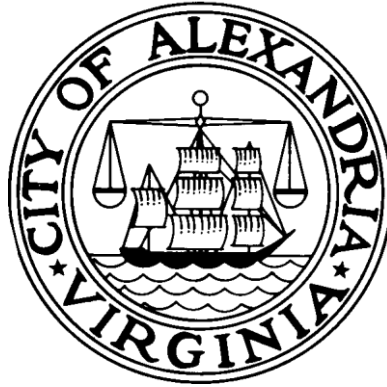


# **CITY OF ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA**



# **SPECIAL EVENTS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Approved September 23, 2023

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The City of Alexandria is committed to facilitating a wide range of special events that highlight the diverse communities within the City. In order to ensure that all events are conducted in a safe and orderly fashion, weighing the social and economic benefit of the event with the general public's well-being, oversight for all Special Events is the responsibility of the Special Events Committee. This committee is a formal group made up of various City departments that support and regulate special events.

The underlying framework the Special Events Committee uses in its decision regarding an application for a special event permit is based on the policies and procedures found in this document.

A Special Event Permit may be required when:

- Use of a city park is involved.
- More than 500 people are expected to attend throughout the event.
- Coordination between two or more permitting agencies is required.
- Food is being sold/served to the public.
- Public safety may be at risk.

## **GUIDING POLICIES**

1. It is the policy of the City of Alexandria, as implemented through related adopted policies and procedures, to recognize the substantial community benefits that result from special events. These events provide cultural enrichment, promote economic vitality, enhance community identity and pride, and provide opportunities for fundraising for the community's nonprofit agencies. To promote these objectives, at times it is appropriate within available funds for the City to bear all, some portion, or no portion of the costs. Cost sharing must be done in a fair and reasonable manner.
2. Partnerships between the City of Alexandria, event organizers, and the community are valuable in ensuring successful events. The City of Alexandria recognizes that events require logistical support and commitment from the organizing entities and that the City requirements may represent a significant portion of an event's costs. When setting fees and conditions for events, the City will consider impacts on the event's costs while balancing the City obligation to protect public health, safety, and financial oversight obligation to the citizens of Alexandria. In general, special events should provide full cost recovery to the City.
3. Outside entities receiving financial assistance from the City for special events may be required to provide the City with a business plan and/or provide a full disclosure of all expenses and revenues related to the event.
4. Staff may seek private and corporate sponsorships to help to offset the cost of City-produced events, programs, and activities, so that events move towards becoming cost neutral to the City.
5. It is the policy goal of the City to have successful cost-effective special events that enrich and enliven the community and provide opportunities for the use of volunteer services from the volunteer agencies and organizations where deemed feasible and practical, and where cost savings will be achieved that will not negatively impact public health and safety.

## **MANAGEMENT OF SPECIAL EVENTS**

The Special Events Committee is authorized to carry out the provisions of the special events policies and City and State Codes. In order to assure working representation from all appropriate segments of the City government and to provide effective deliberation of all impacting events, the Special Events Committee consists of members from various City departments that support and regulate special events.

### **Special Events Committee Members – Agency Representatives**

The Special Events Committee should include an RPCA Deputy Director, the RPCA Special Events Permit Manager, and representatives from other permitting and service agencies including, but not limited to RPCA Park Services, Police, Fire/Code Administration, Fire/Emergency Services, Planning and Zoning, T&ES Transportation Division, T&ES Environmental Quality, Health Department, DASH, Risk Management, General Services, and Visit Alexandria. This composition may be amended and/or updated as needed.

The Special Events Committee is currently led by the Special Event Permit Manager of the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities. The City Manager grants the assigned Deputy Director the authority to resolve Committee disputes and/or determine whether or not it is necessary to consult the City Manager about certain issues before the Committee. The Deputy Director ensures that Committee records are maintained, meeting times and places are scheduled, and special events permits, if approved, are issued.

Representatives from the Finance Department and OMB are available as necessary to advise the Committee on budgeting and accounting procedures and policies.

