

PUBLIC EVENTS – Q & A

The City of Urbana recently adopted a Public Events Ordinance which requires sponsors of special events, free speech events and residential block parties to obtain event permits. When codified in the Urbana City Code (“UCC”), the new ordinance will be found at UCC Secs. 14-51 through 14-59. The following addresses questions which will likely arise in connection with the new ordinance.

Q.: Why will the City now start to require sponsors of public events to obtain event permits?

A.: The City has, for years, required sponsors of public events to obtain event permits. The purpose of codifying this requirement is so that the City can better assure that it will be notified of when and where an event will occur within the City and who will be sponsoring the event. The overall goal of the new ordinance is to provide the City advance notice of when and where events will be held so that the City can assure that they are conducted in a safe manner.

Q.: Do I need an event permit for my particular event?

A.: You will need an event permit to hold a special event, a free speech event, or a residential block party if you will be requesting the use of any City resource or if the City determines that your event will require the use or deployment of one or more City resources. Certain types of events do not need public event permits: (i) events held inside the Civic Center when no liquor will be sold or served; (ii) events sponsored by the City or other local units of government which are held solely on their property; (iii) funeral processions; and (iv) elected state and federal officials when conducting business of their respective governments.

Ordinarily, events held solely on private property and which do not request or require any City resources will not need a public event permit. However, should City resources be deployed to an event on private property to address a threat to human life, health or safety or property, the sponsor will be required to obtain an event permit for any subsequent event scheduled to occur within the next 12-month period.

If you are in doubt about whether your event requires an event permit, please contact the City’s Operations Manager at: vhgustafson@urbanaininois.us or at the Public Works Building located at 706 S. Glover Avenue, Urbana, IL 61802.

Q: What are “City resources?”

A.: “City resources” include all streets, sidewalks, parkways, parks, or other public rights-of-way owned or operated by the City. “City resources” also includes equipment (e.g., barricades) and City employees (e.g., police officers, Fire Marshal). A sponsor of an event may request the City to provide one or more City resources or the City may determine, based on the nature and/or anticipated size of the event, that one or more city resources will be needed to assure a safe event.

Q.: If I plan on serving or selling any alcoholic liquor at my event, will I also need a temporary liquor license?

A.: Yes. The sale or service of any alcoholic liquor at a public event will require the sponsor to obtain a temporary liquor license as provided in UCC Secs. 3-39 and 3-42 in addition to an event permit.

Q.: Must I pay a fee in order to apply for a public event permit and use one or more City resources. If so, how much are those fees?

A.: An application fee will be charged in order to process an application for a public event license. The fee amounts are provided in the City’s Schedule of Fees which is maintained in the City’s Finance Department. The City will not charge an application fee for a spontaneous free speech events – i.e., one held within 48 hours from when the free speech event is first planned or the “call to assemble” was issued.

In certain instances, a sponsor may be charged a fee for using one or more City resources. For example, if one or more first responders will be needed for traffic control in and around an event, the City may charge a

fee for the use of those first responders. The amount of the services fee will be calculated after reviewing the event application and determining what City resources are being requested by the sponsor or will be required by the City.

Q.: What if I want to sponsor a free speech event in a day or two to speak out against something of pressing importance? Will I need to apply for a free speech permit?

A.: If you plan to hold your free speech event within 48 hours from the time you start planning your event or sending out the “call to assemble”, you will not need to apply for a free speech event permit. However, if at all possible, you will be required to contact the Urbana Police Department (at its front desk in the City Building at 400 S. Vine St.) and provide them with the date, time, location, and your name.

Q.: Can the City include restrictions with my event permit?

A.: Yes, the City can include event restrictions which often include security plans with the issuance of an event permit. The purpose for issuing such restrictions is to better assure that the event will be conducted and managed in a safe manner.

Q.: Where can I find event permits and to whom must I submit them?

A.: This information and more can be found on the City’s website at:
<http://www.urbanaininois.us/departments/public-works/special-events/special-events-parade-permit-forms>

Permits can also be picked up from the City’s Operation Manager in the Public Works Building located at 706 S. Glover Avenue, Urbana, IL 61802. Completed applications should be submitted to the City’s Operations Manager either through e-mail or delivery to the Public Works building. Completed applications and/or questions can be submitted to the following e-mail address: yhgustafson@urbanaininois.us.

The City of Urbana looks forward to the many public events held throughout the year and hope that they are all conducted in a safe manner.