

LEADERSHIP -INTERNATIONAL CITY/COUNTY MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION (LICMA)

SPECIAL EVENTS CONSULTING PROJECT



SPECIAL EVENTS CONSULTING AND RECOMMENDATIONS REPORT

Prepared for
City of Frisco
Office of City Manager
6101 Frisco Square Boulevard
Frisco, Texas 7503

City of Frisco
Special Events Review Consulting Project



TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>SECTION</i>	<i>PAGE</i>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	5
INTRODUCTION	7
ON-SITE INTERVIEWS AND SITE VISIT	7
THE SPECIAL EVENTS REVIEW COMMITTEE (SERC)	12
DATA INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS	15
RECOMMENDATIONS	19



ACRONYMS

ICMA	International City/County Management Association
LICMA	Leadership International City/County Management Association
SERC	Special Events Review Committee
SEO	Special Events Ordinance



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The following is the research, findings and recommendations for the special events process for Frisco, Texas. This report includes notes from site visits, telephone conversations, meetings, surveys and document analysis of the special events process. The consultant team goals were to provide the City of Frisco with options and recommendations that will assist in facilitating a more cohesive, comprehensive, and resourceful special events program.

Since the construction of the new City Hall building in the plaza, thirteen (13) years ago, city administration has witnessed an increase in the number of special events requested and honored within the City of Frisco. It is the responsibility of administration and support staff that manage the special events program to facilitate the internal and external operations of the special events process and coordination; to ensure that all involved are available to provide resources on any given day properly and effectively so that the values and mission of the City of Frisco are being met. Along with the increase of requests, there has not been an increase in staffing levels.

Over the years the Special Events Review Committee (SERC) comprising of various departments, with specific special events staff located within the Communications Department, has taken the lead on coordinating all special events projects within the City. The Communications Department currently provides the support needed for the review of all applications, solicits departmental participation and resources from other departments for implementation of all city special events. That approach is one of many assessments conducted to provide options and recommendations on how to better serve the businesses, neighborhoods and public-facing elements of special event coordination.

The Leadership International City/County Management Association (L-ICMA) capstone team, convened in March 2019 in Frisco to conduct an initial planning meeting, conduct on-site interviews with relevant departments, and to visit the facilities that have a high request for events. The LICMA consultant team met with the city/staff (lead team members) to discuss the work plan, confirm on-site interviews, clarify goals, objectives and outcomes for the project. As a part of the initial data request and fact finding, the team requested information from the City of Frisco to determine the current process, the environment of the special events program to understand the staff involved and how each city department handles special events resource requests.



The initial data collection requests and during the two (2) days of on-site research, data and fact-finding collection meetings, the LICMA consultants found challenges and/or obstacles in obtaining requested data and documents needed to perform an all-inclusive review of the special events process. These challenges and obstacles are summarized in Section VIII Implementation and Recommendations of this report.



INTRODUCTION

An analysis from the Leadership International City/County Management Association (LICMA) capstone team, convened in January, 2019 in Phoenix, Arizona. The Frisco Special Events process was chosen amongst a variety of proposed projects from across the nation by four (4) local government professionals eager to assist Frisco.

Frisco, Texas is a City that has rapidly grown over the past 50 years, increasing from a population of 5,500 to 180,000 with an estimated build out of over 200,000. The increase in population has also been accompanied by an increase in business development, specifically within the sports entertainment industry and desire for associated special events. This growth and continued demand has created a strain on the city and community resources for the special events process and management.

The project scope was to perform a comprehensive analysis of Frisco's special events programming, policies, and process to provide recommendations for potential regulatory/legal changes to optimize the special events system (including any needed changes to the governance structure), recommendations for improved process, stakeholder involvement, cost recovery and potential measurements for success, and recommendations for capacity considerations of staff, including best organizational fit for special events, staff roles and/or reporting structures. This also included an assessment of comparable city practices.

PROCESS

The LICMA consultant team investigated methods to improve the City of Frisco's systems for prioritizing, permitting and funding its special events. This included an online survey, on-site interviews, an evaluation of the existing practices, processes, and a review of the special event structural climate, as it relates to the special events committee permitting and processing.

