

FOREST PRESERVE ADVISORY BOARD
REPORT TO COUNCIL

Report No. 2015-01

SUBJECT: Permitting for annual Pumpkin Walk

DATE: April 23, 2015

BACKGROUND: Since the creation of the Forest Preserve Advisory Board (FPAB), it has been the practice of the Board to be actively involved in the preparation and review of the required public use permit, issued by the City Manager per city code. In fact, the content of last year's permit was drafted by FPAB.

DISCUSSION: It has always been the practice of the City Manager's office to allow FPAB the opportunity to review the permit before it is approved. Over time the permit has evolved as issues from past pumpkin walks, and assessment of current conditions necessitate clarification of the parameters and requirements of the pumpkin walk organizers.

In consideration of the planning associated with the pumpkin walk, the FPAB's review of the permit has usually been conducted at the September meeting prior to the event. This has allowed ample opportunity for the FPAB's suggestions to be shared with the office of the City Manager.

ANALYSIS: The Pumpkin Walk is one of the excepted uses allowed in the forest preserve. The guidelines specify that the walk is to be contained to Area B, but over the past several years consideration has been given to the condition of the paths in the preserve, allowing the walk to be relocated, as an exception, to Area A. This is only one example of the dynamic nature of the walk and the need for the walk to be monitored.

The city government does not provide oversight of the activity – FPAB has taken this upon itself. FPAB has conducted pre and post pumpkin walk inspections, and has noted problems which must be considered in subsequent walks. Without this type of monitoring, there is potential for unintended but consequential negative impact to the preserve.

The FPAB has taken it upon itself to take its charge to be the steward of the forest preserve seriously. In order for the FPAB to be effective, the Board must be afforded the opportunity to participate in the planning and approval process for the pumpkin walk. At a minimum, this would include being give the courtesy of permit review in a time frame allowing meaningful consideration and comment.

RECOMMENDATION: It is recommended that the city staff be directed to refer the permit for the pumpkin walk to the FPAB for review and conduct. It is further

recommended that this referral occur no later than the September meeting prior to the scheduled pumpkin walk.

This report was approved by a vote of