

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

**SUBJECT: REQUESTS FOR “FIREFLY COUNTRY NIGHT” ON MAIN STREET
SEPTEMBER 8**

BACKGROUND:

In the past several years, the Main Street Cultural District (MSCD) has held an annual Firefly Country Night on Main Street, which features country musicians performing on a stage placed in the 200 block of Main Street. This year, Jess Clyde of London Underground and Bill Malone of Café Diem have assumed responsibility for organizing the event. MSCD has endorsed the event, and will receive a portion of the proceeds from the organizers. **This report addresses the second of the two Firefly Country Night events the organizers plan this summer, which will take place Friday, September 8th.**

To facilitate this event, organizers have made the following requests:

- Closure of Main Street between Kellogg Avenue and Douglas Avenue from 6:00 a.m. to 11:59 p.m on Friday, September 8th
- Closure of 45 parking spaces within the closed area (\$81 loss to the Parking Fund)
- Temporary Obstruction Permit and blanket Vending License (\$50 license fee)

An alcohol service license will be presented to City Council for approval at a later date. This event is proposed to be held on the Friday prior to the Iowa State-Iowa football game. Organizers anticipate approximately 1,500 people to attend this event. City staff has met with the organizers to discuss concerns related to safety at this event. As staff indicated in a memo to the City Council dated February 24th, a substantial proportion of those cited and arrested during football game weekends for nuisance and alcohol violations are individuals who live outside Ames. Firefly Country Night tends to draw a crowd both from Ames and elsewhere, as the event talent is nationally known.

On typical Cy-Hawk game weekends, the Police Department has historically begun to see an uptick in call activity in other parts of Ames by Friday. In addition, Ames Police officers will be working mandatory overtime shifts on game day, which makes it difficult to secure additional officers for a special event held the day prior.

To mitigate these issues, organizers have proposed enhancing the event security and adjusting some of the environmental factors, including:

- Shifting the event time earlier so the headliner starts at 7:30 p.m. and the event is over by 9:00 p.m.

- Ending beer sales at 8:00 p.m.
- Limiting total attendance to 1,500
- Limiting pre-sale ticket sales to 1,000 and reserving 500 tickets for door sales to avoid turning away large numbers at the door who might become disgruntled
- Hiring a security firm more experienced with large events and increasing the number of security personnel from eight to fourteen
- Utilizing security teams who will patrol inside and outside the event area
- Setting price points that will cater to an older audience.

Staff should note that this event has been held successfully in the past, with only a few incidents requiring intervention by security or police.

Staff has learned that the event was proposed for this date because a national act had an opening. Moving the event to another date would not be possible. The organizers have indicated that their deadline to sign the headliner is approaching soon.

Given the increased calls for service anticipated that evening, City staff has concerns about the ability of police or other emergency services to quickly respond in the event they are needed at the concert site. These concerns were shared with event organizers and with the City Council on February 28. The City Council directed staff at that meeting to accept the event application.

Since that discussion, organizers have agreed to bolster their efforts with regard to peer security, which is important to identify trouble spots early on and intervene in a way that keeps attendees satisfied with the activities. Additionally, organizers will have their security professionals provide bike patrols of the alleys and other areas near the event that are out of plain sight. Finally, organizers will provide a cooling off area for any patron who may need to be calmed down before returning to the main event area.

The event application indicates organizers will communicate event details to affected businesses by going door-to-door, placing signs in the event area prior to the event, and distributing details via email to businesses in the district.

Although a portion of this event's proceeds will be donated to MSCD, it is staff's view that since the MSCD is not directly organizing the event, it is being undertaken as a private business activity open to the public. Therefore, City staff recommends that the organizers be required to reimburse the City for lost parking meter revenue and the Vending License. These costs had been waived in the past when MSCD organized the event.

