

City of Rockland
Downtown Waterfront Planning Committee Meeting Notes 9/21/2021
Discussion with Festival and Event Organizers

Attendees:

Joan Wright, Advisory Committee Member
Kate Doiron, Advisory Committee Member
Paul Benjamin, Advisory Committee Member and North Atlantic Blues Festival)
Mathew Ondra, Advisory Committee Member
Sam Ladley, Advisory Committee Member
Ed Glaser, Mayor and City Councilor
Celia Knight, Maine Lobster Festival
John Hanson, Maine Boat & Home Show
Davis Saltonstall, Rockland Farmers Market
Larry Reed, Eclipse of the Pearl
Ryan Murray, Harbormaster
Julie Hashem, Community Development Director

Meeting focus:

Representatives of the major festivals and events were invited to share information on how they use the project area, what their event involves, and any special needs.

Maine Boat & Home Show

Area used

- Harbor Park, Buoy, and Mildred Merrill Parks; Public Landing

Layout

- Varies –something different each year
- One way traffic flow with booths along road by police condo and exit by Time Out Pub
- Tents primarily to Harbor Park side (20 40 x 100 tents)
 - 54 8x10 booths in the big tent
 - Tent over the stage for things that need to be on dry surface
- Boats on land as well as in water
 - Maybe 40 land exhibitions of various sizes
 - Length of bulkhead used
 - 5 larger boats (35 feet?) from HM building to stage
- Buoy Park used for exhibits – interactive
- Children’s areas in Mildred Merrill Park
- This year there was a tiny house exhibit near the stage
- Harbor Park is like open stage that can be set up in different ways; this is helpful
- Boats in water -- 12 – 10x20 floats strung out by the Black Pearl docks
- Porta-pottys by pump station (4) and near Harbor Masters (12+/-)
- Accommodations for boaters includes walk way down side of the park and golf carts for transporting people and goods

- Golf carts often provided to help the boaters

Timing

- Setup begins Tues vendors arrive Thurs; event is Fri-Sat 10 -5, and Sun 10-4; cleanup Mon
- Sets up usually begins the day after the Lobster Festival breaks down and is cleaned up

Special needs/considerations

- Some vehicles/boats/trailers weigh on the order of 3,000 lbs.; need a firm surface like asphalt for those; they come with large trucks with trailers that require a large turning radius
- Could use more float space if it was available, but would not necessarily mean fewer on land
- Some boats show better out of the water, so there will always be a need for land based boats
- The small launch area could be used for launching and testing small boats

Maine Lobster Festival

Area used

- Harbor, Buoy and Mildred Merrill Parks

Layout

- Eating tent next to Harbor Seawall – effectively a restaurant for 5 days
- Full area of parks used for tents, all the way to the Boardwalk; the oval is filled with tents; there is a kids' area; arts & crafts tent in Buoy Park
- Vendors rent tents (including Eclipse of the Pearl)
- Stage used for various things, including performances and coronation of the Sea Goddess
- 20 porta-pottys near Harbormaster building, 20+/- near the restaurant



Timing

- Festival takes full week ahead to setup – maybe 10 days

Potential changes or trends

- Past had a carnival, not next time
- Looking at green/sustainability options

Special needs/considerations

- Lobster Crate Race needs to be visible from shore
- The stage is used for entertainment and sea goddess accommodation
- When the Navy ship is in, there is accommodation for a line to visit the ship
- Dumpster emptied two times a day
- Police on site at all times
- Stage used for entertainment – sea goddess
- Access to public landing and Pearl is provided through the festival
- LCI provides Wi-Fi that meets their needs