The Special Events Committee is authorized to:

1. Interpret and administer City and State policy and code with input as needed from the City Attorney;
2. Represent the City, under the authority of the City Manager, in discussions and in maintaining agreements or contracts with the person(s) who represent the special event;
3. Coordinate with City departments and with other government agencies for the provision of governmental services for such special events;
4. Establish the terms and conditions, appropriate fees, time, place, and manner of the special event;
5. Ensure that the applicant notifies nearby businesses and residents in advance about events that impact them;
6. Approve or deny a special event permit;
7. Develop an appeal process to the City Manager for an event which is denied a permit; and
8. Make recommendations to the City Council and the City Manager in regard to special events policies and practices

## **EVENT CLASSIFICATION & COSTS**

### **Classification of Special Events**

#### City Produced Special Events

Events that are created, planned, and implemented by City Departments or Agencies. Funding for City produced events is reviewed annually during the budget process. City staff are encouraged to seek event sponsorship by outside entities as well as charging participation fees to reduce costs. Departments must cover the expense of another agency if not included in their agency budget. Permit fees are to be waived for events falling in this category. Although events may continue to be classified as City produced, seeking private and corporate sponsorships is encouraged. Each event shall be assessed by the Special Event Committee as to its overall impact, cost, and community benefits and changes made accordingly.

#### Non-City Funded Special Events

Events that are created, planned, and implemented by non-City Agencies. The City does not provide financial support for these events and expects to be reimbursed for all costs associated with the activity including over time expenses, supplies and materials, and permit fees.

#### Parades

Currently there are three parades approved by City Council to be held annually in the Old Town area of Alexandria: George Washington Birthday Parade, St. Patrick's Day Parade, and the Scottish Walk. Each of the parades provides a unique contribution to the City by promoting community identity and providing cultural enrichment.

#### Foot Races

Marathons and other foot races are allowed in limited locations throughout the city to ensure safety of participants and spectators. The number of permitted foot races may be limited annually by the City Manager.

#### Assemblies/Protests/Rallies

No notice/approval is needed if the Assembly/Protest/Rally won't block pedestrians from using sidewalks/crosswalks, or attendance will be under 50 and won't be on/in a city street, or if the assembly breaks out spontaneously. However, getting advance approval is strongly recommended.

#### Weddings

Weddings with attendance over 50 people and/or that require exclusive use of a city park or other public space will be required to obtain a Special Event permit.

## **APPLICATION PROCESS**

A Special Event Permit application must be submitted to the City to conduct a special event within the city. The following procedures apply:

### **1. Application Submittal:**

1.1. A notice of intent shall be submitted to the City Special Events Committee by the special event applicant. Applications not completed in full will not be processed and will be returned to applicant. The notice of intent shall be filed at least 180 days prior to the date of the proposed event to allow adequate review time. In special and unusual circumstances, the City Manager may waive the above time frames. First time events are encouraged to list several options for location, route, date, time and a site map with the special events application.

### **2. Committee Review**

2.1. The Committee shall review the notice of intent and determine if the event can be accommodated. The Committee shall meet with the applicant to review the completed package of information on the proposed event, including a tentative site plan and activities involved with the event.

2.2. If the event is new or changes from past venue, or date changes, a notice may be required to affected businesses/residents (to be determined on a case-by-case basis by the Committee) along with a request for written comment for a period of sixty days (60) prior to the event. The Committee shall meet with the applicant to discuss comments received and possible conditions and fees.

### **3. Additional Permits**

3.1. After meeting on possible conditions/fees the applicant shall apply for the formal special event permits if wishing to proceed with the event; i.e. health, noise, street, park, alcohol, school use, facility use, Fire Code and Fire Emergency Management Services.

### **4. Committee Approval**

4.1. The Committee shall make a decision on the application and set any conditions and fees, in accordance with policy with the understanding that all Department specific permit requirements shall be met by the applicant thirty (30) days prior to the event date.

4.2. Any changes to the approved plans, including but not limited to the event: date(s), time(s), and location/route, must be approved by all Committee members. Request for changes shall be submitted to the Committee for review and comments no less than thirty (30) days prior to the event.

4.3. Once the applicant meets all requirements and has shown proof of permits, the Committee will issue a Special Event Permit.

