



Special Events Ad Hoc Committee Meeting

October 28, 2015

1. Public Comments
2. Review of Revised Draft Recommendations
3. Action Items
4. Next Steps: OTDB reviews recommendations at the annual retreat



Special Events Ad Hoc Committee Meeting

Minutes

October 21, 2015

Attending: Cory Garman Committee Chair, Mark Lore Promotions Committee Chair, Steve Maclin OTDB Member, Scott Spriggs OTDB Member, Jennifer Bell Downtown Manager, Charlie Fish, David Smith, JP Murphy. (Onofrio Castiglia)

1. Public Comments

2. Review of Draft Recommendations –

A. Procedural Recommendations (Comments)

1. Event Proposal Review. Is one month long enough for review if there are questions? Recommend submitting proposals prior to the budget cycle process (approx. November). New RFP should go out in January, contractor hired approx. May, start work November. "For review by the OTDB" Advisory board, so approval is a recommendation. Suggestion to move #6 above #1 because if follow manual, proposal review would less time consuming. **Change last word "plan" to "outline."**
2. Post Event Evaluations. Need more formal evaluations than current ones. Clarify what type of deliverables. Need consistency across events. Seems participation from businesses is lacking. Charlottesville uses survey monkey at events. We could use for businesses.
3. Promote and Advise all city-approved events. **Change a. to read communicate, not coordinate.** Focus on communication between public and private organizers. Eliminate competitiveness. Current contract emphasizes helping to bring new events. Not in charge of or responsible for other events. Provides support. Promoter part is key. Concern about misinformation going out regarding city policies.
4. Could be part of #3.
5. Sub-Contractors. **Omit from list.** Nothing prohibits sub-contracting.
6. Events Manual. Discussion over whether contractor should be involved in the creation process. How to do events in the city. Current contract involves branding, marketing, promotions. These recommendations don't include much on those topics. Comment that other contractors won't want to be involved in semantics.
7. Surplus Funds. Exclusive of contractor. The budget is set. Surplus goes to the general fund. **Not within the scope of the RFP.** Current contract has incentive piece that

could be removed. Do incentives make much sense if role is more of coordinator? Is sub-contract, who gets incentives?

Request to see new RFP before it is issued. Jennifer noted that this is the time for input. Sometimes there is a public input phase. Draft Recommendations is OTDB's position.

B. Event Recommendations (Comments)

#3. Add "and Sundays"

#4. Charlie noted that the idea that businesses are not productive on holidays is not accurate.

#5/#6. Jennifer noted that the city will likely not name specific organizations. Can give examples.

3. Action Items

- **Need recommendation for next meeting.**
- **Mark and Charlie will work on #1 (schedule of events).**
- **Steve will work on #2 (event proposal template).**
- **Scott will work on #3 (evaluation template).**
- **Cory and David will work on #4 (event manual).**

Jennifer will send out existing resources to work with. Will need by October 29 for November 5 meeting.

4. Next Ad Hoc Committee meeting October 28, 8 a.m.

OTDB Special Event Ad Hoc Committee Recommendations – Draft ver.3 - 10/28/15

OTDB Vision:

To be a vibrant and inclusive Main Street community that combines small-town charm and big-city opportunity and is nationally recognized as a desirable place to work, live, and thrive.

OTDB Mission:

The OTDB inspires community involvement, fosters economic vitality, encourages creativity and entrepreneurship, and attracts residents, visitors, and investors to Old Town Winchester.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this OTDB Ad Hoc Committee is to make recommendations to help inform City staff in the creation of a RFP for a Special Events Organizer and Promoter. The intent of this recommendation is to refine and improve upon the existing events program. The goals of Old Town events are to bring people to Old Town, to create a sense of place, to enhance the brand, and to create partnerships with local groups and businesses.

Methodology

Committee members researched publicly funded events programs in ten different communities: Front Royal, VA; Staunton, VA, Harrisonburg, VA; Charlottesville, VA; Waterford, VA; Hampton, VA; Norfolk, VA; Lebanon, NH; St. Augustine, FL; Lititz, PA. The Committee reviewed these findings, along with contract templates, official documents, as well as accounts from verbal conversations. After two meetings discussing the research materials the Committee determined the next step in the process was to draft a document summarizing recommendations for the future RFP.

Summary of Findings

The members of the Committee agree that events are an important part of the success and growth of Old Town. We believe the events programs should continue, and should be periodically adjusted for the greater benefit of Old Town. The initial RFP for Special Events Contractor focused primarily on the creation of events for Old Town Winchester. After a period of three years, the goal of a vibrant and active downtown has been realized. This achievement has been reached not only through city funded programs, but also through events generated by community and private organizations. As such, the new RFP and events contract should restructure the duties of the Contract to focus more on providing support and marketing for both public and privately organized/funded events. All events reflect upon the quality of the Old Town experience, and contribute to the vitality of Old Town. It is imperative that all City approved events support the mission and vision of the OTDB.

