

November 17, 2015

To: Board of Parks Commissioners

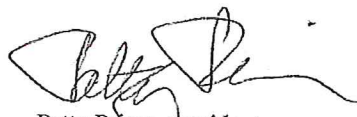
Re: Agreement with Big Top Events LLC

Vern Stenman has appeared before the Tenney-Lapham Neighborhood Association (TLNA) council to request support for an agreement between the City of Madison and Big Top Events LLC for the management of concessions, alcohol, events and facility operations at Breese Stevens Stadium for 2015-2022 (2nd Ald. Dist.). In fact, Big Top Events has held a neighborhood meeting, attended previous TLNA meetings and sought input from the neighborhood and the TLNA Council on both the Avett Brothers event and the Fighting Bob Fest. The feedback has been largely positive. We are grateful that Big Top Events LLC has worked with our alder to ensure that the neighborhood is well represented in the contract. The TLNA Council believes that the contract with Big Top Events will be a benefit to the neighborhood; there will be one contact for any issues that may arise. We are confident that questions about parking, traffic management, noise concerns, and neighborhood communication will be consistently and carefully managed. We also appreciate that Big Top Events will continue to meet with TLNA annually and whenever issues arise.

The TLNA Council voted unanimously to support the agreement between the City and Big Top Events LLC. We look forward to working with them in the next few years and hopefully longer.

If you have any questions or if I can provide any additional information, please let me know.

Sincerely,



Patty Prime, president
Tenney-Lapham Neighborhood Association
[redacted] Sidney Steet

From: Leslie Schroeder [mailto:████████████████████@gmail.com]
Sent: Tuesday, November 17, 2015 7:43 PM
To: Knepp, Eric
Subject: Parks Commission meeting 11/18/15 citizen input

Dear Mr. Knepp,

please forward to all members of the Parks Commission in reference to item 19 on the agenda at the upcoming Commission meeting.

Thank you.

Dear members of the Parks Commission

We are in favor of the 2016 Public Amplification Permit Fees as as written.

The numerous festivals that this City enjoys are a great asset to us all. Unfortunately, some of these events have been resistant to some common sense restraint when it comes to music volume and hours of operation.

Prolonged exposure to sounds over 85dB is known to cause hearing damage. It's not fair to repeatedly inflict immediate neighbors with City sanctioned noise pollution which they cannot escape.

Reduced volume will not have an adverse impact on festivals. Similar to the much feared restaurant smoking ban, the more tolerable environment will likely bring increased business.

Until recently our family lived immediately adjacent to a particularly loud festival location. Seeking to avoid continued impacts from it was a compelling factor in our decision to move.

We are sure there will be many individuals who will testify in opposition to this common sense measure. We are also sure that few, if any, people against this will be residents who actually live in the festival audio blast zones. The lack of empathy from festival organizers and their supporters is acute.

It seems relevant here to copy in the mission statement of this commission-

The Board of Park Commissioners: Governs, manages, controls, improves and cares for all public parks... and secures the quiet, orderly and suitable use and enjoyment thereof; adopts rules and regulations to promote those purposes.

Thank you for your consideration,

Nick and Leslie Schroeder

From: Stu Levitan [mailto:██████████@sbcbglobal.net]

Sent: Tuesday, November 17, 2015 9:17 PM

To: Wallner, David; Gnam, Emily; ██████████@me.com; Leopold, Madelyn; Clear, Mark; Ragland, Nancy; Baldeh, Samba; Knepp, Eric

Subject: Legistar File 40722 - Proposed 2016 Amplification Permit Fees

Dear President Wallner and Commissioners

Everybody (well, *almost* everybody) agrees that outdoor music festivals are one of defining things about Madison. From early spring through late fall, free, live music brings joy and community to parks and neighborhoods around Madison. Music events and festivals are the signposts of our seasons.

And they're of extraordinary quality, bringing national, even international stars while also showcasing local and regional talent.

They're also big business – for the bands, for the vendors and food carts, for the organizers, for charities. As Vice President of the WORT-FM Back Porch Radio board of directors, I know how critical music festivals are to our outreach and fundraising. I know many other non-profits also depend on music events.

I agree that the current permit fee is disproportionate and needs adjustment. I also support appropriate time and volume standards. However, the proposed fees are so excessive and the regulations so restrictive that I fear you would do severe, if not fatal, damage, to several festivals.

As I understand the draft, a four-day festival, such as the Fete de Marquette, would go from a \$100 fee to \$1,680. By what standard is that possibly justified?