## **Late Applications**

Any application received after the deadlines established is a late application. The City Manager or designee shall not accept late applications unless he or she finds that:

1. The proposed special event is in response to an occurrence whose timing did not reasonably allow the applicant to file a timely application; or
2. The imposition of the time limitations would place an unreasonable restriction on the free speech rights of the applicant.

If the City Manager or designee finds both of the above conditions to exist, he or she shall accept the application and process, unless it does not meet the criteria set forth in the application process permit process section, or there is insufficient time for the City to make the necessary preparations for permit filings, staff availability or other public safety matters prior to the proposed date of the special event.



## **APPROVAL**

### **Requirements to Obtain Approval**

In deciding whether to approve, approve with conditions, or deny a permit, the Special Events Committee shall determine:

1. The event, as proposed, can be shown to function safely;
2. The diversion of police and fire resources to support the event will not deny reasonable police and fire protection to the City;
3. The event will not cause irreconcilable interference with previously approved and/or scheduled construction, maintenance or other activities including any sidewalks, streets and parking spaces;
4. The event applicant provides a transportation management/parking plan for traffic control/parking management which may include accommodating transportation demand management measures;
5. The location/route meets the criteria established in the procedures;
6. All costs for City services associated with the permitted event shall be paid by the applicant unless otherwise approved by City Council;
7. The special event applicant provides an Emergency Management Plan for security/safety and which may include accommodating security, first aid and sheltering measures;
8. Events will be scheduled to not overly burden any one neighborhood on a consistent basis;
9. Events will not be approved to be held in Founders Park;
10. The event as proposed shall not severely impact the quality of life within the area it is being held.

The Special Event Committee shall issue a permit for a special event unless it is determined that one or more of the following conditions exist:

1. The application is incomplete;
2. The applicant has not tendered the required application fee, deposit, or insurance certificate and endorsement, unless such tender has been waived;
3. The information contained in the application, including supplemental information provided if any, is found to be false in any material respect, the purpose of the event is contrary to law, and/or the applicant has failed to meet the City requirements for a permit;
4. A prior application for a special event to be held at the same time and place has been received or granted;
5. The special event will unduly interfere with vehicular ingress to, egress from, or travel on a road, state designated highway, or major arterial collector street of the City;
6. The special event will unreasonably interfere with fire or police protection, including presenting a substantial traffic or safety hazard;
7. Event size or durations will require diversion of so great an amount of City safety services that providing minimum levels of safety services to other areas of the City will be jeopardized;
8. The security arrangements that have been made are inadequate;
9. One or more of the applicants or persons whose name is shown on the application was also named on an application for a special event in the City of Alexandria that resulted in a violation within the twelve months preceding the current application;
10. If the special event is proposed to be held on public property, the proposed special event would conflict with a previously scheduled and planned event or activity organized by the City of Alexandria for the same time and place as the proposed special event;
11. The applicant or the organization on whose behalf the application is submitted has, on prior occasions, damaged City property and has not paid in full for such damages, or has other outstanding and unpaid debts to the City of Alexandria;
12. The applicant is legally incompetent to contract or to sue and be sued; and
13. The applicant fails or refuses to comply with any permitting requirement or conditions of approval.

The applicant shall be notified in writing of the action by the Committee with respect to the application as early as possible but no less than thirty (30) after receipt of the completed special events permit application.

## **Conditions Authorized and Additional Permits**

The Committee may include in a special event permit, among other provisions, reasonable terms or conditions as to the time, place and manner of the event; compliance with health and sanitary regulations, emergency services, and security. Additional permits may be required to meet the conditions established by the special event permit, and/or other Federal/State/City/ codes.

In order to accommodate other concurrent events, the rights of abutting owners and the needs of the public to use parks, public property, or streets and rights of way, the conditions may include, but not be limited to, reasonable adjustments in the date, time, route or location of the proposed event; accommodations of pedestrian or vehicular traffic using the street; and limitations on the duration of the event.

## **Revocation of Permit**

If the special event is to be held on public property, the City Manager or designee may revoke the special event permit at any time he or she determines that as a result of inclement weather, conduct of the special event would unreasonably damage the public property for which it is proposed, or if he or she determines that any provision of any condition of the permit has not been met or is being violated. A decision by the City Manager or designee to revoke a permit is final.

