



September 17, 2014

Mr. Bill Manno, Special Events Coordinator
City of Austin
715 East Eight Street
Austin, Texas 78701
Via Electronic Mail William.Manno@austintexas.gov

RE: Special Events Ordinance

Dear Mr. Manno:

As President of the Sixth Street Austin Board of Directors (Board), I submit this letter in response to the issues raised by the Board and stakeholders during recent discussions with City of Austin (City) staff and at boards and commissions meetings to discuss the draft Special Events Ordinance (Ordinance). The Board manages and represents the properties within the boundaries of the East 6th Street Public Improvement District. The Board respectfully requests that the process to review and comment on the draft Ordinance be postponed to allow for more time to streamline the temporary events permitting process and all other permits required by City Code Chapter 14, Chapter 9 and Chapter 25, revise the process to establish Special Events Districts to allow stakeholder participation at public hearings, and address the safety concerns during festivals when temporary events have free alcoholic beverages.

It is our understanding that 43% of the crowd that is downtown during the SXSW spring festival is there for the free alcoholic beverages. Two of the largest underlying factors contributing to the dangerous situations during the SXSW spring festival are public intoxication and overcrowding. In our observation, public intoxication is significantly decreased when alcohol beverages are served according to the rules and regulations promulgated by the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission (TABC).

Events that have an unusual offer, like an international celebrity, or free alcoholic beverages, necessarily draw a larger crowd to their event, relative to other events. This contributes heavily to likely overcrowding of their event. In the downtown area especially, this leads to a large number of events holding a temporary use permit with unusual offers of free alcoholic beverages, unevenly distributed amongst other events without such an offer. When alcoholic beverages are served under the regulations of the TABC, public intoxication will be significantly decreased at that event and overcrowding will also be decreased because the unusual offer will have been lessened.

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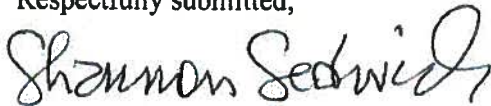
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As such, on September 16, 2014 the Sixth Street Austin Board voted unanimously to recommend the following to the City and request that the following be incorporated into the draft Ordinance:

“In order to increase public safety during the SXSW spring festival, the Board recommends that all areas where alcoholic beverages are present and served, including at temporary use permitted events, require that the alcoholic beverages be served under the guidelines and regulations of the Texas Alcohol and Beverage Commission (TABC), as evidenced by a permit issued by the TABC, and that the serving of free alcoholic beverages is prohibited. This TABC permit should be required in order to receive a Temporary Use Permit from the City of Austin.”

The Board respectfully requests the City and stakeholders engage in ideas to address these critical safety issues prior to presenting the proceeding with boards and commission meetings and final consideration of the draft Ordinance to the City Council. The Board looks forward to working with you and your staff throughout this public process.

Respectfully submitted,



Shannon Sedwick
Chair, Sixth Street Austin
525 E. 6th Street
Austin, Texas 78701