Typically, events held on public streets have been undertaken by non-profit entities or community organizations (e.g. MSCD, CAA). However, there have been a handful of events approved by the City Council where the event was for the benefit of a for-profit entity. In 2010, Olde Main held an outdoor concert in the CBD lot south of Main Street in conjunction with the All-American Weekend activities organized by the Ames Convention and Visitor's Bureau. The City Council also approved the use of public

parking spaces for an event held by the Ames Tribune in 2010. In 2009, the City Council approved a request from Café Diem to hold an outdoor concert on Main Street. Anniversary celebration events on public property have also been authorized for a variety of organizations, including KHOI Community Radio, Youth and Shelter Services, and Wheatsfield Cooperative, although it should be noted that each of these anniversary celebrations were for not-for-profit organizations.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Approve the requests as indicated above and require reimbursement for lost parking revenue and the Vending License.
2. Approve the requests as indicated above, but do not require reimbursement for lost parking revenue and the Vending License.
3. Do not approve the event.

MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Firefly Country Night has been successfully held in previous years, and the organizers of this year's event have been directly involved with the planning and execution of the prior iterations of the event when it was produced by the Main Street Cultural District. However, this particular event proposal is challenging due to the substantially larger numbers of people expected to be in the Ames area over the weekend the event is proposed to be held. This influx of people increases the calls for emergency services, which may make it more difficult for those services to arrive in a timely manner should a need arise.

Hosting a large concert during the Iowa State-Iowa football weekend brings unknown challenges, since it has not been done previously. Additionally, doing so may encourage other groups to propose similar events during football weekends or around other major activities. In the past, staff has worked with organizations to schedule their events around home football weekends to avoid over-burdening the City's resources during those times.

Given the level of activity in Ames that evening, staff's preference would be to minimize the potential for a large gathering to get out of control. The ideal method of accomplishing this is to not schedule such gatherings for that time in the first place. However, staff recognizes the City Council has stated an interest in having this event.

In addition to safe execution, the City Council should consider whether it is appropriate to use City property to host what is primarily a for-profit event. It appears from a review of events held since 2009 that requests have been approved by the City Council to use City property for various purposes. Key to these events being recommended for approval by City staff has been the endorsement of the recognized business

association. These organizations (MSCD and CAA) have agreed in their contracts for funding with the City to assist in reviewing events proposed by others to be held in their respective areas.

In the past five years, a few for-profit events have been proposed by individuals with little to no track record of successfully hosting events. The respective business associations did not feel those events would be successful in advancing the goals of the district. After receiving an indication that neither staff nor the business association recommended approval of the events, organizers of these events did not pursue City Council approval. Based on the experiences in collaborating with MSCD and CAA to review events, City staff puts great weight on their recommendations to determine whether a proposed activity furthers the goals these associations have developed for their respective areas. These organizations are also critical in providing support to notify affected businesses.

Assuming the City Council is comfortable with the potential risk associated with this event on this specific weekend and feels organizers are taking appropriate steps to conduct the event safely, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council adopt Alternative No. 1, thereby approving the requests as indicated above and requiring reimbursement for lost parking revenue and the Vending License.

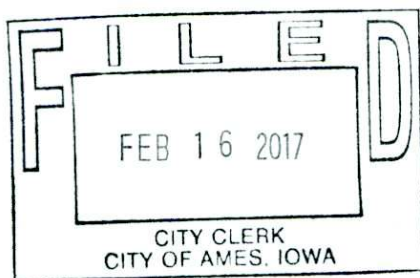


CITY OF

Ames™

SPECIAL EVENT APPLICATION**SUMMARY OF EVENT****DESCRIPTION****Event Name** Firefly Country Nights

Description The Firefly Planning Committee would like to host a concert called Firefly Country Nights on Friday September 8th. Similar to past Firefly concerts, there will be several local and national country musicians, food, and a gated area where beer will be served. The music, food and beer will be located in the 200 block of Main Street in front of London Underground and Cafe Diem.

