

MEMORANDUM

TO: Roger L. Stancil, Town Manager

FROM: Brian Curran, Chief of Police
Chris Blue, Assistant Chief of Police
Dan Jones, Fire Chief
Lance Norris, Public Works Director
Butch Kisiah, Parks and Recreation Director

SUBJECT: Report on Halloween Planning

DATE: October 12, 2009

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to inform the Mayor and Council on current plans for managing expected Halloween activities in Chapel Hill.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

The observance of Halloween on Franklin Street, which is not sponsored by the Town, had grown in recent years to an event of nearly 80,000 attendees in 2007. As the event grew, we saw increased alcohol abuse, observed fewer people in costume, and we experienced traffic gridlock on the major corridors leading into our central business district and in surrounding neighborhoods. The event was managed by involving hundreds of law enforcement personnel from area jurisdictions, fire personnel from surrounding agencies, and it necessitated an extended overnight response from public works, engineering, and parks and recreation staff.

In 2008, the Town implemented a series of steps to reduce the crowd size and begin the process of making the Halloween celebration more of a local event. Through an aggressive media campaign, and in concert with officials from the University of North Carolina, the Town of Carrboro, the Downtown Partnership, and central business district merchants, the Town staff was able to reduce the number of attendees to approximately 35,000.

In an effort to build on last year's successful event, and continue the plan for a multi-year reduction in crowd size, we have already held a series of planning meetings with local partners. We have met with downtown bar and restaurant owners who have again agreed to hold "invitation only" parties on Halloween night and to restrict ingress after 1:00 AM. We have initiated a media campaign touting the Chapel Hill event as a "local" Halloween celebration and we will again employ the services of hundreds of area public safety personnel to manage the event. We hope to see crowd sizes comparable to those of 2008 and that we can continue the multi-year reduction strategy that we began last year.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Council receives the following information on strategies for the 2009 Halloween event:

- Conduct an aggressive public information campaign to reinforce last year's "locals only" message.
- Work with downtown restaurants and bars, the Downtown Partnership and the North Carolina Alcohol Law Enforcement agency to again reduce alcoholic beverage sales at downtown establishments that have permits to sell alcohol. Establishments will receive information on the daylight-savings time change and will be reminded that the 1:00 AM ingress restrictions will apply.
- Place parking monitors in surrounding residential neighborhoods to discourage illegal parking and disruption of neighborhoods.
- Brief Town employees working the event on the appropriate precautionary measures to guard against H1N1 Influenza.
- Alter the traffic management plan to reduce ingress and encourage egress from the Central Business District.
- Utilize the UNC emergency contact system, and as is feasible public address systems in the downtown area to help guide or direct the crowds during an emergency or when the event is ending. We plan to begin clearing the street at 12:00 AM, as we did in 2008.
- Continue discussions with UNC-Chapel Hill administration staff and UNC-Chapel Hill student leaders to determine additional steps that can be taken to meet our goals of a smaller, local, safe event.