FRISCO, TEXAS

On-Site Interviews and Site Visit

All special events projects are currently processed and overseen through the Communications Department. The request to research methods to make changes and adjustments to the internal process on how special events are being evaluated and the demand for City resources, is what initiated this analysis from leadership in Frisco.



The LICMA consultants' initial visit to Frisco, Texas took place March 1-5, 2019. The scheduled days in Frisco included touring a few special event venues and meeting with internal stakeholders to understand how special events projects are evaluated, reviewed, and recommended for processing. The visit also included the consultant team conducting a one (1) day on-site interviews with several participants of the Special Events Review Committee (SERC.)

The City of Frisco, Texas has been planning "special" events for over 20 years. Some of these events include, but are not limited to Merry Main Street, Freedom Fest, Music in the Chambers, Color Run, and the respected Daddy Daughter Dance. These events, according to the interviewees, bring in over 6,000 participants.

During the site visits and interviews, the consultant team determined that currently the Communications Department oversees parades, night runs, which according to staff, have a different process for evaluation and processing. With several events in the City being recurring annual events, new events with new sponsors are being requested. Residents and nonresidents have been competing for the City of Frisco's sought-after venues and locations for the past 10 years. With the increase in requests for events, staff and leadership are left to brainstorm on how to maintain the current events with a solid checks and balances process, while incorporating the new events requests into the already annually planned events. According to staff, to plan and implement the smaller home-grown events are costly compared to the external events, which are the "real" money generators. The pressing matter is the shortage of available venues along with limited staff, which is creating a costly situation for the City.

Suggestions from the on-site interviews and scope of services, warranted the request to analyze leading practices of other cities that are similar in population and with a comparative number of venues (*See Section IV Data Inventory and Analysis*). One recurring theme from the stakeholder interviews suggested that in order to analyze and fully understand the current evaluation and review processes, the internal and external agencies should be included more in the planning discussions and processes. To the participating interviewed staff, this could set the foundation to include a better process of streamlining the evaluation process to establish a more shortened but timely manner of processing special event applications, without overwhelming current administrative staff and limited city resources.

Even though special events are budgeted events, participants feel that leadership is focused on the outcome which is currently how fees are charged, by whom and for what specific "special" event. The overwhelming consensus from the on-site interview participants is to identify a way that



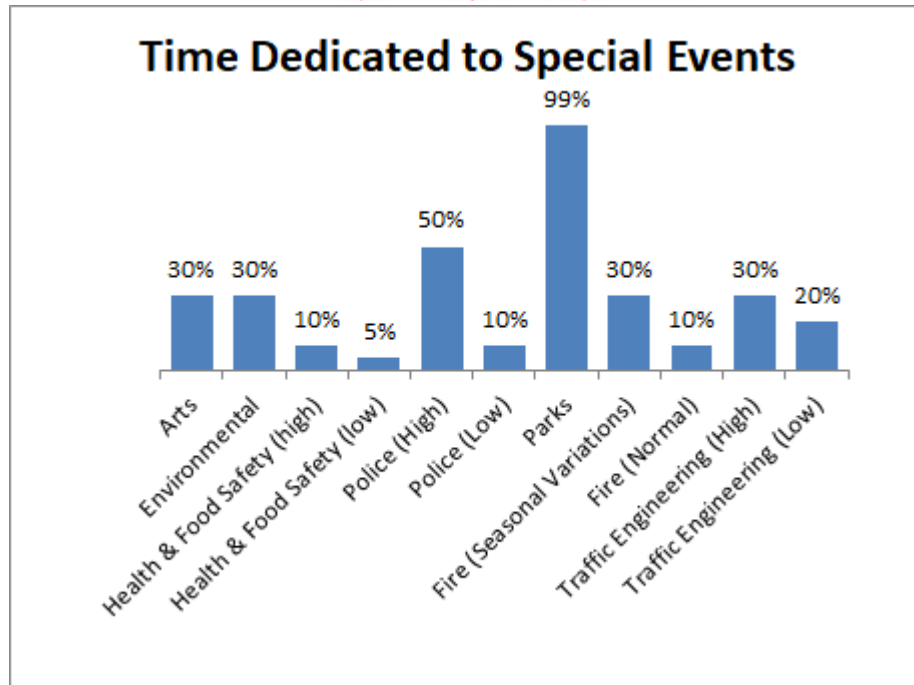
would make the city's evaluation, planning and implementation of a special event more efficient and cost effective (*See Appendix B- Initial Survey/Follow-up Survey*). Even though attendance to the various events varies, four (4) out of the five (5) planned and scheduled special events that are located in the City only warrant 30% of the collected revenue.

