



Dear Mayor and Council,

On May 2, 2011, the City Council approved the Event Permit for the Summer Nights expanded configuration which included portions of both Main and Seventh Street. The Council only approved the new configuration through July 14th. The intention was to give Summer Nights a test run and be in a better position to evaluate the layout and logistics after 6 events. Summer Nights feels very confident that the new configuration is working well and is more manageable for the volunteer staff. We are requesting that we be allowed to continue our event in its current location for the remaining 7 weeks. The decision to expand onto Main was given great consideration by our Board. The fact is Summer Nights has out grown 7th Street. Anybody who has been down to the event this year should recognize that if after July 14th the event is restricted to 7th Street, there will not be enough room for the thousands of people who enjoy and support our event. One of our reasons for expanding was based on the size of the crowd at end of the 2010 season. We were concerned about the safety of the patrons as well as the safety of our volunteers. In our opinion trying to fit the event back on 7th Street would be a potential disaster. Even with less than perfect weather our crowds have grown virtually every week. The night we had perfect weather, the estimated attendance was close to 10,000 people. By the end of the summer we expect this may be a regular occurrence. It has also benefited the event to have the children's area more connected to the overall event. It has eliminated the risks involved when families going between the children's area and the main concert venue must cross a busy street.

We recognized that our expansion has caused some inconvenience to certain businesses and some motorists. We have done what we can to accommodate the businesses downtown and to minimize any negative impacts the event might cause. We have pushed the setup start time back as late as we feel we are able to do. You must recognize that Summer Nights does not just rise out of the street in half an hour. It takes many people and a lot of hard work to get the event set up in approximately two hours. We are extremely proud of the fact that even though we have more than doubled the size of the event, we still setup and tear down in the same amount of time as when we originally started. We also agreed to move our stage forward and have Traffic Services, who we hired and are paying, set up a right turn from 7th Street onto Main Street to lessen the impact on the Main Street businesses between 7th Street and Rushmore Rd. We have also paid Traffic Services to make detour signs directing traffic to those businesses. Based on our discussions with City personnel, they have indicated the traffic delays are not unreasonable nor have they caused any major problems. If the key to continuing on Main Street is that there be no disruption to traffic that is simply not possible. The inconvenience to motorists one night a week must be weighed in conjunction with the benefits to the community from the event. We strongly feel that our event is more beneficial than the temporary inconveniences it may cause some motorists.

It is often suggested by some that the event be moved. We would strongly resist that. We gave great thought on where to hold this event. The whole purpose was to get people downtown. If it was moved out of downtown I doubt we would continue. For all the opinions given by the businesses opposed to Summer Nights, there are many downtown businesses that support us. They recognize and appreciate the thousands of people we bring to the front of their stores on a weekly basis. No matter where we were located someone would be inconvenienced or unhappy. All that would change is who the unhappy people were. Many people come to Summer Nights because of the shops and restaurants surrounding the event. The people who are currently being brought to these businesses doorsteps would simply end up somewhere else. Any move to someplace less "busy" where it would arguably cause less inconvenience would marginalize the event and jeopardize its long term viability and benefit to the downtown district. Furthermore, we have invested significant amounts of money in bringing electricity to the alleys and nodes in the corners at this location to support our event. If we were to move, these improvements may need to be redone and the work we have already done would be wasted. We have also invested in fencing and equipment for the location we are at. Any move may require additional equipment or may result in our having purchased equipment we no longer need. Ultimately, we know the event is successful in its current location. Nobody can predict what will happen if it is moved. Even if you are doing so with the best of intentions, do you really want to take the chance of damaging Summer Nights by moving it?

While it would be great to have universal agreement and support, we recognize that this is not possible. If we had needed a hundred percent agreement from the businesses on 7th Street before we started, Summer Nights would never have happened. Unfortunately, there will always be people opposed. We just hope that a few vocal opponents are not able to trump the enormous number of people who clearly enjoy and support our event.

Sincerely,



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