

Public Comments Received via Website
PRESCOTT PARK POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted on Thursday, April 27, 2017 at 13:55:08

city: Newmarket
state: New Hampshire

comments: Hi,
I know that as someone that doesn't live in Portsmouth my input doesn't carry much weight. I just wanted to let you know that my family and I have been going to the PPAF for most of my life. The plays and concerts have been drawing us into Portsmouth for almost 30 years and with us comes our money. Portsmouth has changed a lot over the years and we've been going there less and less as it gets less welcoming. Each new restriction on the park and the arts festival makes us feel less welcome and less willing to spend time and money in Portsmouth. I am saddened by the lack of support for the arts that I have been seeing thanks to a handful of new residents and loud complainers. Please support the arts festival. It has been such a great experience for myself and my family and I hope it continues to be there for future generations.

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted on Thursday, April 27, 2017 at 13:58:22

city: Kittery
state: Maine

comments: As someone who has worked professionally and given personally to ensure the success of the Prescott Park Arts Festival I just want to register my unwavering support for all that organization does to enrich the lives of seacoast citizens. When summer visitors come to our fair city they often remark how fortunate we are in our arts offerings. I have seen firsthand the enjoyment of the crowds, the economic boost to local merchants, and the knitting together of our community thanks to the robust offerings of PPAF. In recent years it seems some people have become disenchanted with PPAF, as well as other aspects of living in a vibrant city. In my opinion minor concessions can be made to accommodate neighbors from the most odious aspects of large, passionate crowds. But let us not begin to address problems that don't really exist (i.e. public alcohol consumption and drunkenness) in order to mollify a vocal minority. Let's just be thoughtful. Let's not drive PPAF out of business with unnecessary draconian measures. I trust you to be reasonable people with the community's best interest in mind. Thank You, Celina

Engage: Submit

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted on Thursday, April 27, 2017 at 21:14:42

city: Portsmouth
state: NH

comments: Please remember that PPAF is something that the rest of the state and country envies. It is an amazing asset and one that attracts people to live in Portsmouth and visit Portsmouth. It provides cultural arts for our small town and encourages people to enjoy the outdoors. It is family friendly and low cost entertainment for all ages. Do not make this less desirable or more difficult to keep. It is one of the best parts of Portsmouth and makes our high property values and taxes mean something. PPAF is a gem!
I like the satellite parking ideas. And potentially add more bike parking to encourage car free enjoyment.

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted on Friday, April 28, 2017 at 08:55:01

city: Portsmouth
state: NH

comments: Thank you all for listening to the neighbors of Prescott Park and for taking action that should result in a more pleasant summer experience for the audiences and for the neighborhood. Your plan to enforce the "no unattended blanket and chairs more than three hours prior to a performance" will mitigate some of the landscape damage experienced in previous seasons. The Portsmouth Herald reports that "I've got someone assigned to go down there to make sure that policy is adhered to..." I assume that person will be a City employee. My thought is that a City employee should not be the one to physically remove inappropriate blankets and chairs. That should be part of PPAF's responsibility and that a clearly identified PPAF staff member be the one to pick up and move unauthorized blankets, chairs and tarps. An appropriate response to those whose blanket or chair has been removed might take the form of "This is part of the Festival's responsibility to protect the Prescott Park grounds."

Engage: Submit

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted on Wednesday, May 3, 2017 at 06:25:00

city: Kittery
state: ME

comments: I would just like to say that we have been attending the Prescott Park shows since the early 80's when our children were little, and now we have grandchildren. And not once ever, not one time have I ever seen anyone consuming alcohol. Never seen a fight or disturbance as happens around bars. I'm also curious why nobody complained about that brick monstrosity next to the bridge blocking the river view. Thank you for your time,

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by March 30, 2017 at 10:11:45

city: Portsmouth
state: NH

comments: It is just before 7 pm on Sunday, June 18, and I just took a walk through the park to see the set up for the arts festival.

Some observations:

- 1 - The arts festival has cordoned off the park with flagged ropes so that you can't walk through the park from just south of the Hovey Fountain to the backstage area. I had to duck under ropes in order to avoid the gates;
- 2 - The gate to the formal garden closest to the concession pavilion is closed and locked;
- 3 - There is pre-show music playing, which the Working Group had put an end to in 2015;
- 4 - I smelled beer;
- 5 - The park is completely filled up, including up to and past the whale;
- 6 - The main act is Lake Street Dive, the opening act is Suitcase Junket. As the show starts at 7 pm, it is highly unlikely that with two acts it will finish at 9:30;
- 7 - The tour bus is idling in the driveway to the Sheafe Warehouse.

Last night, a rehearsal for Mary Poppins was held. It started at 7:45 and ended at 11:30. This is the latest that the arts festival has ever ended an event/performance/rehearsal/concert. It is one half-hour past the city's Nuisance Noise Ordinance, Section 3.403 B. Please see below:

<http://www.cityofportsmouth.com/cityclerk/noisecontrolordinance.pdf>

The rehearsal was pretty loud in terms of volume.

Engage: Submit

city: Portsmouth
state: NH

comments: Dear Committee Members,

I would like to register my full support of the PPAF as well as my dismay by the restrictions that have been placed on the festival this year. PPAF is a magnificent and integral part of this community. I feel the city should stand wholeheartedly with the Festival and encourage it to grow and further enrich our community. Portsmouth is a tourist town. And the festival is one of the biggest draw to our community. What better way to end a day as a visitor to our beautiful community than a show at Prescott Park, over looking the river? I feel that PPAF has bent over backwards to work with their neighbors and now it is time for the neighbors to show some flexibility and for this committee and the city to start being more supportive of PPAF. Please do not further restrict the shows at the park or try to restrict donation collection at the gate. Thank you for your time. I apologize for not being there in person. The time of the meetings makes it difficult for me to attend as I have two young children to get out the door and a full time position at a local business.