Identifying the many departments that handle or those who participates in the special events process was overwhelming. Each department has its own internal checklist for special events. The special events review committee meets bi-weekly, for what could be a two (2) to four (4) hours meeting. Many departments that participate on the special events review committee are not seeking permission for a specific event. They are participating as an available/unavailable resource or just staff presence.

Even though a majority of the main facilities are owned by the city. Keeping up with all events can be daunting. There are three (3) different calendars for the City that are currently not synced to any internal data sharing process for others to view. According to the interview participants, some of the events are planned out one (1) year in advance. With a growing City with the same number of staff resources, that would cause an undue hardship on staff and available resources.

In discussions with staff, it was apparent that there is a separate process for external events that are held at the city parks that should meet the parks ordinance criteria. However, the Parks Department Ordinance is a separate document, with its own guide for check and balances and policies and procedures. Special events at the park are limited to 300 people, with three (3) events happening on any given weekend. With only three (3) parks in the City of Frisco and over 150 events annually, with two (2) to three (3) events on any given weekend with limited staff, could cause concern.

According to participants of the on-site interviews the current structure for evaluating and processing special events projects is fragmented. Each department has its own internal checklist for special events and some departments have an unbalanced amount of time spent focused on special events. When asked "*What percentage of time is spent handling special event projects?*", the results were;



The cost to invoice for departmental services could range from a \$1.5 million invoice for police services to \$150 for a tent permit. The Police Department currently uses an internal departmental software to staff events. There are currently seventy (70) officers that are not on City payroll as a police officer, but are available to staff a special event. The challenges from staffing Fire personnel are met by hiring part-time staff for special events. Code Compliance has six (6) officers for the city that are all used to handle and participate at special events and after hour inspections. For the Public Works crew the charges are based on the rented equipment and personnel time.

There are not many large open spaces within the City and street closures are frowned upon. Mostly the City does not have enough staff or the resources to make the big or small events happen, therefore seeks to make leadership aware that the currently vacant city positions are in dire need to be filled.

The culture of the City ignites the review of special events along with the process and procedures. According to the on-site interview participants, the final decisions on special events are closely related to the planning and input from leadership. However, the much bigger conversation is at what point does the City feel that there is a need to turn down work or events.



INITIAL SURVEY

The LICMA consultants sent out a survey to the Special Events Review Committee (SERC), with a deadline of March 15, 2019. The initial survey was to solidify the interview process and gather data about those interviewed in an informal yet public setting. This resulted in six (6) completed surveys from a pool of 15 participants.

Some of the participants used the survey as an opportunity to provide the LICMA consultants with additional input. The questions asked and select responses are noted below.

- *How valuable to your daily operations is the existence of the Special Events Committee?*
- *Do you feel that the agendas and topics covered in the Special Events Committee meetings are clear and focused to assist you and fulfilling your departments functions?*
 - *Survey Response:* Concerns about the scope of service of the SERC relating to the amount of guidance provided to outside agencies
 - *Survey Response:* clearer criteria for the Special Events Review Committee (SERC) regarding priorities of events when conflict or indecisiveness arises.
- *What do you feel would make the Special Events Committee operations run more smoothly?*
 - *Survey Response:* Concerns about the frequency and management of the SERC regarding the amount of pre-work that could be completed in advance of meetings
- *Do you feel that the frequency of the in-person meeting is appropriate and helpful in the Special Events process? If yes: What frequency would you prefer?*
 - *Survey Response:* Clearer requirement of applicants to ensure that sufficient information is collected and reviewed prior to the SERC meetings
 - *Survey Response:* A need for greater clarity in the process for applicants and committee members regarding when items need to be discussed at a SERC meeting or processed within an individual department/division
- *How clear are you on the mission of the Special Events Committee?*



- *Survey Response:* Concerns about the scope of service of the SERC relating to the amount of guidance provided to outside agencies was listed.
 - *Survey Response:* A career requirement of applicants to ensure that sufficient information is collected and reviewed prior to SERC meetings.
 - *Survey Response:* A need for greater clarity in the process for applicants and committee members regarding when items need to come up to SERC or processed within individual departments\divisions.
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- *Please in 2-3 sentences describe what you believe is the mission of the Special Events Committee.*
 - *Please rank what you believe the priorities of the City are in regards to the type of Special Events they desire for the community*
 - *Survey Response:* The volume of requests may require additional staff to provide support functions
 - *Survey Response:* There is a need for a more automated process for special events applications.