## **Appeals**

An applicant may appeal the denial of an application or permit conditions made by the Committee to the City Manager within thirty (30) days of receiving the notice. The City Manager or designee shall act upon said appeal promptly, but in no event later than the date and time of the proposed special event. If the decision to deny the special event permit was made by the City Manager or designee, that decision shall be final.

## **SPECIAL EVENT FEES**

### **Permit Fees**

Current fees, as approved by City Council each year, are outlined in the Special Event Guide and related fee schedules. Additional fees may include actual expenses for required services provided by affected departments. City expenses include staff time outside of an employees regular hours which include overtime or part-time hours directly related to the event and FICA/Social Security; equipment and supplies rented for the event such as barricades; trash disposal fees; and contracted services directly related to event support such as security, cleaning services, etc. Fees associated with permit conditions (i.e. electrical, security, fire, etc.) are in addition to the above fee schedule and are the sole responsibility of the applicant. There is a nonrefundable Special Event Permit application fee to the applicant to be paid at the time of the filing of the application.

Applicants will receive a fee estimate within 30 days of submitting a completed special event application.

All permit fees must be paid in advance for the Special Event Permit to be issued.

### **Event Fees**

Depending on the type of event, respective fees may vary. After the event, payment for City services must be paid no later than thirty (30) days after receipt of the final invoice.

Notwithstanding any of the provisions stated in this section, should the Committee determine that prior special events organized or conducted by the applicant have resulted in damages to property, unreasonable risks to public safety, or unpaid debts or late payments, the Committee may require, prior to approval of the Special Event Permit, that the applicant pay the full amount of the estimated cost of City services in advance of the event.

### **Refunds**

Fees charged from the fee schedule are refundable (excluding the Special Event Permit application fee), if the special event is canceled after the permit is issued, and written notice is received by the Committee ten (10) days prior to the date of the event.

If an applicant is unable to hold or conduct a special event because of inclement weather or due to some other cause not within the applicant's control, and the applicant submits a written request for the refund of fees to the Committee within ten (30) days after the scheduled event date the Committee may authorize the refund of any fees that are determined to have not been incurred by the City in the preparation for the special event

*Note: All permit fees and ABC permit fees are nonrefundable.*

## **ADDITIONAL SPECIAL EVENT PERMITS**

### **Permit Process for Special Events**

The permit process begins when a completed Special Event application is submitted to the City. Upon receipt of the application the Special Events Permitting Manager distributes copies of the application to the City Special Events Committee for review. During the reviewing process, the applicant will be notified if the Committee requests additional information. Delay in providing the requested information may delay the Committee's ability to complete the review and issue a Special Event Permit for the event.

Each applicant is provided with a checklist of agencies regarding permits, forms, or licenses needed to receive the approved Special Event Permit. The check list with accompanying permits must be returned to the Special Events Permitting Manager at least thirty (30) days prior to the event. There is an application fee for the Special Event Permit.

Depending on the impact on City services, size and type of event, the applicant may be requested to attend a Special Events Committee meeting to clarify questions and concerns.

### **Additional Permits**

It is the applicant's responsibility to contact federal, state, or City agencies for other relevant permits including, but not limited to, food, cooking appliances, open flame, street closures, and parking.

### **Public Health Requirements**

To protect the health of the public, the following policies shall apply to all special events held in the City of Alexandria:

All special events shall provide adequate toilet facilities for the number of participants expected. If portable toilets are used, the recommendations of the Portable Sanitation Association International shall be followed.

However, as required by state health regulations, a minimum of one toilet for every 100 participants shall be provided. At least 5% of the portable toilets provided shall be handicapped-accessible. Adjacent to each toilet shall be a hand washing station providing running water, soap and either paper towels or a hand drying device. Waste water from hand washing stations shall be disposed of properly. In lieu of hand washing stations, hand sanitizer dispensers may be provided. The minimum number of hand washing stations or hand sanitizer dispensers shall equal the required number of toilets.

