



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
ARTS COUNCIL
KATJANA BALLANTYNE
MAYOR

FROM: Gregory Jenkins, Director, Arts Council
TO: Public Health and Public Safety Committee
DATE: April 17, 2024
RE: City Council Item 24-0417

Dear Members of the Public Health and Public Safety committee/City Council,

The following information from the Arts Council is being provided to the members of the Public Health and Public Safety committee/City Council, in response to the below referenced item.

Order ID # 24-0417 - That the Executive Director of the Arts Council appear before the Housing and Community Development Committee to present a Porchfest safety plan that addresses pedestrian safety concerns, promotion of street closures, intersection crossing safety and the prevention of aggressive and dangerous driver behavior during the active event hours.

Below are multiple tactics that we, the City, implement to ensure safety during PorchFest.

1. **Zones and controlling crowds.** We intentionally have created three zones and three time periods to ensure that we spread out the activities. Here are those times:

Schedule/Flow

- West of Willow Street, 12-2pm
- Willow to Central, 2-4pm
- East of Central, 4-6pm

2. **Communication with Bands/hosts concerning how to control crowds.** We provide a specific "Porchfest Tip Sheet" that advises on how to alert neighbors, housemates, landlords about their performance at Porchfest.
 - a. Requesting bands have a designated "monitor" to help with audience rules concerning neighbors, street clearing, noise levels.
 - b. We specifically mention that bands can NOT perform beyond the two-hour time slot and are subject to enforcement by Police.
 - c. We also mention that there is no "open carry" allowance concerning alcohol.
 - d. Instructions on how to apply for Block Party permits. (To date there are currently 9 block party permits pulled.) This helps to close streets that are anticipated to have

large crowds. Please note this does not qualify main roads that will heavily impact traffic flow in the city.

3. Outreach to larger community/audience goes

- a. SAC works with Communications to send citywide alerts via the 311's alert system to inform residents about PorchFest weekend.
- b. SAC and the City does outreach: Press Release, Social Media Posts, Facebook event pages, community pages, community calendars.
- c. Flyers will be posted in neighborhoods and businesses. SAC will provide flyers for bands—they will be able to pick up printed copies at Arts Council office.

4. Police and Safety:

- a. For every event, including PorchFest, we develop an Incident Action Plan (IAP) with Police, Fire, DPW, Traffic and Parking to address a safety plan. Through this plan we review concerns of the past and make adjustments.
- b. This year we are requesting to increase the number of officers assigned to the event. We believe with the ability to spread those officers within EACH zone and with a buffer to allow for pedestrian flow will help on major cross streets. We will be monitoring these areas. Specifically the areas listed below.
 1. Powderhouse Boulevard Rotary at 4 intersections between 12-2pm.
 2. Morrison b/w Willow and College 12-2pm
 3. Summer St and School St between 2-4pm
 4. Cedar St and Bike Path 2-4pm
 5. Hancock 2-4pm
 6. Highland b/w Cedar & Lowell 2-4pm
 7. School St. 4-6pm

5. Department of Public Works:

Working with DPW we can ensure that we are ready for attendees.

- a. One week before PorchFest, DPW Highways will post "Variable Message Signs" on Medford St. facing East; Highland near Davis facing West; and Powderhouse Rotary to inform residents and passerby's that PorchFest will be happening on May 11th.
- b. DPW adds extra portajohns across the city- SAC has created a google map with portajohn locations.
- c. Extra trash barrels are posted across the city on busy roads. DPW Highways crew is roaming around the city throughout the day emptying and replacing bins.
- d. DPW scans the city after the event time to make sure trash is picked up from streets.