The Special Events Review Committee (SERC)

COMMITTEE MEETING OBSERVATION

On March 26, 2019, members of the LICMA consulting team were able to listen in on one of the scheduled bi-weekly SERC meetings via a telephone conference call. This meeting was scheduled to not only provide the consultant team with the ability to understand the operations of the meeting, on a real time basis, but also to allow the consultant team to have a clearer understanding of how the committee operates and how effectively and efficiently the committee works with other departments in providing productive decisions.

The duration of the meeting was scheduled for two (2) hours. There are participants from all agencies that assist with permitting for special events. The purpose of each meeting is to review in detail, the applications received from the past two (2) weeks to discuss and/or identify any issues from any upcoming year. This meeting is coordinated and hosted by the Sponsorship and Event Development Manager out of the Communications Department.

OBSERVATION OUTCOME



There is a pre-written agenda that is sent out in advance to all of the SERC meeting participants.. This includes applications details for the events that are being reviewed during the meeting. Specific deliverables needed for some of the events are listed along with departments/individuals with his/her identified tasks.

The LICMA consultant team understands that the bi-weekly SERC meetings provide a platform for all departments impacted by the special events process, to meet and discuss recent, past and upcoming events. The SERC meetings are to provide a consistent opportunity for those affected departments to meet and discuss event concerns. By providing a platform to discuss the recently held events and to identify any missed areas for improvement is a useful tool to plan for future events.

IDENTIFIED AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

The March 26, 2019 SERC meeting had a very large attendance. The large number of people attending the meeting caused the meeting to be slightly chaotic with multiple conversations going on at one time.

The agenda, along with several other application details, from what the LICM consultant team observed, appeared to have been sent out only a few hours prior to the start of the meeting. The agenda covered all events that had been scheduled for the upcoming year and the events from the prior two weeks. A separate analysis was conducted on the past events to gather information that might be useful in permitting that event or similar events in the future. Each event was evaluated separately with a round table discussion of the event. Any particular problem associated with the events were also discussed. As the events got further out from the meeting date, less details about a proposed event was discussed.

Follow-Up Survey

After the site visit and listen-in on the SERC meeting by the LICMA consultant team, a follow-up survey was given to all the members of the SERC on May 6, 2019. The survey completion date closed May 10, 2019. The goal of this survey was to help identify practices that were working, and on practices that might need improvement. It was also to expound on the original observation during the site visit that there was a lack of clarity as to the mission of the SERC that may lead to inconsistencies as to how that process has been viewed.



The follow-up survey had 12 questions and was sent to all members of the SERC. The purpose of this survey was to anonymously identify areas for more organizational clarity. Of the 14 committee members that were sent the survey, 10 responded with a 71% response rate.

Some of the participants used the follow-up survey as an opportunity to provide the LICMA consultants with additional input. This received information is broken into categories and summarized below;

- *How valuable to your daily operation is the existence of the SERC?"*
 - *Survey Response:* the majority of the respondents (eight) rated the committee as “*somewhat important or higher*” only two (2) respondents indicated that it was “*not so important*” and no one indicated that it “*was not at all important*”. This indicated that there is a clear necessity for the SERC.

Do you feel that the agendas and topics covered in the SERC meetings are clear and focused to assist you in fulfilling your department’s functions?

- *Survey Response:* Only one respondent indicated they were “extremely clear”, while the majority indicated they felt agendas were “very clear” or “somewhat clear”. Only one person indicated that they were “*not at all clear*”.

