


MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor England
Vice Mayor Kostka
Commissioner George
Commissioner Samora
Commissioner Rumrell

FROM: Max Royle, City Manager 

DATE: September 2, 2020

SUBJECT: New Year's Eve Fireworks Show: Update Report and Request for Commission to Decide Whether to Hold

Attached is the paper version of a PowerPoint presentation that Ms. Melissa Conlon, the City's Communications and Events Coordinator, will give at your September 14th meeting.

In summary her recommendation and that of the other members of the City staff (Chief Hardwick, Public Works Director Tredik, Finance Director Douylliez, and the City Manager) involved with putting on the City's New Year's Eve each year is that it not be held this year.

The main reasons for this recommendation are:

1. The City cannot limit the number of attendees to the 3,750 that the County says it will allow in the pier park. The City must obtain a County permit to hold the event in the park and to use the pier as a launching platform for the fireworks.
2. The six-foot social distancing requirement between attendees will be impossible to enforce and could subject possible exposure to the virus the City's employees (police officers and Public Works employees) as well as the County deputies and St. Augustine police officers who provide security at the event.
3. The City should not hold an event normally attended by thousands that could contribute to the spread of Covid-19.
4. The TDC will not provide a grant this year that helps pay for some of the operating costs. In a lean budget year, this means that the City would be responsible for all the costs, except for the \$25,000 for the fireworks and except for whatever sponsorship money Ms. Conlon can get. The \$25,000 for the fireworks comes from TDC money and will still be provided if the City holds the event.
5. For transportation between satellite parking lots and the pier park, the City would have to hire double the number of buses, which is usually 11, needed for the event, which will create additional expense. The additional buses would be needed so that social distancing can be maintained on them and because the buses will have to be sanitized after EACH trip, likely by City personnel, which will create additional cost as well as exposure.
6. Without the buses, the City's residential areas could be overwhelmed with persons parking vehicles in them, possibly blocking driveways and leaving behind litter.

7. No other area cities are holding a New Year's Eve fireworks show, nor does it appear that any other in the entire state, including Disney World, are considering having a show. This could mean that attendance at a show in our City could be greater than usual.

On the last page of her presentation that Ms. Conlon proposes several "alternative event ideas." None of them will draw the large crowd and create the problems that the fireworks show would cause.

ACTION REQUESTED

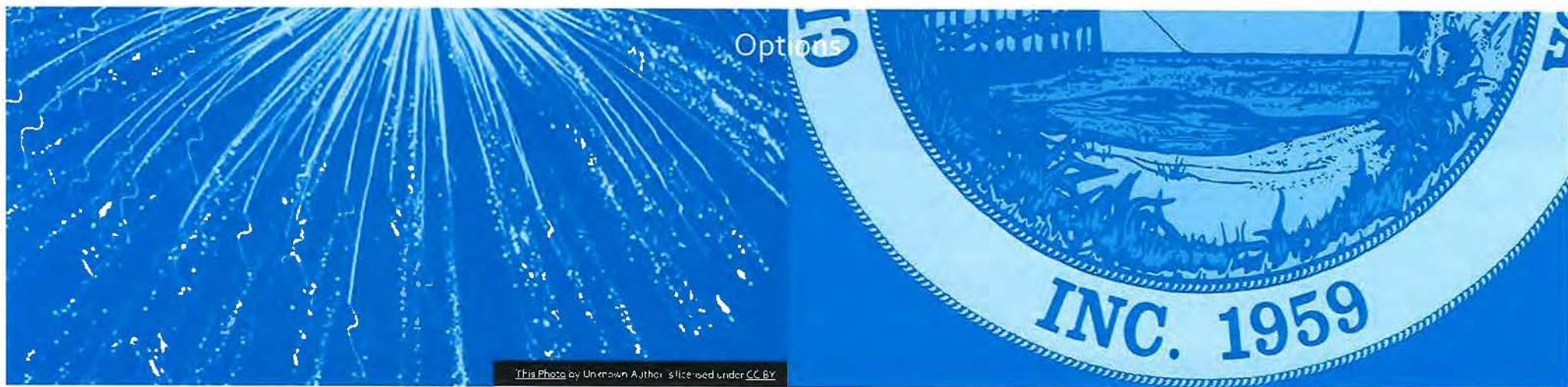
It is that you decide whether the City's New Year's Eve fireworks show (Beach Blast Off) should be cancelled this year.

