

Development of Park Event Standards

Background – Long Range Planning

The park system had 164 special events that required a park special event permit in 2013. The number of special events in parks has grown by approximately 20% over the past five years. Setting event standards is something that is done in other municipal park systems. These standards establish conditions related to events by location. Parks staff and the Park Commission have expressed an interest in ensuring that any standards take appropriate consideration of the numerous variables involved with an event and its impact on the park system. Considerations have been made in the past to assess fees based on the following event characteristics: estimated attendance, beer sales, food/non-consumable sales, additional vendors, paid admission (non-athletic events), if the event is open to the public, and total use of the park/facility.

The event standards would set guidelines and conditions for all special events (non-athletic) in parks, provide special conditions to specific parks, and establish a fee structure that provides for equitable cost recovery goals based on the impact to the park system. The project would extend to other conditions to ensure the standards provide clarity on permits required for events (e.g. Temporary Structures) and provide a guide to event organizers regarding existing policies (e.g. no PA permits at select parks).

Various definitions of a ‘Special Event’

- A special event is a gathering of human beings, generally lasting from a few hours to a few days, designed to celebrate, honor, discuss, sell, teach about, encourage, observe, or influence human endeavors.
The Special Event Guru
- A special event is a one-time or infrequently occurring event outside normal programs or activities of the sponsoring or organizing body; and, to the customer or guest, a special event is an opportunity for leisure, social or cultural experience outside the normal range of choices or beyond everyday experiences.
The Special Event Guru
- Occasions to commemorate an event or occasions designated for a specific purpose.
Sensagent Corporation
- A special event is an event whether indoors or outdoors, that is held on public property or streets that can reasonably be expected to cause a public gathering that is not part of the normal course of business at the location.

Town of Conway, New Hampshire

Analysis

Park Event Permit data from 2013 and 2014 were reviewed. Data from 2014 were analyzed by Parkland Classification, Event, Event Organizer Type, Invoice amounts, Size of Event (by projected attendance) and other triggers for permits (i.e., amplification, temporary structures and vending). A summary of the data follows:

In 2014, park event permits were issued for 188 unique events which utilized 198 different parks. This accounts for events that were held in multiple parks. This does not represent the number of days the events were held in the parks. Some events were issued permits for multiple days either directly for the event or for setup/teardown of the event.

Parkland Classification	General Description	Number of Events
Sports Complex	Heavily programmed athletic fields and associated facilities whose primary purpose is programmed active recreation.	2
Mini Park	Used to address limited, isolated or unique recreation needs.	11
Neighborhood Park	Neighborhood parks remain the basic unit of the park system. Serves as the recreational and social focus of the neighborhood. Focus is on informal active and passive recreation.	46
Community Park	Serves broader purpose than neighborhood park. Focus is on meeting community-based recreation needs, as well as preserving unique landscapes and open spaces.	139

Parkland Classification as defined by the 2012-2017 Park and Open Space Plan

Events in Community Parks

139 events were held in 17 different Community Parks. The six (6) most utilized parks with 111 (80%) events were:

- Warner – 39 events (28%)
- Olin – 22 events (16%)
- Vilas – 22 events (16%)
- Olbrich – 10 events (7%)
- Brittingham – 9 events (6%)
- Elver – 9 events (6%)

N=139

46 events were held in 23 different Neighborhood Parks. The four (4) most utilized parks with 22 events were:

- Penn – 10 events (22%)
- Elvehjem – 4 events (9%)
- Rennebohm – 4 events (9%)
- Wingra – 4 events (9%)

N=46

11 events were held in 10 different Mini Parks. The most utilized park was Norman Clayton with two (2) events.

Time of Year for Events

Analysis was also completed on the time of year that events occur in parks. The calendar was broken into three (3) periods:

- January – April (16 events/8.5%)
- May – August (110 events/60%)
- September – December (62 events/33%).

N=188

Event Organizers

The events in 2014 were organized by groups that are classified as:

- For Profit = 31 events (16%)
- Not-for-Profit = 126 events (67%)
- Neighborhood Association = 16 events (9%)
- Madison Parks = 10 (5%)
- City of Madison = 3 (2%)
- State of Wisconsin = 2 (1%)

Summary Data

In total, event permit fees were charged in the amount of \$126,530 and known projected attendance at all permitted events was 263,217.