What do you feel would make the SERC operations run more smoothly”

Survey Response: With the option to select multiple choices only two individuals had “*I like the Special Events Committee just the way it is currently run*”. Two (2) other individuals also indicated the same, but did include items for improvements as well in their responses. A digital permitting platform was overwhelming chosen as an option to improve the SERC, with all nine (9) respondents who made recommendations indicating it as a method for improvements. One (1) of the “other” responses included “*only assembling the SERC when needed, if a system was created that allowed each department to deliver their remarks*”. The majority of respondents found the frequency of SERC meetings helpful with only two (2) indicating that they are not helpful.

Regarding clarifying the SERC process, the majority of respondents felt that the mission of the SERC was very clear with only two (2) respondents indicating that it was “*somewhat clear*” or “*not so clear*”. When given a freeform question providing a description of the mission, the word



“safety” was in a majority of the responses. Some of the responses indicated a more compliance focus, while other responses indicated a more customer service and support focus.

The respondents were asked to rank City priorities regarding the SERC. Only 10 of the 11 people surveyed provided rankings for this question. Again safety ranked the highest priority for the SERC. The other items surveyed were less clear in their consistency amongst committee members. “*Providing full customer service experience for all applicants*” was at the top two for six of the respondents, but three (3) respondents ranked it as lowest or second lowest priority. “Focusing on City run events to ensure that they are the best quality possible” was spread out amongst the priorities, but was generally seen as a middle level of priority. “Openness to all applicants” was ranked towards the middle or bottom of priorities for nine (9) respondents. “Cost recovery for all City expenses” was consistently ranked lowest, with seven (7) individual ranking it lowest. One (1) participant did take the opportunity to add a priority that was not listed “Making sure city resources are used sparingly for each event and leaving enough staff for normal city operations.”

Regarding the types of events that the SERC review, the participants felt equally about prioritizing events that are “large open events”, “smaller exclusive events on city property”, “private events associated with private venues”, and “public (open) events”, respectfully in that order.

DATA INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

SELECTED COMPARABLE PRACTICES

In an effort to identify leading practices and provide recommendations and/or options for the special events process, the LICMA consultant team researched municipalities comparable to the City of Frisco as it pertains to demographics, population size, and the number of festivals/special events held per year. The consulting team interviewed leaders from the following cities:

ARLINGTON, TEXAS

POPULATION: 386,180

NUMBER OF SPECIAL EVENTS ANNUALLY: 177

The City of Arlington has developed a special event policy and a set of standard operating procedures that are reviewed annually by the department responsible for special events coordination, Planning and Development Services. This department is responsible for receiving and processing special events applications, which includes ensuring all required documents such



as, a certificate of insurance and a site layout, are submitted with the application. The application must be received forty-five (45) days in advance and are only available at City Hall, though they are currently developing an online event permit portal. These tasks are assigned to one staff member whose responsibilities include saving the application in a shared drive accessible by members of the Special Events Committee comprised of: Police (3), Fire (5), Convention Center (1), Engineering (1), Health Department (3), Transportation (1), Storm Water (1), Environmental (1), Legal (2), Risk Management (1), Parks (3), Building Inspection (2), and Code Enforcement.

The special event coordinator sends a mass email to committee members notifying them that an application is available for review in the shared drive. The committee members review the application individually and provide written comments in the comment section of the form. If there are any questions or clarifications needed, the special event coordinator addresses them with the applicant. Once approved, the application is moved into the “approved” folder located in the shared drive. The Special Events Committee never meet in person, all reviews are conducted remotely. Grounds for application denial generally include not providing evidence of insurance, late submission, incomplete form, or lack of certificate of occupancy.

Special Events Permit

The standard fee for any special event permit is \$150 per event to be submitted along with the application. It is general city policy that certain services be provided by the City with the agreement that the applicant will reimburse the City upon demand for all costs associated with the provision of such services. All applicants are charged with no exceptions (including nonprofit organizations). City services include Police protection, crowd control, fire protection, street closures, traffic and parking, among other things.

Capacity

The City of Arlington’s special events program is limited to businesses only, no residents allowed unless sponsored by a business. Applicants from out of town are also allowed so long as they are sponsored by a local business. Applications are approved on a first come, first served basis. Currently the City does not have any set limits on the number of applications approved, however, City sponsored events always take priority. Last year 177 event applications were approved by the committee.

