

Special Events Committee Meeting Minutes
151 Martin Street, Conference Rooms 202 & 203
December 9, 2022

Chairperson Astrein called the meeting to order at 8:32 a.m.

In Attendance: R. Astrein, K. Cummings, D. Fehan, Z. Kay, S. Lipari, B. Hussey

Staff: J. Brook, C. Sheppard-Decius, N. Gerkey

Guests: none

Absent: none

Public Comment: none

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Kay, seconded by Hussey to approve the October 14, 2022 Special Event Committee meeting minutes.

Yeas: R. Astrein, K. Cummings, D. Fehan, Z. Kay, S. Lipari, B. Hussey

Nay: none

Absent: none

Event Recaps:

Santa Walk – November 26

Brook shared that there were more participants than ever before. Astrein and Kay said that they gave away all of their handouts (about 200 each). Hussey said she gave away about 400 hot chocolates at the event.

It was noted that for next year there should be a greater effort to have people stay on the sidewalk – it poses a safety issue with children going into the street. Fehan mentioned there was a gathering of people overflowing into Bates prior to the event. There were suggestions made about having more police presence and potential street closures of Bates and Maple, but Brook noted that Santa Walk is such a short event that closing the streets would be challenging because of time necessary to close the streets. This will need to be revisited.

Winter Markt – Dec 2-4

Brook mentioned that the marshmallow station was a big hit, and ran out of skewers. It was agreed that many more skewers will need to be purchased to accommodate for next year. Astrein noted that the sound system was an improvement from previous years. Brook said there was very high wind from Friday to Saturday, however tents were not impacted.

For next year, Brook brought up the idea for expanding the fencing to allow for attendees to walk around the market with alcoholic beverages, as the fencing outside the beer tent did not seem sufficient. Kay also added that this could open up potential for another beer/wine vendor at the event.

Sheppard-Decius pointed out the need for more help for during the event next year, whether that's via volunteers or contracting out. Lipari suggested that students from Groves/Seaholm could be a good place to source volunteers. It was also noted to place "do not touch" signs on the ice sculptures as patrons were playing with the sculptures, and most didn't survive the duration of the event. Lastly, for the night of the tree lighting, it was suggested to have a more "kid-friendly" band after the tree lighting, as most of the attendees are families.

Restaurant Week:

Sheppard-Decius mentioned that out of 11 restaurants that the survey was sent to, she only received 5 responses. She noted that there was not a call to action in the survey, which could have justified the small response. Hussey suggested that we take a pause on restaurant week and brainstorm new ideas. We have a \$15,000 budget for Restaurant Week, and want to ensure the event is something that restauranters and patrons find valuable. Hussey proposed having a meeting for restauranters to brainstorm; the committee agreed.

There was also discussion about making updates to the website with how restaurants are showcased. Currently the website is based on cuisine, but the suggestion was to have all the restaurants listed in one place.

Spring Stroll:

Sheppard-Decius discussed putting a budget toward Spring Stroll to make the event bigger. It was also suggested to gather ideas from merchants for how to create more awareness for the event.

Goals and Objectives:

Sheppard-Decius provided an event matrix that outlined attendance, budget, patrons, and more for future events and keeping track of statistics. She also discussed three types of events – signature, retail, and community – and how Birmingham events fit into each category.

Meeting adjourned at 10 a.m.

NEXT MEETING: Friday, January 13, 2023 at 8:30 a.m.