All events where diaper changing stations are provided shall comply with current CDC recommendations with the exception that instructions for cleaning and sanitizing the diapering station before and after use must be posted, but training does not have to be provided to the diaper station users.

All events where animals are exhibited or are otherwise present as part of the event shall comply

with current CDC (and the National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians’) recommendations.

All events at which food is served shall comply with the requirements of the Food and Food Handling Code of the City of Alexandria. Applications for permits for temporary food service shall be submitted at least 30 days prior to the event.

### **Fire**

The Fire Marshal will determine the appropriate permits required for each event.

### **Code Administration**

Code Administration will review applications to determine the appropriate permits required including, but not limited to, building permits for stages and other structures, and amusement permits.

### **Street Closures and Other Public Works**

Street closures are processed through a permit process coordinated by the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services as follows:

#### **Permits for parades/processions, foot races/walk-a-thons**

The event must be approved by the Special Events Committee.

A permit application must be filed, complete with the approvals from the Special Events Committee and a certificate of insurance for general liability. This approval process must be done at least five (5) business days before the event. If the street is to be closed during the event, a petition, signed by all residents/businesses within the block must also be submitted. If “No Parking” signs are required, you must make this request separately at the time you apply for the permit.

#### **Residential block party/street closure**

Block parties and street closures not associated with an event do not always require a Special Event Permit. An application, along with a petition signed by each property owner or primary resident/business in the block showing their agreement to close the block, and a certificate of insurance covering the event in the amount of \$1,000,000\*, naming the City of Alexandria as additional insured must be submitted to Transportation and Environmental Services.

The application must be submitted a minimum of five (5) business days before the scheduled block party/street closure. Please be advised that closing of arterial and collector streets is NOT permitted. There shall be no intersecting streets within the block where the party is to be held, or no more than one "T" intersecting street, alley or right- of-way. During the event, access into or out of the block will be available only to emergency vehicles. All activity granted by this permit must be contained entirely within the closed block.

Please note: The applicant is responsible for obtaining and placing required barricades. An Alexandria Police Officer, or a Transportation & Environmental Services Departmental Inspector, will inspect the barricade placement one hour prior to the event. If the barricades are not properly in place at that time, the permit may be revoked, and the block may not be closed.

The request for "No Parking" is not part of the request for street/block closures. If "No Parking" signs are required, applicants must make this request separately at the time when you apply for the street/block closure permit.

\*Waiver Provision - A waiver of the insurance requirement may be granted only if alcohol will not be present. The applicant will be required to sign an acknowledgment of this requirement. If alcohol will be present, a copy of the ABC permit will be required before the street closure permit can be issued.

## **INDEMNIFICATION**

The applicant shall indemnify and hold harmless the City of Alexandria, its officers, agents, employees and volunteers from any and all claims, causes of action, penalties, losses, expenses (including reasonable attorneys' fee) and any other liability for injuries or damages to persons or property resulting from the special event which caused by the omissions or authorized acts of the applicant officers, agents or employees.

If the City incurs any costs as a result if the applicant's failure to comply with any provisions, or if City property is destroyed or damaged by reason of a special event, the applicant shall reimburse the City for its actual costs, including the actual replacement or repair cost of the destroyed property. The City may retain any deposit or portion thereof as full or partial reimbursement for any such damage.

### **Insurance Requirements**

If a special event involves one or more of the following conditions, the applicant must obtain general liability insurance in the amount of one million dollars for the duration of the event, which names the City of Alexandria, its officers, agents and employee or volunteers as additional insured:

1. Closure of a major arterial or collector City street, as defined in the general site plan;
2. An anticipated attendance at the special event of 500 or more people;
3. A street closure anticipated to have a major effect on the flow of traffic in the area; i. e. closure of two or more intersections and rerouting of transit services or other public transportation.

No applicant shall be required to comply with the insurance requirement of this section if the activity proposed for the special event is protected by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution and the applicant produces evidence that complying with the insurance provision is impossible or so financially burdensome that it would preclude the proposed special event from occurring.

The amount of insurance required shall not be based on the existence or content of any expression involved in the event, or on the expected reaction of observers.

