



Legislation Text

File #: 22-2990, **Version:** 1

Subject:

CONFERENCE SESSION ON A SPECIAL EVENTS ORDINANCE

BACKGROUND SUMMARY:

The Town of Vienna regularly hosts and permits special events on public property, in the Town rights-of-way, and on private property. Events in the past have included Viva Vienna, the 4th of July Fireworks, events at the Town Green, drive-in movies at the Maple Avenue Shopping Center, and the Halloween Parade.

Special events are a big part of Vienna's identity and are supported in the Town's Strategic Plan and Comprehensive Plan. While they play a big role in building the sense of community and supporting economic development, they are not formally regulated in the Town Code. Currently, Parks & Recreation have their own special event application and policy for the Town Green. Police have their own special event application and policy for races, runs and block parties that affect public roads. There is no universal application or policy for businesses to host events on private property. This fragmented approach has created challenges for Town staff, especially with the increase in demand for events, both from businesses and Town non-profit partners. Below is a list of some of the challenges:

- Lack of unified application for events.
- Lack of formal process for review of all types of events
- Lack of requirements for special event application for all scenarios, including information that may be required for the Police Department, Parks and Recreation, and Public Works to anticipate the number of employees that may be necessary to assist with the event
- Ambiguities on what qualifies as a special event
- No cap on how many special events a business or non-profit can hold per year
- Need to develop a standard submission deadline on when an event organizer has to submit the application (ex. application must be submitted so many days before the actual event)
- No requirement to show a parking plan for event organizers and event participants

Excerpts from the Strategic Plan:

Vienna as a complete community (page 5)

The Town of Vienna will embrace its independent, active, and welcoming character as a unique place to live-work-play-dine-shop in Northern Virginia. Our traditional events and year-round activities enrich the Town's vibrant, caring, and inclusive community identity and spirit.

Implement strategies that encourage residents to shop locally and regional citizens to visit shop-dine in Vienna. (page 16)

Investigate hosting harmonious themed events (such as Restaurant Week or a Chocolate Escape) that feature local businesses.

Encourage more utilization, visibility of Town Green by considering an interactive water feature, installing furniture, and other unique opportunities.

Increase the quality and quantity of event programming. (page 22)

Enhance event sponsorship opportunities for businesses.

Evaluate existing events and explore new events and locations, including those that support businesses.

Formalize Town alcohol policy for events and public spaces.

Expand concert series and other Town Green events.

Explore increasing event funding and staffing on a net neutral basis.

Excerpts from the Comprehensive Plan:

Objective 5 - Promote tourism and temporary urbanism. (page 54)

Continue to enhance the availability of special events, festivals, and celebrations that bring tourists and regional residents into the Central Business District.

Objective 2 - Increase the number of residents bicycling to work and to school as well as other activities. (page 67)

Evaluate and recommend plan to establish temporary detours for primary bicycle routes during special events when significant conflicts between pedestrians and bicycles may occur.

Parking and Curb Space Management (page 72)

The expanding portfolio of special events and festivals places added pressure on parking supply in selected locations during these events.

Parks and Recreation Chapter (page 121)

The Department of Parks and Recreation is also responsible for coordinating the many special events that are a hallmark of the Town's sense of community. These include the concerts and programs at the Town Green, and support for events such as Viva! Vienna, the Halloween Parade, Oktoberfest, and the Church Street Stroll.

Objective 2 - Maintain or improve existing facilities and programs. (Page 128)

Hold Town events and festivals, and identify opportunities for new events and partnerships.

OVERVIEW:

Town Staff, including representatives from the Departments of Parks and Recreation, Public Works,

Planning and Zoning, Economic Development, and the Police Department have held several meetings to work on developing a special events ordinance to discuss with Town Council. The ordinance is based on several ordinances from the surrounding Northern Virginia jurisdictions with the form and layout primarily based on the Town of Purcellville's special event ordinance. The draft, which is attached, is not meant to be a final version of any ordinance but is meant to be a point of discussion for Town Council and staff.

The ordinance is proposed to be part of Chapter 2 of the Town Code. Because it is not part of the Zoning Ordinance, it would not require the review and recommendation of the Planning Commission.

SUMMARY/STAFF IMPRESSIONS:

Town Staff supports the creation of a special events ordinance.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends an additional conference session with Town Council before consideration of adoption of any ordinance.