ADDISON, TEXAS

POPULATION: 15,790

NUMBER OF SPECIAL EVENTS ANNUALLY: 301



The Town of Addison has established a special event policy that serves as a guide for decision-making, processes and procedures of the Special Event Department. This department is staffed with four individuals consisting of two Special Events Coordinators, a Special Events Manager, and a director who reports to the Assistant City Manager. The Town of Addison developed an online portal that allows applicants to submit event applications online in addition to the option of submitting in person. Any events with an expected 1,500 or more attendees must be held at the Park, whereas those with less are held at the Conference Centre. The Special Events committee reviews and approves event applications, these may include road closures, public event (admission, food and beverage sales), and infrastructure in the park. The application must be submitted no less than 90 days in advance and all required materials submitted at least 60 days out. These include insurance certificate, site plan, parking plan, payment, temporary Food Permit (if applicable), and completed agreement to indemnify. When a special event application is received, a general review of the application is conducted by two coordinators to ensure that the form was fully completed, signed, and all materials were attached. The application is saved in a shared drive accessible by members of the Special Events Committee, which is comprised of Police, Fire, Street, Parks, and Health Departments. The coordinator sends out an email to all committee members notifying them that there is an application pending their approval. The Town of Addison is currently exploring various softwares to streamline this application review process. The committee may determine that clarification or additional information may be necessary for proper consideration of an application; therefore, they would meet with the applicant 45 days prior to the proposed event to discuss logistics.

Special Events Permit

The Town of Addison charges a standard \$75 non-refundable fee per event permit to be submitted no less than 30 days prior to the proposed event. All applicants are charged with no exceptions (including nonprofit organizations). Additional fees are applied based on requested services (e.g., if they are using the Town's electricity) and size of area rented, if the event is to be held at the park. Special event permits are processed in the Special Events department.

Capacity

The Town of Addison's special events program is open to everyone, including non-residents. Applications are approved on a first come, first served basis. Currently the Town does not have any set limits on the number of applications approved per year, however, Town sponsored events always take priority. Last year 301 event applications were approved by the committee. The department is very strict on ensuring the applications are evaluated based on whether they align with the Town's brand and vision. An event application may be denied if the event does not fit the



Town's vision, requires excessive road closures, or poses safety concerns. The Town would only allow up to 5 event related road closures per year.

FORT COLLINS, COLORADO

POPULATION: 171,000

NUMBER OF SPECIAL EVENTS ANNUALLY: 150

Fort Collins is a community similar in size to Frisco that also hosts an increasingly large number of special events each year (160 applications processed in 2018). Due to an increasing demand on staff and a desire to provide improved service to event planners, the city made significant changes to their special events process and staffing model that has seen success over the previous three years.

Fort Collins has set up a single point of contact model coupled with an online permit application and software solution to streamline both the work required of staff and applicant. They utilize a software program called Eproval, with a module designed specifically for special event permitting. The city has set up custom questions that are automatically assigned to one of 15 departments. Departments are able to either approve, submit internal comments viewable by other parties, or submit feedback or request changes to the applicant. Once approval is received by all needed departments, the permit is issued by the Special Events Coordinator. Implementation of this software is pointed to by Fort Collins staff as the single biggest process improvement in terms of efficiency gains and customer communication.

The city also utilizes a special events committee, which meets only for events that require a street closure (more than block party), alcohol service, 10,000 or more people, or any first time event. The committee meets 3-5 months ahead of the scheduled event, one time, with the applicant in order to debrief any routes (for bike events or races), address specific questions, and reinforce the city's expectation around neighborhood communication, outreach, and general event logistics. Meetings are guided by internal notes received within the Approval software. These meetings are only held with applicants, and the committee generally only needs to meet monthly for 3-5 months per year (prior to event season in Fort Collins, which runs from April to October). Fort Collins is working on developing a decision matrix highlighting when the committee needs to meet.

Fort Collins also issues a special events newsletter to a subscriber list and to the downtown area, where most events occur. This newsletter, generated by the Special Events Coordinator, gives a broad overview of upcoming events, any closures, and high level details of what to expect. The newsletter only goes out during event season on a biweekly basis. Residents can also subscribe to or view at any time a special events calendar kept on the city's website.



The city recovers costs for any services provided, such as parks rental, police staffing, EMS, etc. It does not however, fully recover the time spent processing applications, though they are in the process of raising application fees over a period of three years. The Special Events Coordinator and a half-time assistant are funded out of the city's general fund and housed within the Neighborhood Services team.