Engage: Submit

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted on Wednesday, June 21, 2017 at 23:23:53

city: Portsmouth
state: New Hampshire

comments: The recent Sunday night concert was louder than what I have heard before. I usually do not hear the concerts at my house, but this past Sunday night it was loud and clear in my backyard. How did this happen with all the efforts to reduce the volume. Turn the volume button down please. It doesn't seem that difficult of a request.

Engage: Submit

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted on Wednesday, June 21, 2017 at 23:42:47

city: Dover
state: NH

comments: As a Portsmouth resident from 1997-2015, a frequent visitor, and employee of Service Credit Union on Lafayette Rd., I wish my schedule allowed me to attend some of these meetings, but the bottom line is any reduction (or black nights) to the PPAF schedule will serve only to please a tiny minority, and not the greater good. Let's not make changes that make Portsmouth less attractive to tourists and the majority of residents who want as much programming as possible. PPAF brings life, excitement, and vibrancy to the city. Please stop with the baby steps toward killing that.

The list of concessions PPAF has already made is staggering (& costly, so let's not cut down their ability to collect donations!). There is no science whatsoever that the grass needs to "rest." When I moved to Portsmouth in 1997, it truly was an artists' community. Over the years, it really seems the city leaders continue to pay far too much attention to a very small group of whiners.

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted on Wednesday, June 21, 2017 at 23:52:00

city: Portsmouth
state: NH

comments: As a resident of Portsmouth, I wanted to provide my thoughts on the one vs two dark night question being discussed with regard to Prescott Park. The lively community environment was a major reason my husband and I moved to Portsmouth three years ago. We have discussed this with many friends and neighbors who also agree that the vibrancy of the downtown area, the arts offerings, and especially summertime events like the PPAF are essential to keeping Portsmouth attractive to both residents and visitors. I think that the town has done a good job of controlling event duration and noise to a very reasonable level, and there are far more economic positives for the town when an event is occurring than when they are not. I would hate to see the PPAF be reduced in 2018 (or ever!) for the benefit of "greener grass" (is the grass really always greener on the other side??) or calmer evenings in town. Portsmouth isn't meant to be a sleepy town, but eliminating events from the PPAF would be an step in that direction and any further steps would not only strip the town of its charm, but its economic stability. I don't want to live in a failing town, and I'm sure I speak for many when I say that. Keep Portsmouth lively, and encourage community rather than silencing it.

Engage: Submit

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted on Thursday, June 22, 2017 at 02:58:41

city: Portsmouth
state: NH

comments: This is regarding the city's plans to hold a meeting to discuss the idea of having two "dark nights" a week during the Prescott Park Arts Festival's 2018 summer season.
Please do not reduce programming for the Prescott Park Arts Festival. The shows in the park are a big part of what makes Portsmouth a great city to live and visit. Please look for alternative solutions to any perceived issues.
Thank you.

Engage: Submit

Below is the result of your feedback form. on Thursday, June 22, 2017 at 04:14:19

city: Portsmouth
state: NH

comments: I'm disappointed to hear the City is trying to enforce two dark nights at PPAF. PPAF is a treasure of the Seacoast community. There is no evidence to support the two dark nights recommendation. Why on earth would we consider limiting and event that is the essence of summer in our fair city? The only reason our town has so much abundant growth and economy is because we cultivate the arts and tourism. This would be a foolish move based on appeasing a couple of crabby rich South Enders. Please don't do anything to make this town LESS appealing.

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted on Thursday, June 22, 2017 at 04:46:07

city: Portsmouth
state: Nh

comments: One dark night is fine, but no more than that. The festival does not take up the whole park, and it's just for 3 months out of the year.. I am a Portsmouth native who returned to raise her children here.

Please stop pandering to a couple of cranks and let the festival continue to be successful. If Portsmouth loses this gen, it will be a big loss. Thank you.

Engage: Submit

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted on Thursday, June 22, 2017 at 05:30:53

city: Portsmouth

state: NH

comments: I own a business in town and I also live here. Prescott Park is a wonderful shining star in our city. Please do not darken it.

Engage: Submit

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted on Thursday, June 22, 2017 at 05:52:13

city: Portsmouth

state: NH

comments: PLEASE! Leave the PPAF alone. The frequency of the programming is one of the things that allows them to be solvent. I just got my family membership again this year. While I will probably only go see the play once, I will attend many concerts here and probably a movie or two. I'm already disappointed about the lack of permanent stage. I lost sympathy for the shutters when they started making random stuff up last year.

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted on Thursday, June 22, 2017 at 08:10:18

city: Portsmouth

state: NH

comments: Hello Prescott Park Committee,

I just wanted to write in to you as a tax paying citizen of Portsmouth who is 100% in support of the Prescott Park Arts Festival. This festival is one of the Crown Jewels of our city and one of my top reasons for living here. I have been going to shows here for many years and plan to for many more. The people responsible for this summer tradition do an amazing job bringing in such high quality performers and to be able to enjoy them on a summer evening with the grass between my toes is one of my favorite things to do.

Last night I attended my first show of the season and it was fantastic. The music was excellent and people were happy. I kept running into friends and neighbor's of mine and taking some time to catch up. The crowd was multigenerational and it was great to see kids and teens and tweens roaming around while their parents and grandparents were also enjoying the music. I had even forgotten to bring my member pins and the very friendly person at the gate said "no problem" and just waved me in. I couldn't have asked for a better evening. After the long cold winters we endure here, having a summer festival like PPAF is a giant breath of life into our collective spirit. We are so lucky to have this tradition in our city.

I feel like a small vocal minority of people are attempting to put a damper on this festival at the expense of the vast silent majority of townspeople who relish it. Please know that PPAF has the strong support of everyone I know in Portsmouth. As you read this realize I speak for many many people who may not have the time in their busy lives to attend committee meetings and send in letters in support of an institution they take for granted and count on every summer. Please do all that you can to ensure that this Portsmouth tradition Carey's on into future generations.

