

Randy, thank you for following up with me about the concerns of the Downtown Seattle Association in regards to Seattle Hempfest, scheduled for the 16th, 17th, and 18th of August this summer. We enjoyed meeting with your members and hearing directly from them.

Let us address each issue detailed in your letter, one by one:

#### Event Size / Venue Appropriateness

In a letter the DSA sent to James Keblas dated 3/29/13, the DSA suggested that the Hempfest event venue is 4.8 acres, and used that number to suggest that Hempfest has outgrown its venue. We believe Association's estimate of the size of Hempfest's venue to be significantly erroneous. The venue is actually more than five times that. Checking the Park's Department's website you will see that Hempfest extends the length of Centennial Park which is an additional 11 acres. The Olympic Sculpture Park adds a quick 11 acres (of which, Hempfest utilizes about 3 acres).

[http://www.seattle.gov/parks/park\\_detail.asp?id=311](http://www.seattle.gov/parks/park_detail.asp?id=311). Of course by adding these you get a total that is 24.3 acres, not 4.8. <http://www.portseattle.org/Parks-Public-Access/Parks/Pages/Centennial-Park.aspx> .

It may also help to know that the calculation of 74 acres for Seattle Center comes with some severe caveats. It includes the Mercer St. Parking Garage, Key Arena, Memorial Stadium, EMP Museum, Seattle Center Monorail, Fisher Pavillion, SIFF Film Center, the VERA Project, McCaw Hall, Seattle Repertory Theatre, INTIMAN Playhouse, Mercer Arena, KCTS 9, Pacific Science Center, Boeing IMAX, the PSC Garage, First Ave N. Parking Garage, Park Place, Pottery Northwest, the Space Needle, 5th Ave N. Parking Garage, Teatro ZinZanni and other areas that probably should not be included in an acreage estimate of this type

[http://www.seattlecenter.com/downloads/sc\\_map\\_color\\_gates.pdf](http://www.seattlecenter.com/downloads/sc_map_color_gates.pdf) .

Therefore, we believe that usable acreage at Seattle Center is less than that available at our current venue. Furthermore, we at Seattle Hempfest have explored every other park option in the City. All others are either too small, or in strictly residential areas with inadequate public transportation and inadequate parking.

#### Business Impact

Hempfest's internal polling indicates that business impact is a positive opportunity for many businesses, especially restaurants, cafes, souvenir shops and other tourist oriented businesses, esp on waterfront, Belltown and Lower QA, as well as parking lots and taxis. As many as 20% of Hempfest attendees reportedly visit from out of town, stay in local motels, and purchase food, petrol, and other products while in Seattle.

However, to further address potential business and community impact Hempfest is spending around \$1,000 to proactively construct a Community Impact Report Form

component on our website, allowing individuals in the surrounding area to upload photos and detail perceived Hempfest impact, and make suggestions on impact mitigation.

The DSA cites the fact that disturbances from construction from Seawall placement, at the same time as ongoing Hwy. 99 tunnel construction, as reasons that Hempfest should not happen, even though Hempfest itself is a business that is also impacted by those projects. Just imagine how it would be received if Hempfest suggested that waterfront businesses go away to make producing our event easier.

### Residential impact

Residential impact is substantially similar to Folklife, Bite of Seattle, Fourth of Julivar's (historic) and Bumbershoot. Our Community Impact Report Form will be accessible for residents as well as businesses.

### Traffic Congestion

Traffic congestion is substantially similar as that of the annual special events listed above. We have worked closely with SPD and SDOT to refine traffic plans and manage congestion and pedestrian traffic effectively. Those efforts are ongoing.

### Trash Removal

Seattle Hempfest volunteers annually work with Cedar Grove, Cleanscapes, and Waste Free Oregon to pick up, sort, and remove over 500 cubic yards of trash at a cost of \$30,000. There is not an event that we know of in Seattle that manually sorts such a volume of refuse to reduce and minimize recyclables and compost going into landfills.

In addition, Seattle Hempfest volunteers spend several additional days with a laser-focus in Olympic Sculpture Park, Myrtle Edwards Park, and Centennial Park to remove each and every visible cigarette butt and piece of residual debris. No event in Seattle goes to such extremes to deliver public property back to the community virtually cigarette butt and refuse free.

Hempfest is increasing efforts to address event related trash in the neighborhoods beyond the park and continues to work with City on new ideas to further address litter issues. We have had good support and ideas from Seattle Public Utilities on mitigation and will use information gleaned from our new Community Impact Report Form to surgically address areas with a concentration of impact (assuming that impact appears to be Hempfest related to some degree).

### Parking

We would appreciate any help of the association to help persuade Amgen to make its garage available. This could be a revenue source for Amgen or an opportunity for Amgen to give back to the community by donating NET parking profits to United Way or

American Cancer Assoc., etc. This would also help reduce traffic and other neighborhood impacts in Belltown. We believe any staff and cleaning costs would be modest compared to revenue.

#### Event Duration and Safety

The three day event actually helped reduce single day crowds at HF 2012. That was the plan all along and it worked. We expect same in 2013.

The addition of the new Thomas Street Footbridge pedestrian overpass will also help reduce the impact on Belltown and Central Waterfront by allowing a significant new point of access and egress. In addition, the new Thomas Street Footbridge addition greatly makes any evacuation of the venue much safer and efficient than past years.

The last time Hempfest experienced a significant crowd crunch was on Sunday of the 2011 event, caused by the performance of a musical act that had a major draw. Since that time Hempfest has adopted a policy of not publicly announcing acts that we feel will draw a significant number of additional attendees. That move has made it very difficult to find sponsors to pay for headline acts, creating challenges for us, but it is something we are doing to support our commitment to public safety.

In 20+ years, Seattle Hempfest has had an exemplary record for safety, and has worked cooperatively with Seattle Police and Fire. Indeed, in the past two years, SPD has sought to entirely remove its police presence from inside the park and largely limit the Seattle police presence to the area of Broad, between Elliott and Alaskan Way. In 2011, 2012 and again this year, HF has encouraged SPD to maintain a presence inside the Park in response to SPD command staff efforts to remove the police. We appreciate the Port of Seattle's practice of continuing to deploy officers inside Centennial Park, north of MEP. SFD and volunteer First Aid staff, and other measures have helped with safety as well as disability access. Hempfest's 21 year safety record is spotless, and can stand alongside any other large event in Seattle.

If the Association believes there is a better venue in the City, we look forward to their written analysis and we will be happy to attend a joint meeting with them and all relevant local community councils and business associations, eg View Ridge Neighborhood Assn. or SE Seattle Assn. to discuss the issue, if they can find mutually agreeable dates to discuss the issues for 2014. We would be happy for Seattle OED to participate in those meetings, as well. We have examined all park venues and the Seattle Center repeatedly in past years and as recently as 2012, when we did so extensively.

We look forward to a continuing dialogue about ways to improve our event and its impact. We have always believed that our community is served best when citizens and public officials work cooperatively to serve the public good. The same rule applies when protest organizers and community and business leaders can find enough common ground to work cooperatively towards constructive solutions that serve the public best.

Sincerely, Vivian McPeak  
Executive Director, Seattle Hempfest 2013