the cost of rental is significantly more than other venues in town and therefore is not utilized to its full potential. Northville Historical Society representatives participated on the subcommittee and have expressed a willingness to revisit the 2017 policy.

Budget Impact:

The reduction of street closures should have a positive impact on downtown businesses. The special event subcommittee recommended that as part of the review of the City's special event application that a review of fees charged for special events be conducted.

Recommendation:

The DDA recommends that the Northville City Council adopt the criteria for evaluating street closures as part of the special event application and incorporate the criteria into the City's Special Event policy. Further, the DDA recommends that the City revisit the Ford Field Rental Reservation Policy to encourage additional use of Ford Field and/or Mill Race Village for special events.

Recommended Motion:

Move to adopt the criteria for evaluating street closures as part of the special event application and incorporate the criteria into the City's Special Event policy. Further, move that the City revisit the Ford Field Rental Reservation Policy to encourage additional use of Ford Field and/or Mill Race Village for special events.

DEPARTMENT HEAD

CITY MANAGER

Special Event SubCommittee Members

Shawn Riley, DDA Board, Musical Performer, office tenant

Margene Buckhave, DDA Board, retail business owner and building owner

John Casey, DDA Board, restaurant owner and building owner

Denise Jenkins, Chamber of Commerce Board member, Tipping Point Board of Directors, event organizer

Sue Taylor, Art House, event organizer

Erin Maten, Art House Director, event organizer

Dan Ferrara, Development Director Tipping Point Theatre, retail owner

Will Hundley, restaurant and retail business owner

Chris VanDam, retail business owner

Jennifer Luikart, Mill Race Village

Leany Bailey, Northville Historical Society

Kevin DeGrood, restaurant owner, event organizer

Mark Gasche, Northville Parks and Recreation, event organizer

Shannon Cocker, Northville Parks and Recreation, event organizer



List of events that require road closure in Downtown Northville in 2019:

- Friday night concert (13)
- Flower Sale (2)
- Orin's Block Party (already closed for Flower Sale)
- Memorial Day Parade (1)
- Party in the 'Ville (1)
- Arts and Acts (3)
- Independence Day Parade (1)
- Buy Michigan Now (3)
- OLV Victory Run (1)
- Streets of Treats (1)
- Spectrum Fest (1)
- Northville Wine & Food Festival (1)
- Heritage Festival (3)
- Skeletons are Alive! (1)
- Holiday Lighted Parade (1)
- Homecoming Parade (1)

Total : 34 days of road closures to accommodate special events
Downtown.

Special Event Committee Notes

Reasons for Special Events

- Economic enhancement
- Community building
- Promotion of downtown

Criteria for Street Closures

- No more than 2 full day (6hr) events with street closures per month or
- Only one multi full day (6hr) event with street closures per month

Criteria for Venue

- Number of people
- Square footage required
- 21-day advance notice, realistically needs to be longer
- Utility needs

Priority of Event Organizers

- City sponsored
- City co-sponsored
- Non-profit
- For profit

Special Event Venues

- Town Square
- Ford Field
- Mill Race Village
- Open Space behind City Hall
- Old Church Square

Revisit Ford Field rental agreement with Mill Race Village

Update and clarify all fees associated with events

Communication of event details merchants prior to events

Evaluation of events through survey or other forms of communication