A final, regional approach, that Fort Collins has taken is helping to establish a Colorado Special Events Alliance, that has been meeting for a few years specifically around municipal event management. That group is able to share thoughts on hot topics, discuss resource overlap and talk about any regional coordination needed.

General Observations

EMPLOYEE TENURE AND GROWTH

The City of Frisco has been catapulted into one of the fastest growing communities in America. While the community has evolved significantly in the past 20 years, it has had the benefit of retaining much of its original staff, especially in the Communications Department, where the special events process organically began. As it grows, it has recruited nationally a staff that has a diverse background of experiences and there seems to be some cultural friction between the established staff with a long tenure in the community and the new staff.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The large size of the community with an extremely fast paced and demanding citizenry may present difficulties that are systemic to the process of providing special permits. With various demands on employees and a lack of central organization for the process, it is certainly the SERC that has provided the continuity necessary to be able to execute so many special events successfully.

In completing this research project the consultants did find it difficult to coordinate and gain access to information. This was not from lack of interest, but from lack of time on behalf of Frisco staff to be able to devote to this project. For example, the itinerary for the project was made available 12 hours in advance of the site visit. The visit was well organized and structured, although the short notice did require the consultants to be adaptable to various formats of meetings. It seems that staff was regularly called upon to react quickly, which can result in confusion and frustration in such a large group.

RECOMMENDATIONS

SPECIAL EVENTS ORDINANCE



The consultant team has reviewed the DRAFT Special Events Ordinance (SEO) and suggest that sections such as the special events application and attendance estimates are structured as policies and procedures for the submittal of an event. Cost should be listed and approved by resolution so that when change occurs it could be updated by resolution and not by amendment of the ordinance. This will allow more attention to be placed on the process and be more easily amended as processes change and the City grows.

Even though there are specific guidelines to justify and approve events, the Ordinance should include justifying parameters for denying events, that may include the capacity, location/venue, time of day/night, and available City staff and resources.

Create bylaws for the special events committee to adhere to that will establish how a meeting is conducted and by whom. If there are other departments that participate on the SERC and an ordinance has been established for that department, make sure it is referenced in the special events ordinance, for advisement and adherence. It has been acknowledged that different departments have different internal checks and balances for events. This should allow for a more clear, concise and consistent process no matter which department oversees the “special” event.

The DRAFT Special Events Ordinance has structured timelines. The anticipated special events Ordinance should define specific “special events” and how and what type should be submitted to the special events review committee (SERC) for review and recommendation. According to participants on the special events review committee the SEO has been reviewed together by the SERC participants and each department had input. Eleven participants determined that the DRAFT SEO addresses the departmental concerns.

SPECIAL EVENTS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Special events review process is a different process for other departments. The type of event and how it is and evaluated should be separate based on the events. With participation on the special events committee from ; Code Enforcement, Fire, Traffic Engineering, Fixed facilities, Risk Management, Police/ (fire coordination), Parks and Recreation, Health and Food Safety- temp food establishment/food trucks, Environmental Health, Communications Media Relations and Environmental services, Participation on the SERC should be limited to one (1) person per division plus an alternate, to limit the number of people at the meetings to increase communication and reduce time commitments. Clear agendas and minutes should increase the clarity of communication without including every party in the SERC meetings. These two (2) items should also help to keep the meeting on task, provide a significant amount of the preparation work to



occur outside the meeting, keep all parties informed even if they are not direct participants in the meeting, and reduce the amount of time each meeting takes.

The agenda should be sent out 48 hours in advance of all SERC meetings. The meetings should be tailored to each individual meeting specifically highlighting the events in advance that require communication towards approval or denial. Either events coming up more immediately, within a fixed period of time, and events that are perceived to be off track or particularly problematic. Specific deliverables that can be achieved in advance should be requested. Consistent questions from each participating department should be asked, and only those questions that are unanswered should be covered during the meeting. The post event analysis still has value in identifying any items missed in the current process. Items identified in this analysis should be integrated into the process for future requests to try and avoid repeats of the same issue. Additionally, dates with a high degree of conflict should be evaluated for internal and external coordination.