- 56 events had 146 temporary structures which includes tents (of varying sizes), stages and/or inflatables.
- 100 events received permits for amplifications.
- 18 events received beer permits.
- 43 events had permits to sell food and/or merchandise.

In regards to staff costs associated with these events, it is projected that small events (300 or less) cost approximately \$84 to process each application/permits. In 2014, there were 93 small events for a total cost of \$7,825. For large events (301 or more), there were 95 events and at a cost of \$421 to process that amounts to \$39,964. Total application/permit cost associated with park events was \$47,788.

Event Size	Number of events	Staff cost per application	Total Cost	Revenue from Fees
Small (300 or >)	93	\$84	\$7,825	\$14,255
Large (301 or <)	95	\$421	\$39,964	\$97,520

Note: The staff costs reference only includes projected time and wage amounts for receiving the application, reviewing, communication with the organizer, approvals and processing the permit. It does **not** include staff time associated with the event prior to setup, during and following the event.

Comparative data for Community Park events

(Total events for all Community Parks = 139)

	Warner	Vilas	Olin	Olbrich	Britt	Elver	Total
# Events	39	22	22	10	9	9	111
1 st Quarter (Jan-Apr)	3	5	1	0	3	1	13
2 nd Quarter (May-Aug)	24	8	19	8	5	6	70
3 rd Quarter (Sept-Oct)	12	9	2	2	1	2	28
For Profit	9	16	6	1	0	1	33
Not-for-Profit	28	4	13	8	7	6	66
Neighborhood Association	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Madison/State	2	2	3	1	2	1	11
Attendance	34,625	5,612	23,750	8,070	21,275	1,850	95,182
Fees	\$20,643	\$9,072	\$19,279	\$1,928	\$2,010	\$1,935	\$78,284
Temporary Structures	37	3	23	6	5	1	76
Amplification	28	15	10	4	3	4	65
Beer Sales	1	1	5	0	1	0	8
Food Sales	10	1	6	3	1	0	21
Merchandise Sales	6	0	3	1	1	1	12

Obviously, the bulk of events in parks occur during the months of **May through August**. A few analytical facts for this time period:

- Olin had fewer events but collected more in fees than the other large Community Parks primarily due to the Madison Homebrewers – Great Taste of the Midwest event (\$23,417.00); which is **not** included in the fees listed above. The fee is driven higher because of the number of vendors they have at the event.
- 35 of 59 events included amplification (64%): 2 events at Olbrich; 8 events at Olin; 6 events at Vilas; 19 at Warner.
- 6 of 7 events included beer permits during this time and 5 of the 7 events were at Olin.
- Known projected attendance at these events is 95,182 which equates to 41% of the annual attendance in Community Parks. Please note that attendance projections are not included for all events.

Comparative data for Neighborhood Park Events

(Total events for all Neighborhood Parks = 46)

	Penn	Elvehjem	Rennebohm	Wingra	Total
# Events	10	4	4	4	22
1 st Quarter (Jan-Apr)	0	0	0	0	0
2 nd Quarter (May-Aug)	8	2	3	4	17
3 rd Quarter (Sept-Oct)	2	2	1	0	5
For Profit	0	0	0	0	0
Not-for-Profit	9	2	2	3	16
Neighborhood Association	0	2	2	1	5
Madison/State	1	0	0	0	1
Attendance	6,550	700	1,300	700	9,250
Fees	\$2,821	\$200	\$200.00	\$550.00	\$3,770.64
Temporary Structures	5	2	0	2	9
Amplification	8	0	2	3	13
Beer Sales	0	0	0	0	0
Food Sales	2	1	0	0	3
Merchandise Sales	1	0	0	0	1

The majority (77%) of events in neighborhood parks occur during the months of May through August. A few analytical facts:

- All but one event in a neighborhood park was organized by a not-for-profit group or neighborhood association.
- Juneteenth in Penn Park was the largest event in a Neighborhood Park with an expected attendance of 5,000-10,000. Average attendance for all other events was 575.
- Juneteenth also had the largest invoice amount for events in Neighborhood Parks at \$2,124.00. All other events were either free (11 events) or averaged \$164 in fees (10 events).
- All but two events in Penn Park received an amplification permit. One-half of the events in both Rennebohm and Wingra received an amplification permit.
- Known projected attendance at these events is 9,250 which equates to 53% of the annual attendance. Please note that attendance projections are not included for all events.