



The City of Lowell
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TO: Eileen Donoghue, City Manager *EMD*
FROM: Henri Marchand, Director, Cultural Affairs and Special Events
Christine McCall, Director, Economic Development
DATE: May 19, 2020
RE: C. Samaras - Req. City Mgr. Provide A Report Regarding Status Of Various Events Scheduled For This Summer i.e., Folk Festival.

Virtually all of downtown Lowell's traditional summer festivals and entertainment events have been cancelled for this season. In response, the Economic Development and Cultural Affairs and Special Events offices are proposing to create a street level, music, and variety entertainment series. While these may not replace the Lowell Summer Music Series or Lowell Folk Festival, the goal is to work in concert with the proposed outdoor seating plan to help draw people to downtown with unique performances in order to assist restaurant and business efforts in generating foot traffic and sales.

The proposed temporary outdoor seating expansion for restaurants will allow for greater physical distancing and safety for customers to resume sit-down service at the start of Phase 2 of Reopening Massachusetts. Lowell is a mecca of arts and entertainment and we intend to utilize these cultural assets to activate our streets in support of local businesses during this unprecedented period.

As isolation orders are eased, it is expected that there will be a steady return of visitors looking for what Lowell has to offer in terms of dining and shopping. As an added incentive, creating street level entertainment, not unlike that found at major festival marketplaces, should help encourage visitation.

Depending on how quickly the state's "safer at home" guidelines are eased, the program could begin in July and extend through September during good weather for about 10 weeks. Performances would be scheduled two days per week, possibly Fridays and Saturdays, and include two individual performers per day from approximately 5:30 to 9 p.m.

Saturday performances could include a mid-afternoon family street performer and an evening musical group. We would also reach out to the arts community to engage them to do some en plein air painting which has proven to be a popular draw during past events and would also highlight the remarkable range of artists that call Lowell home.

Musical performances (single acoustic players, duos, trios or 4-5 piece local bands) would be strategically positioned on a rotating basis to be within sight and sound of several outdoor seating areas. Street performers (jugglers, vents, comedians, magicians, performance artists, etc.) could do two sets per afternoon or evening at key locations for spacing and foot traffic flow between businesses. Plein air painting could be arranged weekends during the daytime at a variety of locations depending on interest.

C. Samaras, summer event status

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We will collaborate with the Transportation Engineer, Parking Department, and Lowell Police Department, on select days/evenings throughout the summer, to shut down portions of our downtown streets to encourage attendance at these events that will allow for maximum space to maintain appropriate physical distancing requirements.

We propose to use Festival Account funds, typically utilized for other summer events, to support this project.

We will provide updates as we further develop and fine tune these proposals.

Please let us know if you have any questions or would like additional information on this matter.

CC: Diane Tradd, DPD Director/Assistant City Manager