Engage: Submit

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by on Thursday, June 22, 2017 at 08:33:35

city: Portsmouth
state: NEW HAMPSHIRE

comments: Hello,

I wanted to comment on the proposed programming reduction (aka: two dark nights a week).

I am not in favor of a reduction, nor do I feel that a reduction would actually BENEFIT the residents of Portsmouth. I'm a Portsmouth resident, I try to make as many events in the park as I can and it is truly one of the highlights of summer. Its amazing to play volleyball on Pierce Island and then head on over the the amazing programming in the park. How would reducing something amazing be beneficial to the residents and patrons of Portsmouth???

Please don't let a few very obnoxious and vocal abutters take away amazing programming from the rest of us residents in Portsmouth.

I hope you guys come to the right conclusion...
Engage: Submit

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted on Thursday, June 22, 2017 at 09:03:08

city: Pepperell
state: Ma

comments: This issue is no longer about noise. It is about wealthy abutters trying to instill their will for their own benefit. They have no interest in the public good. When you buy a home next to a public park one should expect noise and support the public good.

Engage: Submit

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted on Thursday, June 22, 2017 at 11:31:32

city: Portsmouth
state: Nh

comments: Re: Concert Venue discussion at PP meeting on June 21st:
The vacant PanAm hanger at Pease would be a great venue for PPAF concerts.
Leave Our beautiful City Park to the local talent.

Engage: Submit

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted on Thursday, June 22, 2017 at 12:41:53

city: Kittery
state: ME

comments: I wish to state that I believe the continued efforts to restrict PPAF will result in hurting the city and the surrounding areas. The Festival is a wonderful attraction bringing families and tourists together, creating revenue for the city and surrounding areas. The complaints of those that live near the park are disingenuous. The park has had plays since I was a child in the 70's...if you choose to live in the nearby area you know that summers will bring music, entertainment and crowds to the park. I live on Badgers Is and we

have a major parking issue because of the bridge and the tourists but it is worth it to live so close and here the music travel across the river in the summer. Pls do not further restrict this wonderful and unique aspect of our Seacoast life.

Engage: Submit

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted on Thursday, June 22, 2017 at 16:06:54

city: Portsmouth
state: NH

comments: Hi,

I'd like to leave my input opposing any efforts to reduce the PPAF schedule. The schedule had already been reduced from past years and the events at the park are great for residents as well as bringing in tourists. It should be a source of pride for the city. We should support and encourage the PPAF as much as possible.

Engage: Submit

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted on Thursday, June 22, 2017 at 20:22:47

city: Portsmouth
state: New Hampshire

comments: Dear Advisory,

I am not in favor of imposing an extra "dark" night on PPAF (that is, 2 dark nights instead of one), unless the PPAF staff and board choose to do so on their own. I support PPAF with my membership and attendance. I directed shows in the park in the 80's then saw the festival take a downward slide. Looking at the data from this year's AFTA economic impact of the arts survey, shows me that an extra dark night would also negatively impact area businesses.

Engage: Submit

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted on Friday, June 23, 2017 at 06:39:49

city: Portsmouth
state: NH

comments: I want to write to express my support and ask for the city's continuing support of the programming at the Prescott Park Arts Festival. We are truly lucky to have the caliber of entertainment offered by the schedule and it draws a tremendous amount of energy, tourism and business in this city.

I've worked in MA for many years, and few people had heard of or visited Portsmouth even 5 short years ago. Now, Portsmouth is a destination (due to the efforts of many) and PPAF is a summer destination (due to the efforts of the PPAF). Please continue to support the artistic and economic vitality of the city by supporting this festival.

Engage: Submit

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted on Thursday, July 13, 2017 at 08:00:26

city: Portsmouth
state: NH

comments: First let me say that I am disappointed that the upcoming meeting on July 19th will be held at 7:30 am, a time when many Portsmouth residents, including me, will be on their way to work and thus unable to attend. It seems to me that the entire purpose of a public meeting is undermined when you schedule it at a time when many of the public cannot be there,

If I could be there, I would say this:

1) I have been coming to Prescott Park for events for greater than 20 years. My daughter dances there every summer. My son was entranced by his first Shakespeare performance there several years back.

2) Portsmouth has a resource far more valuable than grass and flowers (which can be replanted.) That is community spirit. Many cities have spent endless resources trying to create this. Portsmouth already has it. This is driven by the impulse to gather and enjoy shared experiences with friends and neighbors. The PPAF, by bringing people together in one of the most beautiful parts of the city, makes a mighty contribution to it.

3) It would be a mistake to think that just one or two more "common sense" restrictions on PPAF will satisfy the small group of complaining downtown residents. They have been working to hamstring PPAF for a number of years. Every time they have won a victory, they have come back to seek another one. I can guarantee they will be back next year for more. They will not stop. Why should they? They're winning.

4) At some point, PPAF, which is not a wealthy organization and relies on the energy of its volunteers more than anything else, is going to give up. The continued pressure from the neighborhood complainers will overwhelm it. When that happens, the complainers will meet (and my guess is that they could all fit in a small room) and raise a glass of champagne to their victory. The rest of us, many more in number, but not as vehement in our opinion, will mourn the loss of PPAF and the weakening of our community spirit. We will all then have to read five years of editorials in the Portsmouth Herald asking why our downtown is no longer as vibrant.

Thank you.

Engage: Submit

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted on Tuesday, July 18, 2017 at 22:01:13

city: Portsmouth
state: NH

comments: In 1974, when the PPAF began, it ran for two weeks. By 1996, it was up to six weeks. Now, in 2017, it is almost 12 weeks. The intensification of use particularly ramped up in 2011 when the number of days that the PPAF operated jumped from 50 to 68 and the number of events went from 71 to 88. In 2017, the number of days the PPAF will operate is 67 and the number of events is a staggering 102, which is typical of the level of events in the last few years.

