

923.03 Block Party Code Revisions

Supplemental information

Purpose:

In recent years, CRPD has had difficulty accommodating event Block Party permit requests due to time restrictions that are stated in City Code. The original Block Party Code was written to address street closures associated with residential block parties, but has been used for many years to also facilitate street closings for Columbus events. As the number of festivals, races, and events continue to grow so does the need for flexibility in issuing permits.

Recommendations:

Recreation and Parks recommends these revisions to City Code 923.03 to establish common ground between past practices, Code and current need. Specific language stating that "**No block party shall be conducted between the hours of 12:01 a.m. and 8:00 a.m.**" is the catalyst for recommending change. Although the physical closure of streets has been historically over-looked during multi-day festivals, the current practice is to deny a permit for event closures that are requested during that time. Events have been accommodated when CPD is willing to assign an officer to "supervise" these overnight closures. For liability reasons, this is not a good practice.

Changes recommended below will allow the Director of Recreation and Parks to support events which benefit the Greater Columbus community and to streamline the process for event coordinators, the Department and City Council.

- 1). Authorization for the Director of Recreation and Parks to permit event block party activity between the hours of 12:01am-8am. Adequate checks and balances will still be in place to review the impact of proposed closures since the application process continues to require the review and approval of Transportation, Fire and Police. There is no intention to implement overnight events on public streets. The primary purpose is to accommodate event set-up/clean-up, and early morning starts for charity walks, races and bike rides.
- 2). Authorization for the Director of Recreation and Parks to permit event block party street closures that exceed five (5) consecutive days. Requests for closing public streets for construction do not require Council action so the current review process should be adequate. The recommended change eliminates the formality of preparing legislation for City Council. Columbus averages 3 such closures per year, and in 10 years we have not had a conflict.
- 3). Extension of the application-filing deadline from 5 days to 7 days and to remove language indicating that the Department will process late applications.
- 4). Omission of Code language dictating the content of applications since changes to applications are made as processing needs change. Rather than dictating content in Code, Department policy will be to issue a permit when all of the application requirements are met.