



# NEWS FROM CITY HALL

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## **CITY'S RESPONSE TO PROMOTERS CANCELING EVENTS**

The City of Sanford recognizes the importance of special events bringing residents and visitors to popular historic downtown Sanford. Since the early 2000's events in the downtown area help(ed) the city to create a successful business and entertainment area. The City of Sanford regrets promoters have decided not to host two events that have been favorites of the public in the past.

The Jingle Jam press release stated "increased regulations were an issue". The promoter has not shared which regulations prevented Sanford Main Street from doing Jingle Jam but said the issue was "rising costs over time, pushback, increasing liability, and trying to make everyone happy." After the 2022 Jingle Jam event, the promoter shared with city staff they were considering major changes in the event, including hosting a family friendly event at the Sanford Civic Center or Fort Mellon Park instead of a street party. Sanford is a growing city, another consideration presented by the city to Sanford Mainstreet, was two possible construction projects along Second Street that would considerably impact the event footprint.

Sanford Main Street did not submit an event application to host Jingle Jam in 2023 so there was no review by the city. Their vendor organizer, Ladies 327, has applied for the Sanford Holiday Extravaganza event to be held at the Sanford Civic Center on December 17. It will be on the August 28 City Commission agenda for approval. This event will take on the vendor portion and Kid's Zone portion of Jingle Jam.

After downtown resident and business owners complained to the city about Sanford's Mainstreet Jingle Jam (a downtown Sanford street party) in 2021, changes were made in 2022 including one less stage and more coordination with businesses. Mayor Art Woodruff expressed concerns about the large number of street closures required for this event since the event extended from Sanford Avenue to Myrtle Avenue, impacting both residents and businesses during the busy holiday season.

The city approved the Hollerbach's Octoberfest renamed to Novemberfest event in June 2023. The event, scheduled for November 3 -5, opened the door for Hollerbach's to participate in other events throughout Central Florida in October. City fees for the public event would have increased about 8.5 percent over the previous year due to increased costs overall. The promoter of Octoberfest stated "city costs and other costs for the event, including rental equipment and insurance, led to their decision to cancel the event this year."

Christina Hollerbach, President of Sanford Main Street, has advocated an open container model that could change the way we do events and reduce street closures and liability insurance costs for organizers. Last week, Ms. Hollerbach, Paul Williams, Sanford Police Chief Cecil Smith, City Events Coordinator Jennifer Brooks, Assistant City Manager Craig Radzak and Mayor Woodruff sat down to discuss parameters for an open container policy. The Mayor suggested Jingle Jam would be a good opportunity to test the model. Ms. Hollerbach and Mr. Williams preferred using the date previously scheduled for Novemberfest as the "test." The city is awaiting the proposal for the event.

The most recent changes to the city's event guidelines were made in 2022. The changes are: ending outdoor entertainment at 10 p.m. (to encourage people to move inside), giving extra attention for two or more adjacent events, trying to maintain north-south access between Sanford Avenue and Park Avenue, (since most of our parking is north of First Street), making sure multiple outdoor stages do not expose residents or other businesses who are midway between stages to competing performances, and requiring the events help manage parking.

History on city costs for the events:

2019 – Ocktoberfest held in Magnolia Square with private security used for overnight city charges \$8,946 including \$5,051 for police.

2020 – Canceled due to Covid

2021 – Ocktoberfest moved to Civic Center.

City charges were \$10,365 including \$3,756 for police, \$1,425 for fire, and \$2,750 for Civic Center rental.

2022 – Oktoberfest planned for Civic Center and rescheduled to November because of flooding.

City charges were \$16,103 including \$5,254 for police, \$1,770 for fire, and \$5,330 for Civic Center rental. Hollerbach's paid an additional \$8,000 to upgrade the Civic Center's network infrastructure to accommodate credit card readers and wi-fi usage for up to 10,000 people.

2023 – Novemberfest Estimate – event requested for November 3 – 5. Request was withdrawn by Hollerbach's before the City Commission was to consider it at the June 26 meeting.

City charges estimated at \$17,492 including \$7,505 for police, \$2,680 for fire, and \$3,947 for Civic Center rental.

In each case, the nonprofit rate for the Civic Center was used because the applicant was Hollerbach's Has Heart, a nonprofit organization.

2021 – Jingle Jam – City charges were \$6,377 including \$4,674 for police and \$356 for fire.

2022 – Jingle Jam – City charges were \$4,981 including \$2,451 for police.

2023 – No application for Jingle Jam was submitted.

2023 – Sanford Holiday Extravaganza, organized by Ladies 327, Inc. charges are estimated at \$2,543 including \$855 for police. This event is organized by the same group that organized the vendors for Jingle Jam and will include vendors, Kid's Zone, entertainment, food trucks and alcohol sales.

Between now and the end of the year, there are 18 events plus the weekly Farmer's Market all scheduled to occur in downtown Sanford. Three events have been approved for November 4 which was the date planned for Novemberfest. Additional events will be considered at upcoming commission meetings.

Downtown Sanford is a very popular destination among all ages, special events have become more attended. The city has reviewed events and event policies in an attempt to balance impacts on other businesses and nearby residents, parking, staffing, and public safety. We will continue to work with event promoters to try to meet their requests while also paying attention to impacts on other businesses, residents, local infrastructure, and employees.

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