**Event Category**

☐ Athletic/Recreation
☐ Exhibits/Misc.
☒ Festival/Celebration
☐ Parade/Procession/March
☒ Concert/Performance
☐ Farmer/Outdoor Market
☐ Other (please explain)

Anticipated Attendance

Total 1500 Per Day _____

DATE/TIME

Setup	Date <u>09/08/2017</u>	Time <u>6:00 am</u>	Day of Week <u>Friday</u>
Event Starts	Date <u>09/08/2017</u>	Time <u>4:00 pm</u>	Day of Week <u>Friday</u>
Event Ends	Date <u>09/08/2017</u>	Time <u>10:00 pm</u>	Day of Week <u>Friday</u>
Teardown Complete	Date <u>09/08/2017</u>	Time <u>11:59 pm</u>	Day of Week <u>Friday</u>

Rain Date, if applicable _____

Rain Location, if applicable _____

LOCATION

Region

(Select one or more)

- ☒ Main Street Cultural District (Downtown)
Campustown District
Iowa State University Property
City Parks
Other (please explain)

Please note that events occurring in the Downtown, Campustown, in City parks, or on ISU property require prior approvals. A letter of support will be required from CAA if the event occurs in Campustown or from MSCD if the event occurs in Downtown. Please contact the appropriate office well in advance:

Downtown - Main Street Cultural District: (515) 233-3472

Campustown - Campustown Action Association: (515) 450-8771

Iowa State University - Events Authorization Committee: (515) 294-1437

events@amesdowntown.org

director@amescampustown.com

eventauthorization@iastate.edu

CONTACTS

Host Organization

London Underground

Local Contact (Required)

Must be present during event

Name: Jess Clyde

Address: 212 Main Street

Telephone: (515) 233-8500

Cell phone: (515) 460-1019

Must be available by cell phone during event

Email: jaclyde77@gmail.com

At least ten business days prior to the event, Organizer must submit Emergency Contact List, including names and numbers of all coordinators, volunteers, and location assigned to each.

Yes No

☒ ☐ Is this an annual event? How many years have you been holding this event? 3

☒ ☐ Is this event open to the public?

☐ ☒ Is your event being held in conjunction with another event (e.g. *Farmers' Market, 4th of July*, etc.)?

If yes, please list



March 2, 2017

Mayor and City Council
City of Ames
515 Clark Ave
Ames, IA 50010

Dear Mayor Ann Campbell and City Council,

The Ames Main Street Cultural District supports the closure of the 200 block of Main for annual Firefly Country Nights on Thursday July 14, and Friday, September 8. Both of these concerts, while privately managed, organized, and promoted by Bill Malone, will be a fundraisers for the Main Street Cultural District. Events of this nature help MSCD achieve its vision of making downtown Ames the primary destination of Central Iowa by creating an economically vibrant district with unique living, dining, and entertainment experience.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Paul Livingston".

Paul Livingston
2017 MSCD Board President



Contemporary Services Corporation



Friday, March 3rd, 2017

To whom it may concern:

I am writing this letter today in regards to the proposed September 8th Firefly Country Night event. In working with Bill Malone over the last few days/weeks, I understand the city's concerns and the goals regarding public safety surrounding the event.

In talking with Bill, and listening to his proposed timelines/plans for the event, I feel he has done his due diligence in hoping to contain/limit alcohol related issues throughout the duration of the event.

We have been fortunate enough to work this event last year, and in the Ames community since 2009 with VEISHEA Live. We have also been the primary provider for Iowa State University since 2011. With that, we have a long track record for being able to handle events, such as Firefly Country Night, in the Ames and Des Moines area for a number of years.

Bill and I have been working together, to create a staffing plan to ensure we have adequate staffing numbers to handle the expected crowd in, and outside, the performance area. We understand that this given weekend puts a strain on the city's public safety resources, and due to that, we have increased our overall numbers to ensure we have enough personnel to respond to issues as they arrive.

As with any client/event I work, I view it as a partnership with those that I am working with, to ensure a successful event. So, please don't hesitate to reach out should you have any questions/concerns regarding CSC's operation.

Thanks

Todd Long

CSC Branch Manager – Des Moines

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Office: 515.564.8165

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