Providing as much information in advance and providing clear expectations in advance of the ERC meetings should help the meeting move forward in a productive manner. Having the information in advance allows participants to submit concerns and flush out the agenda in advance of the meeting. There should be time limits on discussions to keep the focus on the specific topic being discussed.

The utilization of permit tracking software should significantly reduce the reliance on these in person meetings to cover all aspects of the permitting process and expedite these meetings in the future. Ideally departments will be able to participate, add information, and collaborate through a digital software tool, so that in person meetings can be utilized to handle items of extraordinary and extreme complexity and that are very high profile. This should allow for the scope of meetings to be reduced and increase the volume of work that could be signed off administratively.

After the implementation of the permitting software, the bi-weekly frequency of the meeting should be evaluated for necessity. It is a possibility that the software will assist in collecting similar information that was previously collected at the meetings which could result in less frequent meetings.

Based on special events process and procedures from communities similar to the City of Frisco as described above, the consultant team has determined that the following recommendations, if implemented, would improve the City of Frisco's Special Events program:

- Establish a standard operating procedure (SOP) that will be reviewed annually for updates as it is the case in both the City of Arlington and the Town of Addison.
- Acquire a software solution to increase efficiency, productivity, and maximize employee resources.



- Develop an online event application portal to expedite the process and provide the applicant the choice of not coming in person to submit an application.
- Keep track of all upcoming events on a calendar accessible to all members of the Special Events committee and others as needed.
- Establish a standard base permit fee for all applications as is the case with all three cities above. Apply additional fees based on service requested (e.g., street closure, Police protection, crowd control, fire protection, traffic and parking, among other things).
- Limit number of road closures related events per year to prevent traffic issues and fast depletion of resources. The Town of Addison limits road closure events to five per year for these very reasons.
- Establish clear and precise application review criteria to serve as guidance for the committee. Discuss and establish a clear vision for the program that aligns with the City's goals and objectives. This will provide guidance to the Special Events committee as they review applications, thus only approving those that without a doubt fit with program's vision. By doing so it will naturally reduce the number of approved events to a manageable pack while ensuring that the City still retains its reputation as a destination City.

ORGANIZATIONAL CLARITY

During the process of data collection for this report, it was clear that there were many individual perspectives about the role of the City in the special events process, and that the mission of the SERC and the members that serve on the committee is unclear. Articulation of purpose, direction, and values (in questions outlined below) from leadership could help increase common understanding from internal\external stakeholders

- Clarity of Mission
 - What is the charge/purpose of the committee?
 - What duties/obligations do they have to the permit holders?
 - What other non-permitted events need to be included at private venues?
- Clarity of Process
 - Need to have one point of entry for groups into process for special events permitting and redirect applicants through that formal process
 - Detailed/Strict Application fees and deadlines.
- Clarity of Values



- Understanding of community and counsel values regarding how they are communicated via a special events process
 - This will assist in determining how much time should be spent guiding applicants through process
 - Clear from our interviews that there are currently disagreements on what those values are:
 - Customer service at all costs (and concerns about squeaky wheel)
 - Detracting from other services each organization provides
 - Liability concern, that planning too much for non-City events may lead to liability issues if something goes wrong
- This will be essential is denying permits in the future
 - Legal counsel's comments on ordinance clearly illustrated that there needed to be clear and consistent

OPERATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Special Events Team will need to obtain a specific protocol structure that will allow all participants to follow the process even when not physically participating at an on-site bi-weekly meeting.

- Digital permitting process
 - Should include a checklist for each item, once a request has all items checked off, then the event should not be discussed at bi-weekly meetings until ready to issue the special event permit.
- Lead in the permitting process
 - Currently communications, not sure that placement is compatible with the mission of Special Events
 - Options for change
 - Separate the names of the events; all events should not be called "special events"
 - Keep the same & create cross organizational team with clear authority
 - Special events committee should be comprised of departments that can make valuable decisions.



- Move to another existing department, may require employees shifting
- Create new division to manage special events, may require employees shifting from multiple departments.



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The special events committee, city staff and administration for graciously allowing the LICMA team to work with each of you and the many steadfast departments that make up the great City of Frisco.

We are extremely grateful for your hospitality, commitment to professional development within the local government profession, and your willingness to let us assist your organization.