The park is overused and in detriment of its being a park. As the consultants found in their analysis last year, "the operations in the park are beyond the capacity of the park". See Portsmouth Herald, August 3, 2016. Walking through the park on my way home from the Sheafe Warehouse yesterday - which thanks to the Master Plan's recommendation, I was able to purchase artwork right on site - I noticed the lawn area in front of the stage is already showing brown spots, despite much rain this summer and that these brown spots do not seem to be present in other parts of the park.

Of all of the events, the concerts are the most ill-suited to a small park in a residential area. They draw large crowds, there is no infrastructure to handle parking or drop-offs for people and, in general, concerts put the most ecological strain on the park. And as the number of concerts as increased from about 9 in 2007 to about 23 to 25 this year, that pressure is enormous.

The Attorney General's office has approved the Master Plan. In doing so, Terry Knowles, the Assistant Director of the Charitable Trust Unit, stated, "certainly we'd be interested in the implementation of the plan as the season is starting very soon." See Portsmouth Herald, April 5, 2017. Therefore, the AG's office expected the Master Plan to be implemented immediately, which was the 2017 season. This is even more so for the 2018 season.

A lot has been said and written about what the impact of reducing the PPAF's schedule would have on the economic viability of the PPAF. Whether these claims are true will ultimately be borne out by an independent review of its financials by city staff.

But, let's consider the following for now. The PPAF's fund balance grew from \$189,972 in 2007 to \$1,803,373 in 2015. The compensation of the executive director went from \$57,410 in 2007 to \$124,199 in 2015. According to a job posting, it offers medical and health benefits as well as a 401 K plan. It has enough resources to branch out into Exeter staging a production of A Christmas Carol as it did last winter and as it will on August 6 holding a Mary Poppins picnic in Swasey Parkway.

In the period from 2011 to 2016, it has paid only \$69,246 to the Prescott Trust, which averages out to be about \$14,000 a year. For this it receives, the second floor of the Shaw Building for offices, the third floor of the Shaw Building for storage, the use of the Sheafe Building in the winter for storage, free water, sewer and electric (one can only imagine how much the taxpayers of Portsmouth are paying for sewer in the summer). As for parking, PPAF staff have about 6 or 7 spaces on Water Street, where they park for free. Using the rates for the meters on Marcy Street and figuring about 8 hours a day, 5 days a week, the benefit conferred on the PPAF is about \$30,000 a year.

Lastly, and most importantly, the PPAF has exclusive use of 1.5 (+/-) acres of the 10 acres of park during the summer - land left to the people of Portsmouth to be used as a park by Josie Prescott.

It is up to the PPAF board to guide and protect the festival's operations. It is up to this Advisory Committee to ensure that the Master Plan, which mandated a "park first" approach to the park, be implemented. To do that there needs to be a reduction in the operations of the PPAF. There needs to be not just a reduction of a day in the festival's schedule but an overall reduction in the amount of events, particularly on the weekends. Please know that you are not doing this to protect the neighborhood from the impacts of the vastly expanded operations of the PPAF. You are doing it for the park. Your job is to protect the park - not the PPAF or the neighborhood.

Thank you for your time.

Engage: Submit

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted on Thursday, July 20, 2017 at 13:11:17

city: Portsmouth
state: New Hampshire

comments: Hello. Sorry I could not attend the most recent public comment session. I am NOT in favor of adding a second dark night per week to the PPAF schedule. I agree with others sharing this opinion. In the 80's when I directed Music Man in the park, we were rained out at least 10 times. Devastating financially. Even if other venues are offered for rain out concerts, you can't replace a rainout of the the musical. Thus PPAF needs the flexibility of having offerings 6 days/evenings per week. It's also much more flexible when booking acts. And again, it's proven that each performance positively effects local businesses.

Engage: Submit

Sent: Friday, July 14, 2017 12:01 PM

Subject: PPAF - Would be sorry to see another dark night for the PPAF

As an abutter, a father in a family of four (with two youngsters) and someone who's a big fan of this city and things that make it special, I think it would be a big loss (and mistake) to force the PPAF to go dark two nights a week.

The programming is open to all. The festival brings great energy to Portsmouth. It provides a family friendly venue/programming especially to those that can't afford the time or cost of going to obtain something similar in Boston or elsewhere. And it supports local businesses

I basically live on the front stoop of that festival and I have no problem with it going six nights a week. And I'd especially be disappointed to lose the Monday night movies as I think that's especially locally oriented (not usually huge crowds) and something that really resonates with people of all ages. I fear that would be one of the first things to go if the festival had to go dark another night.

I urge the committee no to recommend the festival go dark two nights a week.

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted on Friday, July 21, 2017 at 07:19:13

city: Portsmouth
state: NH

comments: I am a member of the arts community and a resident of Portsmouth and I whole heartedly support guidelines to regulate the Festival. The guidelines should be fair and reasonable and in no way destroy the future of the AF.

I too enjoy the AF and hope it will continue to entertain audiences from around the Seacoast and I believe that guidelines that regulate the number of events, times, angle of the stage and sound levels will contribute in the long run to the viability of the AF.

I work at the Gov. John Langdon House on Pleasant St. in Portsmouth and we are also limited to a certain number of tented events on our property. These events are our bottom line's bread and butter, but we are happy to comply with the guidelines because we are fortunate to be a part of this special neighborhood and we want to be considerate of our neighbors.

The PPAF's board president is concerned with how weather and rainy days can affect how much money the Festival can make, but all businesses are impacted by rainy days. Weather affects restaurants, tourist destinations, kayak rentals, shops and certainly the visitation at The Gov. Langdon House. This is all a part of doing business and should be taken into consideration when making business plans.

I urge the Committee to create guidelines, especially those that regulate the number of event days per week. Personally I think that 5 event days per week is reasonable. Each event has an impact on our city with

people, parking, noise and wear & tear on the park itself. Let's protect the legacy of Prescott Park for future generations with common sense guidelines that are considerate of the neighborhood.