If insurance is required pursuant to this section, a certificate of insurance and an endorsement naming the City of Alexandria as an additional insured shall be provided to the City, and must be approved as to form and sufficiency by the City, at least thirty (30) days prior to the event. If the applicant is unable to obtain insurance or does not provide the City with the certificate of insurance or endorsement, the City Manager may obtain such insurance on behalf of the permit applicant and charge the permit applicant for the cost.



## **POST EVENT EVALUATION**

A post event evaluation shall be conducted by the Special Events Committee. The evaluation may include information from affected residents/businesses complaints received by the City and a meeting with the applicant. The post event evaluation may include, but is not limited to:

1. Completion of an After-Action Report and a written Program Evaluation
2. If applicable, review of feedback surveys distributed at the event.
3. If applicable, review of possible complaints from members of the community/event participants.
4. Obtain feedback from facility/park/property managers to ensure that nothing was damaged or stolen at the event site.
5. Reconciliation of event expenses ensuring that the City has received payment/reimbursement for services provided. In the case of City events, ensuring that vendors have received payment.

## DEFINITIONS

The following definitions shall be defined as; to all definitions highlighted words and phrases.

“**Annual Event**” an event recurring each year at approximately the same date and which has previously complied with permit requirements.

“**Applicant**” the authorized agent who completes the application, acts as primary contact, and is responsible for the special event.

“**City Produced Event**” an event for which the City produces the event and engages full financial responsibility.

“**City Services**” include services such as police, fire, and medic and other required services.

“**Closed Route**” a route along or across a public right-of-way on which nonemergency vehicle traffic is not permitted to proceed for the entire duration of a special event.

“**Event Management Plan**” a plan developed by the applicant to identify and mitigate potential health and public safety impacts and proposed solutions associated with the event. (Includes security plan, shelter plan, first aid plan etc).

“**Event Participants**” a person in attendance at an event, including spectators, vendors, event staff, City staff, and all others present for the purpose of the event.

“**Farmers Market**” an organized group that the City at a cost/fee use of designated open ( I.e. market square plaza and or parking lots for the purpose to sale merchandise, food items and various approved items.

“**Notice of Intent**” a notice to stage a special event submitted by an applicant which informs the City of a proposed event.

“**Parade**” any organized group marching or in procession, whether on foot, animal, or vehicle.

“**Permit Fee**” costs payable to the City of Alexandria and related agencies for the issuance of a required permit.

“**Procedure**” a procedure adopted by the Special Events Committee, to implement policy or code, or to carry out other responsibilities as may be required by the special event permit approval or by other codes, ordinances, or resolutions of the City or other agencies.

“**Race/Run**” an organized event upon a public street, sidewalk, or trail in which 10 or more persons participate by walking, running, riding a bicycle, or operating a wheelchair

“**Right-Of-Way Use Permit**” a permit issued pursuant to the Right-of-Way Use Codes (Section 5-2- 41-51).

**“Rolling Closure Route”** a street, sidewalk, trail, walkway, or other right-of-way closure to accommodate an event, where as the event passes, the right-of-way is reopened for use by the general public.

**“Special Event”** a short-term activity on public property that, due to the anticipated amount of attendees or the nature of the event characterized by:

- Requires City services to ensure compliance with Federal, state, or local laws;
- Involves use of City owned or managed property such as public streets, sidewalks, parking lots, alleys, parks or any other City owned/managed open space
- Involves closure or partial closure of any public right-of way, or requires traffic control procedures necessitating the involvement of the City of Alexandria police department or services from the Transportation Environmental Services Department personnel;
- Impairs emergency vehicles access or requires the attendance of Emergency Management Services personnel.

**“Sponsorship”** the relationship between a sponsor and an event, in which the sponsor pays a cash or in-kind fee in return for access to commercial potential associated with an event. The general aim of sponsorship is to raise the profile of the sponsoring organization, to sell more products or services and to reach particular target audiences.

**“Transportation Management/Parking Plan”** a plan developed by the applicant/sponsor to identify and mitigate traffic/parking impacts, conditions, and proposed solutions associated with a special event (includes transportation demand management measures).