

CITY OF COOS BAY CITY COUNCIL
Agenda Staff Report

MEETING DATE October 6, 2015	AGENDA ITEM NUMBER
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TO: Mayor Shoji and City Councilors

FROM: Rodger Craddock, City Manager

ISSUE: 2017 Tall Ship Festival

BACKGROUND:

The annual visits of the historic tall ships Lady Washington and Hawaiian Chieftain along with the two week-long maritime celebration which surrounds their visits are arguably one of the biggest tourism draws in downtown Coos Bay. Many other communities have capitalized on the public's love of the sea and historic tall ships by hosting Tall Ship Festivals which draw thousands of both tourist as well as community members to the events. A number of communities are exploring hosting a coordinated Tall Ship Festival West Coast Tour in 2017. Those communities include Tacoma, Washington; San Francisco, California; Los Angeles, California; and here in Coos Bay.

Successful events such as these require a tremendous amount of strategic event planning, logistics, support, promotions, etc. Draw Events, a company which specializes in large Tall Ship Festival productions throughout the United States, has been working with the above listed communities on the proposed event. Draw Events has a rich history of coordinating and promoting tall ship events on both sides of the continental US. Craig Samborski, President of Draw Events, has been working with Councilor Leahy about the possibility of Coos Bay's inclusion in the 2017 event. Craig has visited our community several times, and he met with various stakeholders. Without a doubt, the possibility of this event and its potential impact on the local economy has generated a tremendous amount of interest.

The proposed event would draw at least eight tall ships, and it would require a venue large enough for not only mooring of the ships but to allow for vendor booths, ample parking, etc. The Mill Casino has been identified as the central location for the event given its parking infrastructure. While the bulk of the tall ship fleet would be docked there, the current event concept includes stationing two of the tall ships near our downtown waterfront; and those two ships would be used to facilitate sailing events during the festival.

Moving forward from concept to discussion of to the event and planning for it, will require the professional assistance of a proven event promoter / organizer such as Draw Events. Draw Events is working with the other identified ports of call for the proposed event. In order to enlist Draw Events services, event investors are being sought to help fund the needed up-front work involved in an event of this size. Currently, a private investor has committed to investing a portion of the required \$150,000. In addition, the Mill Casino who has agreed to allow for the use of their facility to host the main portion of the event is considering becoming an investor as well.

ADVANTAGES:

Past tall ship events have proven to draw visitors to our community which arguably has had a positive impact on our local economy. A larger coordinated and promoted event could draw several thousand visitors to our community and help our local economy.

DISADVANTAGES:

An investment such as this does have some risk, although Draw Events has a proven track record of producing successful events.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS:

Staff is suggesting a \$15,000 investment contingent on Draw Events securing enough investors to fund the needed \$150,000. Should the event occur, the City as an investor would be eligible for repayment, and the City would share in any derived profit out of the event proceeds. Use of Hotel / Motel Tax Funds would be appropriate as this event is designed to promote tourism.

ACTION REQUESTED:

If it pleases the Council, approve to becoming a \$15,000 investor in the 2017 Tall Ship Festival contingent upon Draw Events securing the other necessary investors, and approve Councilor Thomas Leahy to continue as the representative of our area at the coordination meetings (which would include some travel expenses).