Engage: Submit

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted on Friday, July 21, 2017 at 09:20:31

city: Portsmouth
state: NH

comments: Concerning New Guidelines for the Prescott Parks Arts Festival

I have been a resident of Portsmouth since 2001 and have enjoyed and appreciated the events organized at Prescott Park even before when I was previously living in another town in New Hampshire. Both my wife and I have been and continue to be big supporters of the arts.

At the same time, I have seen the festival improve in both quality and quantity. However, as this has happened it has essentially taken over the park during the summer season, limiting the use of the park by Portsmouth residents and visitors, and imposing increased burdens on the neighborhood and the public park that is Prescott Park. Because of its location and the status of the park, it seems to me unrealistic to continue to make the PPA Festival bigger every year, without regard to the collateral damage that it is doing. Common-sense guidelines are needed to ensure the long-term viability and sustainability of this Portsmouth institution. I agree with many of the suggested guidelines to date, including having 2 instead of 1 dark days, seriously reducing noise pollution and looking at a different orientation for the stage.

I also believe that the current technique of funneling visitor through a portal, at which time they are asked for a donation, must end. This is clearly an intimidation of many visitors and even locals who don't see the requested donation as voluntary, and do not know that access to the park by the public is always free of charge. The roped-off areas should be severely reduced and proper visible signage should make clear that donations are truly voluntary, and that accessing the park is always free of charge.

Engage: Submit

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted on Sunday, July 23, 2017 at 12:42:18

city: Portsmouth
state: NH

comments: As a follow up to the meeting of July 19, 2017, I write to offer the following.

I hope that serious consideration will be given to moving the concert series to Pease. There has been some discussion about distributing the PPAF to other sites in town and here we have a site already in existence and an interested partner.

David Mullen, the director of the Pease Development Authority, was supportive of this idea in his comments to the Portsmouth Herald. Redhook Brewery already holds concerts on-site, so there is infrastructure in place that the PPAF can use. There are no trust restrictions to deal with, ample parking, the ability to easily accommodate large crowds as well as charge admission, if desired. In fact, it may turn out to be a very significant revenue source for the PPAF. Non-profits often have profit-making ventures to support the operations of the non-profit.

Although children attend the concerts in the park, they are directed primarily toward adults. The concert series is a new offering of the PPAF and the one with the least connection to the core mission of the organization, which according to PPAF's website, is:

“The primary objective of the festival is to provide quality family entertainment, promote artistic excellence in the community and maintain quality presentations of both entertainment and educational events.”

Therefore, of all the PPAF offerings, it seems the best candidate to be moved to another location.

Finally, and most importantly for purposes of the Master Plan, if the 23 concerts and 2 festivals the PPAF is holding this summer were held at Redhook Brewery, it would have reduced the number of events at the park from 102 to 77 and the number of days the festival operates from 67 to 47 (some concerts are on days with other events). In 2007, the festival operated for 48 days and had 69 events. This is the level of use that had existed, with minor variations, before overuse became an issue with the park.

While some people will undoubtedly be disappointed by not having concerts in the park, they will still be held someplace else and in a more suitable location. This is a good option for implementing the master plan recommendations to reduce impact on the park and, at the end of the day, there needs to be some give and take.

Thank you for your time.

Engage: Submit

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted on Thursday, July 27, 2017 at 07:54:18

city: Portsmouth

state: NH

comments: If ever there was a good example of a concert that Prescott Park could not accommodate and one that should have been held at Redhook, it was last night's Michael Franti & Spearhead's performance. There were people all the way to the Hovey Fountain and some beyond that. The main act did not start until just after 8 pm and concluded around 10 pm. There was canned music playing between the opener and the main act, just like at an arena. It was loud, especially when Franti yelled "let's make some noise".

Tomorrow night, the New Pornographers is playing in the park. Is a band with that name really family-friendly entertainment? How many parents will have to explain what pornographers are to their children? Neither one of these acts belongs in that park.

Engage: Submit

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted on Tuesday, August 1, 2017 at 10:17:52

city: Portsmouth

state: NH

comments: I have gone back and forth whether to send this email or not but decided it may help someone in the future. I attended Mary Poppins last Sat. (1pm show) with my 5 and 6 year old kids. We have seen shows before but were always far away as I don't have time to get there early and put down blankets or chairs. I decided to treat them and purchased a table (table 51 to be exact). We were there about 10 minutes prior to the show. When we got there the people in front of our table had their chairs within a foot of the table and had a big blanket in front of them with no one on it. To our left people were within 2 feet. I was very upset but i'm not one to say anything, nor should i have to. If we had 4 people we would not have had room. As the show started a man put a chair down to the left of our table and he was actually so close he was touching it. My kids and I sat so close (my son on my lap). This should never happen. Someone working for the show should be walking around and making sure that the tables have plenty of room. I have to say it was not worth the \$50 and I would not recommend it to anyone. Again I am emailing because I don't want this to happen to anyone else. Please feel free to contact me if you would like more information.

Engage: Submit

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted on Wednesday, August 16, 2017 at 19:28:43

comments: At the spark tonight. The show being RUINED by people standing in front of the stage. Where are the Ushers? I get here at 1:30 to reserve my spot and now not able to see a thing. Very disappointing.

Engage: Submit

Sent: Wednesday, August 16, 2017 5:56 PM

Subject: PPAF

Dear Mr. Bohenko,

I want to thank you and David Moore for (finally) some relief from the noise at PPAF performances. Noise, yes, for what reaches the residents can only be described as noise, especially (but not only) from the concerts. This summer has been much better although some problems of noise control (such as the throbbing bass) remain. And the screeching of a human voice is not unfamiliar.

Four years ago I wrote you the first letter of complaint, I believe, about noise and the other conditions (waste and debris) in the Park. Your response was quick and effective. You also invited me to meet with the Trustees of the Trust where I outlined all of the problems that continued until recently to exist there under Mr. Anderson's management. These continued to exist in spite of the insistence of the PPAF Board and Mr. Anderson that they had been corrected or that they were insignificant.