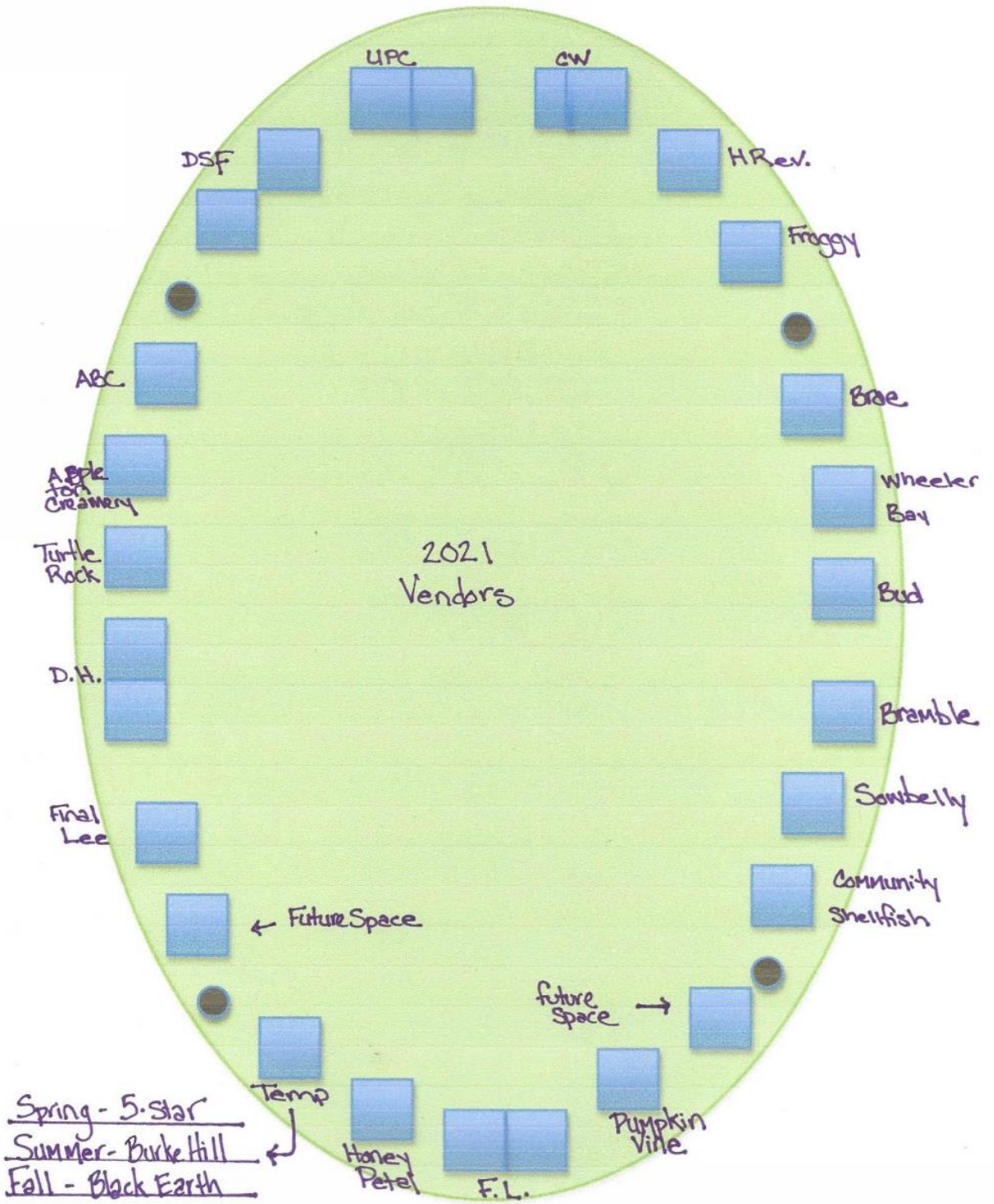
Farmers Market

Area used

- Oval at Harbor Park, and nearby parking

Layout

- Vendors are within circle at Harbor Park; currently at max capacity
- 10x10 tents, with cars in neighboring parking areas
- Check in tent w/1 card reader for all vendors
- Occasional live music w/tent in center of circle
- Harbor Park remains open to other uses
- Important to have access to parking nearby for loading/unloading
- Use existing restrooms



Timing

- Thursdays May to Oct
- 7:00-8:00am setup, – 8:30-1:00ish operation

Potential changes or trends

- More vendors are selling prepared foods
- Space currently used to capacity; room for growth

Special needs/considerations

- Flat space for tents/vendors; currently constrained by oval
- Would ideally like covered space for weather etc.
- Wayfinding signage would be helpful
- As more vendors sell prepared foods, nearby seating for meals would be helpful
- Nearby parking – for both vendors and customers (vendors need to be able to load and unload) is important
- Access to electricity is important
- Necessary to relocate to Snow Marine when festivals are happening
- Wi-Fi access would be helpful – currently using phone

North Atlantic Blues Festival

Area used

- Harbor Park and Mildred Merrill Park

Layout

- Stage on the water with fans on grass up the hill; festival provides the stage
- 60x40 tent at Mildred Merrill Park
- Vendors near Time Out Pub
- Food Court in grass area adjacent to Harbor Master building
- 3 gates
- 30 portable toilets on backside of Harbor Master building

Timing

- Close parks on Saturday and Sunday
- Allow boats access in morning
- Gates open at 9 – Shows 11-7 Sat, 6:30 Sunday
 - By 9:00 on Sunday they are cleaned up and done

Special needs/considerations

- Stage is delivered on tractor trailer
- Wi-Fi could be improved
- There would be savings if electrical was distributed to more locations across the site
- Good view of the stage is needed from the seating
- Electrical – power throughout the park would save cost on equipment they need to bring in
- LCI sponsor and provides Wi-Fi

General discussion

- Event organizers appreciate the site as it is today, and also are willing to be flexible if the site changes
- The openness of the area today provides flexibility; that is important
- More green space would be nice, but trees could present problems because flexibility in how the space can be used would be diminished
- Parking/solid surfaces are needed for all
- There is a City process for ensuring public safety access and coordination for events
- The Parks have evolved over time; Harbor Park started with a dirt road and grass in 1935
- People like to park and look at the water; any design would ideally provide that
- The Lobster Festival owns the lot just South of Mildred Merrill Park
- Utilities:
 - Land based electricity is reliable, the Festivals shared the costs of upgrading electrical service a few years back, though better distribution across the grounds for plugging in could be helpful; it is costly to bring in equipment to make it available throughout the site
 - Could wires be underground rather than on poles to improve views?
 - Year round Wi-Fi could be beneficial for all
- Access during festivals:
 - Boaters and customers of neighboring restaurants generally need to go through the festival gates
 - Better access could include a walkway down behind the wall over by Boston Financial
 - If the Harbor Trail extends along the shore of Harbor and Buoy Parks, pedestrian access could potentially be allowed during festivals to facilitate access to the restaurants and piers

Related Issue: festivals charge admission; would be important to have a barrier to prevent access to the festival grounds; would that be sufficient?