We need to know your decision now because contracts, such as with the fireworks company, will have to be signed in October. Once the fireworks contract is signed, the City must pay half (\$12,500) of the \$25,000 due for the fireworks.



BEACH BLAST OFF INTO 2021

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COUNTY GUIDELINES FOR PERMIT UNDER PHASE 2

- Under the Phase 2 guidelines, the County would allow a maximum of 3,750 people at the Pier for BBO.

The CoSAB has no way of creating a perimeter that the public could not access.

- A plan for social distancing to maintain CDC guidelines of 6' distance.

The CoSAB does not have the resources to make sure people are maintaining 6' distance.

The plan to maintain the maximum allowed.

The CoSAB does not have the resources to maintain the limit of 3,750.

- Conclusion:

The CoSAB cannot meet the guidelines set by the County to receive the permit for BBO into 2021.

TDC – NOT PROVIDING FUNDING FOR 2020

- What is the official reason the TDC panel decided not to fund any events before January 1, 2020? The TDC decided not to fund the Annual & Special Events that occur before January 1, 2020 out of the abundance of caution due to the current coronavirus situation and the impact of gathering in large crowds and organizations not being able to secure permits and being cancelled at the last minute.
- Can the fireworks funding possibly be applied to another time in FY21 with special permission? It is possible that funding could be available for Fireworks at another time during FY21 (Oct 1, 2020 – September 30, 2021). This will require approval.
- The ACH grant funding that we would have received for Beach Blast Off can NOT be applied to a future time in FY21, that funding will now be applied to events that were already scheduled after January 1, 2021. Yes, this is the recommendation of the TDC.

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER FOR BBO INTO 2021

- Social Responsibility to our Community
- Health, Welfare and safety of our employees and volunteers
- Cost to the City

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY - THINGS TO CONSIDER...



- Does the City want to encourage a large gathering of people during a pandemic?
- Do the residents want large amounts of people to gather during a pandemic?
- There is no way to ensure social distancing due the location of our event. There are too many points of entry.

HEALTH, WELFARE AND SAFETY – THINGS TO CONSIDER...

- Can the City provide a safe environment for event for residents and visitors attending the event?
- Can the City ensure a safe environment for workers/employees and volunteers with the exposure to large amounts of people?
- The City has already been turned down by a handful of its regular volunteers for this year due to concerns over COVID-19.



COST TO THE CITY - POTENTIAL APPROXIMATE COSTS

Item	Estimated Cost	Mandatory vs. Optional	
Equipment – Light Towers/George Buggys	\$2,104	Mandatory	
Port-o-lets	\$5,775	Mandatory	
Labor/Overtime	\$6,000 - \$10,000	Mandatory	
Meals for workers and volunteers	\$500	Mandatory	
OPTIONAL Costs			
Buses (see next page)	\$11,000-\$23,000	Optional	Was covered in TDC grant. Cost greatly increased due to number of buses needed for safety.
Tables and Chairs	\$850	Optional	Possibly placed in old Kids zone area



TRANSPORTATION

- BUSES
- Currently following Duval County's Guidelines, 43 people per bus.
- 22-25 buses to make up for what we usually carry, including 4 ESE buses.
- Cost is \$1,029.00 Per bus, this includes cost of sanitizing each bus between runs, for 10.5 hours.
- 11 buses total cost: \$11,319.00
- 22 buses total cost: \$22,638.00
- 25 buses total cost: \$25,725.00

RECOMMENDATION – CANCEL BBO INTO 2021

- COUNTY GUIDELINES THAT THE CITY CANNOT MEET

Maximum number of people allowed at the event is 3,750.

- NO TDC FUNDING THIS YEAR

- INTERNAL STAFF RECOMMENDS CANCELLING BBO THIS YEAR

All Department Heads including SABPD recommend cancelling BBO this year.

ALTERNATIVE EVENT IDEAS

- Local Shop and Dine - promoting local businesses and vendors
- Art Walk – promoting local businesses and Artists
- ‘Locals only’ Farmer’s Market with food and gifts for purchase – promoting local vendors as well our local businesses

Or some sort of combination of the above ideas, perhaps an afternoon into evening event where we would showcase our lights along the Blvd.

- Possible ‘Nights of Lights’ Season similar to the City of St. Augustine