What troubles me personally is that much time, attention, and concern has been exercised by many residents, by the City, and by the Trustees during these past four years. That is, in some respects, an astonishing cost in resources, human and financial, in order to bring Mr. Anderson into compliance with the contracts under which PPAF presumably operates as a tenant of a City Park.

Were Anderson a responsible promoter working with a responsible board, he would long ago have realized not only was noise a problem, but access for emergency personnel, attention to parking restrictions, and compliance with the generally commonsense 'rules' of handling large crowds deserved his attention as well as the attention of the PPAF Board. There are other important concerns, too.

In addition, Mr. Anderson is an employee of PPAF and PPAF is a non-profit organization enjoying considerable economic benefits from that fact. Some of these benefits are at the expense of City residents. But they also include an advantage in soliciting sponsors and supporters who gain not only advertising benefits but tax advantages and the social status that 'contributions to the arts' confers in contemporary American culture. The advertising benefits are impossible to measure, but like most advertisers, the exposure to a largest number of eyes is important.

The economic advantage for a few in my view helps explain why PPAF is so resistant to the restraints its residential location inevitably imposes. A thoughtful move to a more appropriate location for many events as well as a limit on their number are intelligent solutions for some of the problems the PPAF monopoly creates in the Park.

Of course the Board of PPAF is, ultimately, responsible for Mr. Anderson's behavior here and in the other communities to which he has moved events. This is something they clearly don't recognize. In fact, the leadership has denied publicly that the objections of residents are of any significance.

I apologize for the length of this e-mail at the beginning of your sabbatical. I believe David Moore is a concerned, active and effective watchdog (if that is the correct term) for what is happening in the Park and he will, I hope, continue to be part of the solution. The presence of a City employee in the Park has also been effective. But it still strikes me that a responsible tenant would not need such constant attention to daily behavior (at the expense of the City) and the monitoring of agreements, all without consequences to the tenant.

Enjoy your sabbatical. As an academic I enjoyed a few, but mine were devoted to research and the rule of publish or perish. May you be spared such obligations.

Good luck.

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted on Thursday, August 17, 2017 at 11:19:20

city: Portsmouth
state: NH

comments: Good afternoon,

I am writing today just to offer my opinion regarding additional "dark nights" at Prescott Park. Businesses in Portsmouth rely on a vibrant summer business to carry us through the slower winter months. Reducing reasons for people to come and enjoy our downtown will only make our businesses suffer. Prescott Park, one of the shining gems of our city, is one of the reasons why I decided to open my business here. Please consider this when making decisions.

Engage: Submit

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by on Monday, September 11, 2017 at 06:05:38

city: Portsmouth
state: NH

comments: To The Advisory Committee:

Please consider carefully the noise limits for events at Prescott Park. We have looked at many other outdoor venues, some located in residential neighborhoods, some not, which are located all over the US and Europe. We found many that limit "the front of house" sound level from 55dB to 75dB and more that have a limit of 85dB.

We hope you will make a recommendation to the city that is acceptable to any residential neighborhood. Portsmouth has a City zoning ordinance for all residential districts: Sect.10.1332.0. All Residential Districts in Portsmouth have the following limits:

7AM to 9PM 55dB
9PM to 7AM 45 dB

Please remember we are a residential neighborhood and have been here for over 100 years.

There is also a great deal of information from the EPA, the National Institutes of Health and many experts in the field that state, " exposure to noise at or above 80 to 85 dB can cause hearing loss".

It would be irresponsible for a city owned park supported by its' taxpayers to allow events that could damage anyones hearing.

Please take these things into consideration when you make your recommendation to the city.

Engage: Submit

Date: September 11, 2017 at 10:48:51 AM EDT

I apologize for jumping in very late in the process related to Prescott Park.

I have lived a block away from Prescott Park since 1998.

I have not commented publicly until now.

Until a few years ago, there seemed to be a reasonable balance between the Prescott Park Arts Festival and other uses. Within the past few years, PPAF-related use has grown significantly in terms of noise, frequency and scale of events, and related traffic. (I can hear PPAF events with my windows closed. I called PPAF during particularly noisy events a couple of years ago, and PPAF staff were rude and unresponsive.) The park-first philosophy 2017 report of the Advisory Committee is excellent and right on target.

Noise and traffic related to the PPAF have continued this summer. All of this is not only unpleasant for me but also lowers the value of my property. I hope that the committee will help ensure that a shift to the park-first approach will come to fruition by 2018.

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted on Wednesday, October 4, 2017 at 08:45:27

comments: Hi, I read the article in the Portsmouth Herald today, Wed Oct 4th. I think that Ben Anderson already does a great job on planning the music shows in regards to interest and crowd size. I attended many music shows this summer. Some of them drew very large crowds were others were much smaller. I think Ben takes this into account and it should be left alone. Thanks.

Engage: Submit

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted on Monday, October 16, 2017 at 21:26:37

city: Portsmouth
state: NH
zip: 03801

comments: I am a huge supporter of the Prescott park arts festival. I am retired and live in town and love the vibrant energy of Portsmouth and in the summer, it is Prescott Park that brings all ages together to listen to and enjoy concerts and plays. Besides the wonderful atmosphere and entertainment the park concerts give thousands of people, it also creates a wonderful community energy (and it is a great for area businesses). I am so upset that a few people can create such conflict and endanger the vibrancy of Portsmouth in the summer. Please consider leaving the calendar as it is and let the community enjoy this gem!

Engage: Submit

comments: To All-

I didn't get a chance to stay for the whole committee meeting yesterday and therefore could not speak at public comment. Here are my observations/feedback in no particular order and done hastily:

1 - I just wanted to clarify that the occupancy limits were for 1540 for chairs and blankets and 2900-3400 if everyone stood. I am not sure if I heard that correctly. Given that this is a public park and those are the outer limits, how is crowd size to be limited?