The majority of communities that we surveyed operate events with a non-profit business model, which often is not funded by a special tax assessment. None of these examples had an effective method for gauging the overall success of events or their impact on local businesses. As this outcome is difficult to measure, greater importance should be placed on the direct involvement of Old Town stakeholders. There should be events that focus on retail and shopping downtown. There should be events that focus on dining downtown. There should be events that focus on living downtown. The new RFP needs to include events that appeal to multi-cultural residents, as well as the "Creative Class" which figures so prominently in our brand.

The following items should be considered for the future Special Events Contractor RFP:

Procedural Recommendations

1. Written event proposals provided by Contractor for review by the OTDB at least two months prior to budget deadline. Proposals should include: name of event, date(s), purpose of event, target audience, concept overview, projected budget, staffing, location, marketing strategy, and operation outline.
2. Contractor must take an active role in promoting and advising all City-approved events.
 - a. Communicate with other city event organizers
 - b. Provide complete city schedule of public and private events
 - c. Provide promotional support for all City-approved events
3. City events should not occur in direct competition with community events
4. Contractor to create an Old Town events manual in cooperation with OTDB and City Staff to uphold consistent quality and branding.
 - a. Formalize preferred procedures for events
 - b. Establish branding and messaging hierarchy for marketing materials
 - c. Identify acceptable locations of portable restrooms and vendors
 - d. Post-event evaluation to be submitted to OTDB.
 - i. Evaluation template for contractor performance and stakeholder satisfaction to be completed and submitted with event report.

Events Recommendations

1. Create events or programs during the winter months and early spring.
2. Remove events from the schedule that do not support OTDB mission or are not sustainable.
3. More daytime events on Saturdays and Sunday
4. Schedule city events around holidays
5. Create a new retail-focused event in partnership with stakeholders, such as OTWBA.
6. Partner with organizations to promote and support cultural events, such as Winchester Main Streets Foundation

Actions Items

1. Revise scope of events including description of the number, type, and occurrence of events
2. Event proposal template
3. Evaluation template
4. Event manual content requirements, including existing draft of OTDB Events Policy

Additional Considerations

1. Surplus funds generated by Old Town events should return to the OTDB budget to be utilized to market and promote Old Town.
2. Contractor should be hired with sufficient time to prepare event proposals for November OTDB retreat.
3. OTDB would like to review the new RFP before it is put out for bids and have the opportunity to give feedback.

Draft Scope of Events

For purposes of the RFP, future downtown events could be divided into six categories. Presumably only # 1-2 or 1-3 might actually figure in the RFP:

1. Well-established, City-Sponsored/Financed events (“Signature” events) to be organized by the contractor:

- KidzFest (May)
- Rockin’ Independence Eve (July)
- OctoBeer Fest (October)
- OT Parade/Santa’s Hq/Holly Jolly (December)

2. New City-Sponsored events aimed at increasing diversity and occurrence of OT events on weekend daytime hours, also to be organized by the contractor. Possibilities are:

- Winter-Is-Ending Event (Late February). Outdoor Family activities (e.g. Ice Sculptures, Carriage Rides, etc.) combined with indoor activities (Bright Box?)
- Flower, Home & Garden Show (April). This would be a revival of a former, OTWBA-sponsored event which was popular but allowed to lapse. It might be on the same weekend as the current OTWBA Rally in the Alley.
- John Kirby Day (June?). Jazz/Soul/Blues concert in the Taylor Pavilion, perhaps co-sponsored by the Coalition for Racial Unity & the local NAACP chapter.
- Sports/Football-Themed Family event on the Mall, non-alcoholic, perhaps with participation of local school sports teams & inclusion of merchant contests/prizes (late August or September).
- Weekend Afternoon Event(s) Aimed at Teens/Young Adults. Month(s) tbd. One possibility could be showings of cult films, e.g. classic horror and/or comedy flicks, etc.

3. Established, City-Sponsored Events to be organized by city staff/volunteers with assistance as needed from the contractor:

- Chocolate Escape (early February)
- Family Movies (June-July)
- Classic Movies (June-August)
- Taylor Pavilion Sunday Concerts (June-September)
- Spooktacular (October)

4. Established, Privately-Sponsored Events where the city lends publicity support and financial support and/or support-in-kind:

- OTWBA Egg Hunt (April)
- Bluemont Concerts (June-August)

(Continued)

5. Established, Privately-Sponsored Events which deserve priority in city publicity support:

- Restaurant Week (March)
- Rally In The Alley (April)
- Loudoun Street Mile (May)
- Hop Blossom (June)
- WATTS Happening in OT (September)
- Main Street Ag Day (September)
- Skyline Film Festival (September)
- Celebracion (September)
- Post-Holiday Sales (December). This is a possible new event.

6. "New" Privately-Sponsored Events:

These might include the current three Friday Night Live Events and the Downtown Tailgate – which could be turned over to private organizers if there is interest – as well as other initiatives.