The limitation of 85 db is also troublesome. First, the phrase “at the perimeter of the event” is vague, and will lead to confusion and disputes. It is also unreasonably low. While I'm not a sound engineer, I do go to a lot of music events, and I think 90-92 db at the soundboard is both reasonable and enforceable.

I understand that, under certain atmospheric conditions, the music and noise from a music event or festival will annoy certain residents. However, given the limited duration of the disturbance, and the overwhelming public benefit that comes from the event, I think the best public policy is to respect those who feel aggrieved, but not sacrifice the greater good to their individual concerns.

The city's own cultural plan recognizes how important live free music events are to the Madison community and economy. In its current form, the proposed 2016 public amplification permit fees will clearly harm many, if not all, of those events.

The monthly meeting of the WORT board keeps me from attending tomorrow's meeting. I hope you will have the opportunity to read this note (which I know is in line with many other messages you've received), and support our music events and festivals by amending the draft as discussed herein.

Thanks very much,

Stu Levitan

From: [REDACTED]@charter.net
To: "annedave@chorus.net" <annedave@chorus.net>, "emily.gnam@cunamutual.com" <emily.gnam@cunamutual.com>, "jllewis2@me.com" <jllewis2@me.com>, "madelyn.leopold@gmail.com" <madelyn.leopold@gmail.com>, "district19@cityofmadison.com" <district19@cityofmadison.com>, "nanragland@att.net" <nanragland@att.net>, "district17@cityofmadison.com" <district17@cityofmadison.com>
Sent: Wednesday, November 18, 2015 11:48:43 AM
Subject: Agenda item 40772

Dear Madison Parks Commissioners,

Thank you for taking the time to consider input from a breadth of constituents on the topic of permits for festivals held in city parks. I am interested in agenda item 40772 (Proposed 2016 Amplified Sound (PA) Fees) as a commissioner on the Madison Arts Commission, as a lifelong Madison eastside resident, and as a professional musician who has benefited directly from the performance opportunities that local festivals provide for Madison musicians.

Much of Madison Arts Commission's current scope of work is focused on implementing recommendations put forth in the Madison Cultural Plan, a comprehensive five-year action plan formally adopted by the city in 2013 to advance Madison's position as a center for creativity and innovation. The Cultural Plan includes dozens of recommendations specifically aimed at increasing access to free arts festivals throughout the city, and at making it easier for community groups to plan and implement festivals in city spaces. A few of the recommendations have already come to fruition, including the completion of Central Park as a new festival site and the development of Breese Stevens field as an outdoor music venue. I would hate to see the city take steps backward at this juncture by increasing hurdles for festival organizers.

With regard to the proposed new fee structure, I offer a few suggestions that could reduce the financial burden for nonprofit festival organizers:

Consider a two-tiered fee structure, with full price fees for for-profit businesses and promoters, and lower fees for nonprofit organizations with 501c3 status. There is certainly a precedent for this type of fee structure at other local event venues, including many city facilities.

Work with Madison Arts Commission (MAC) to address parks fees paid for by MAC grants. We are seeing increasing requests for city arts grants to be used to pay city event fees, meaning that the "revenue" generated for Parks is actually just a transfer of city funds from MAC. Perhaps a fee waiver could be built in for festivals that have been vetted and endorsed by the city through the MAC grants process. As the chair of the MAC Grants Committee I would be happy to work on this with Parks staff or commissioners.

With regard to the proposed decibel limits and monitoring procedures, ~~the city~~ the city take care to take a consistent approach with all outdoor public events, such as Ironman, Freakfest, etc., rather than having a separate set of rules based on genre (live music) or site (parks vs. other city properties). I am not an expert on the exact decibel levels of local events, but I would be surprised if music festivals at Warner Park, for instance, were more disruptive to neighbors than sporting events such as Mallards games or 5k events with amplified music and announcements.

Neighborhood music festivals contribute to the vibrancy of our community in innumerable ways, and events held in city parks offer a level of accessibility and inclusion that cannot be attained by our indoor performance venues. Despite all of the good work being done by downtown cultural institutions to offer free programming and reach underserved audiences, there are still too often barriers to participation at these venues. I participate in a myriad of cultural arts events in Madison, and always see the greatest diversity of families at outdoor festivals. Let's work together to help our local festivals continue to flourish. Thank you for your consideration of these suggestions, and for your volunteer service to the city through your work on the Parks Commission.

Sincerely,

Kia Karlen

Vice Chair, Madison Arts Commission