2 - I only attended one performance at the park this summer and that was the finale of Mary Poppins. My overwhelming impression was that the PPAF needs to add staff to manage the crowds. I saw a few harried looking board members trying to pitch in, but that side of the operation really needs to be beefed up. It was very crowded, we were jammed into a VIP table from which we could not see the performance, we saw two people fall on the sidewalk and the lack of lighting on the walkways was a problem.

3 - There is an increase in low level disorderliness in the neighborhood when there are concerts, but my husband and I don't report them to the police, because we have been able to resolve the issues ourselves. We ask people to move along, we tell them to not sit on the fence, once when three extremely intoxicated people were looking for Gilley's, we pointed them (with misgivings) in the right direction and, in general, keep an eye on our yard until everyone goes. We have not seen any serious crimes, just very minor mischief and people almost always respond to us courteously. But it is definitely on the night of the concerts. Also, when you call the police for a significant problem, you need to instruct them to log the call. If the call is not logged, it does not show up. Most people do not know to do this. Also, if you call the police, sometimes they will wait to respond, I think, to see if it stops on its own. This happened more pre-2015.

4 - The bigger concerts need to be moved to Redhook Brewery. They are set up there for big events, can ticket, and don't have the problems with limiting crowd size and managing the crowds due to the capacity of the place. I strongly believe that these large concerts do not belong in a park; it is just not set up for it.

Also, the PPAF has said that the gate donations do not cover the cost of the larger acts, so I do not know why they would not go to Redhook where they could cover their costs.

If the concerts are so impactful to the park, to the neighborhood and the PPAF loses money on them, why are they there?

Thanks,

comments: As I walk through the park every day, I am frustrated by the lingering remains of the arts festival - graffitied trailers, unenclosed tents (with a sofa exposed to the elements), ticket booths, etc. The festival was over in September. The fencing that hid this ugly scenario was removed weeks ago...but little to no effort has been made to remove what was enclosed inside the fencing. It is an ugly stain on a beautiful park! After so many months of the festival dominating the park, this is a lovely period of time to enjoy the park in its natural and intended state...and it is inexcusable that this blight is allowed to mar the landscape.

Many thanks in advance for addressing this issue.

Engage: Submit

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted on Saturday, November 4, 2017 at 08:56:10

address: Portsmouth. NH 03801

comments: I would like to give my support to Ben and the entire staff of PPAF. I have been to (almost) all the summer concerts and was impressed with the quality of musicians that they were able to bring to our small but very amazing, hip and innovative city. As I walked home on those nights after the concert I was thinking "God, we are so lucky!" Thank you for the Committee to continue to support these events that bring connection to our community and not to give in to the few individuals that are not growing with our beautiful place and should move to rural Maine! Thank you for hearing and representing my input,

Engage: Submit

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted on Sunday, November 5, 2017 at 01:17:18

comments: I have lived in Portsmouth for the better part of a decade and just recently purchased my first house in June of 2016 (Burkitt St). I have been attending most all of the events in the park since I started living here. It was at the top of our list for why my fiance and I wanted to purchase a house in town...because we wanted to be "moped distance to the park." We have a few framed posters of Prescott in our home. We attend every Wednesday, all of the festivals (chowder, chili, etc), one evening of the play a year, and a few movies a year. I get upset fired about the non-supporters and the concerns they raise each year. We have purchased Partner buttons each of the past 3 years. If the park festival leaves I likely would to.

Engage: Submit

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted on Monday, November 6, 2017 at 06:06:23

comments: The Prescott Park Arts Festival is one of the most enjoyable summertime activities in Portsmouth. The caliber of the performances is outstanding. What an amazing gift to the Seacoast area that all ages, all stages of life, and all socio-economic attendees can enjoy such high quality acting, music, dance, and movies. The musicians also clearly enjoy performing at the park.

Engage: Submit

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted on Monday, November 6, 2017 at 15:37:35

address: 3 Portsmouth, NH

comments: My small, two-person business has been supporting the PPAF for two seasons. As a small business, this is the only sponsorship we can afford, and we wouldn't have it any other way. We love the festival, we love bringing our families, and we love being able to treat our clients to a VIP experience from time to time. Two years ago when we started sponsoring the festival, we had 3 clients, now we have 16 and just ran our first payroll this month. Some of that positive economic impact can be directly attributed to connections and relationships we've made through the PPAF and our support of their mission. We hope that this Committee will consider this local success story (among others) and treat the PPAF as an asset to this City and the Park, and make decisions with that value in mind.

Engage: Submit

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted on Tuesday, November 14, 2017 at 12:29:32

comments: Team,

Thank you for all your continued support. Please keep in mind, PPAF is the lifeblood of our community -- especially in the summer. While I appreciate the local concerns, those residents have enjoyed 30+% in their home appreciation over the past 2 years.

PPAF has done an outstanding job to bring in world class acts and control any/all undesirable activity.

Please support PPAF with their plans.

Engage: Submit

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted Thursday, November 30, 2017 at 16:40:53

comments: Today, I was able to take a look at the May 3, 2017 Letter Agreement between John Bohenko and Ben Anderson to see what it said about financial records.

The Letter Agreement incorporates the 2012 Operating Agreement between the PPAF and the Trustees of the Trust Funds. The Letter Agreement and the 2012 Operating Agreement are on the PPPAC website; the Operating Agreement is Exhibit A, page 5 of that document, under Insurance and Finances, No. 23. It states, in full:

23. Financial Books and records of PPAF shall be open for review at all times by the Trustees upon reasonable notice to the PPAF.

The City Manager is the successor to the Trustees. The word "shall" makes this mandatory. There is no requirement that the City file a written request to the PPAF to obtain the audited financial statements. If the PPAF wanted to claim that it was proprietary, it should have eliminated that clause from the Agreement prior to signing it.

Further, there is no per se rule about the proprietary of financial statements for non- or for- profit organizations.

Financial statements are often available to the public. In fact, non-profits like this information to be available so that potential donors feel confidence in donating to that organization.

Thank you for your time.

Engage: Submit

To: Chairman Tom Watson, and other Prescott Park Advisory Committee members

From: Portsmouth

Date: November 24, 2017

Re: Recommendations for final report of Committee

It is my understanding that the Prescott Park Advisory Committee will meet three more times. A meeting on November 29th, followed by a meeting to prepare draft recommendations of its work to the City Manager John Bohenko, and a final meeting to finalize the draft recommendations.

The meeting on November 29th includes an agenda item of "discussion of finances including payments". Related to that agenda item I would ask you to consider the following four recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION

Require the Prescott Park Arts Festival (PPAF) to change its accounting methodology from “Modified Cash Basis” to “Accrual Accounting”.

BACKGROUND

It is essential that the City Manager’s office receive the most accurate financial information from all nonprofit users of Prescott Park to properly evaluate the financial performance of each nonprofit. The PPAF currently prepares their financial statements on a “Modified Cash Basis”. Preparing financial statements on a “modified cash basis” has the potential to over or under state revenues and/or expenses thus distorting the true financial performance in any given year.

The PPAF’s Audited Financial Statements for years ended December 31, 2015 and 2014, page 7, Notes to Financial Statements, Note A – Summary Of Significant Accounting Policies, Basis of Accounting reads as follows: “The organization’s policy is to prepare its financial statements on a modified cash basis, which is a comprehensive basis of accounting other than accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America. Under this basis, revenues are recognized when collected rather than when earned, and expenditures are recognized when paid rather than incurred”.

Two examples of how the modified cash basis methodology has the potential to distort financial results are as follows:

First, in 2014 the PPAF paid no annual fee to the City for operating in Prescott Park. In 2015 they paid \$30,000, or 2 years at \$15,000 per year. Using the modified cash basis of accounting the PPAF has overstated 2015 expenses by \$15,000, the 2014 fee. The more representative accrual basis of accounting would have recognized (accrued), the 2014 annual fee in 2014 even though it was not paid until 2015.

Second, The Executive Director’s bonus is paid in the current year for achieving goals of the previous year. Modified cash basis recognizes the payment as a current year’s expense, whereas accrual basis accounting would properly recognize the expense in the year the bonus was earned.

RECOMMENDATION

Require the Prescott Park Arts Festival to submit their audited financial statements to the City Manager’s office on, or before, April 30th.

BACKGROUND

As essential as it is to have accurate financial information, it is equally important to have financial information received in a timely manner. The City Manager’s office needs the audited financial statements in advance of the upcoming season. This will enable the City Manager’s office to evaluate the prior year’s financial results, and ask questions related to those financial statements to assess the PPAF’s operations for the upcoming season. Financial statements received no later than April 30th will achieve this goal.

It would be amusing if it was not so sad, and embarrassing to City officials, that at almost all of the recent committee meetings members kept asking “have we received the financials yet?” There is NO reason why the PPAF management cannot have audited financial statements available by April 30th, NONE.

RECOMMENDATION

Design, develop, and implement a “Rate Card” to be used as the basis of charging all nonprofits for their conducting events in Prescott Park.

BACKGROUND

The PPAF’s annual fee to the City beginning in 2014 through 2017 has been \$15,000 a year, or \$15,000 per year for the last four years. This at a time when the number of days, events, and use of office/storage space in the Shaw and Sheafe buildings has been increasing.

The City should move toward a “user fee” basis for the PPAF, and other nonprofits, conducting events in the park. The fee should be assessed on a per event basis. The City should determine its user fee rate by benchmarking what other municipalities are charging for similar venues around the country.

RECOMMENDATION

Develop a “per square footage” charge to be applied to all nonprofit users of office and other space in the Shaw and Sheafe buildings.

BACKGROUND

It is my understanding that the PPAF, the Gundalow Company, and the New Hampshire Arts Association are utilizing space within the Shaw and Sheafe buildings. A standardized per square footage rate should be developed and implemented with the goal of each nonprofit user being charged on a consistent basis for the utilization of space in the buildings.

SUMMARY

I hope that you would consider any, or all, of the recommendations to be included in your final recommendations to the City Manager.

If any, or all, of the above are not part of the scope of your work I would urge the City Manager to adopt the recommendations in addition to implementing the recommendations of the Prescott Park Advisory Committee.

I have followed closely the work of the Committee, and the previous work of the Blue Ribbon Committee, and former Mayor Bob Listor’s work before that. A significant amount of time, money, and hard work has gone into the process to produce a generational (30 – 50 years) Master Plan for the betterment of Prescott Park. The next three to five years will be critical to the implementation of the Master Plan and the Advisory Committee’s recommendations.

The City Manager has two important responsibilities during this transition period related to the nonprofit users of Prescott Park. First, that all nonprofits are paying their fair share for using the park to ensure that the taxpayers of Portsmouth are not unfairly subsidizing nonprofit activity in the park. Second, write license agreements with provisions that “level the playing field” to ensure all nonprofit users are treated fairly and in a consistent manner.

The City owns the park, the City sets the rules! In my view there has been too much deference, negotiation, and politicalization in the dealings with the PPAF management and board. Almost every change/recommendation, in furtherance of the Park First approach, that they disagree with, no matter how small, is met with “you are threatening the financial sustainability of the Festival.” If you don’t believe me please see Council Denton’s motion at a recent City Council meeting. The PPAF has an outstanding management team and a sophisticated Board of Directors. They are more than capable of adapting their business model to any changes that they perceive as adversely impacting their bottom line.

Thanks to all of you for all of the time and effort you have put into this process. It is very much appreciated. Also, thanks in advance for considering the above recommendations.

As you prepare your draft and finalize your recommendations to the City Manager, please remember to think LONG TERM, think PARK FIRST.