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TOWN OF DARIEN
PLANNING & ZONING

Date: June 6, 2019

To: Darien Planning and Zoning Commission

From: The Andrew Shaw Memorial Trust – Trustees, Operating Board, and Tag Sale Leadership Team

RE: 2019 Darien Scouts Tag Sale Implementation

Background

The Darien Planning and Zoning Commission approved The Andrew Shaw Memorial Trust Special Permit in November 2018, with several stipulations for the 2019 Scouts Tag Sale community service project and fundraiser. The Commission requires a report “assessing the event’s compliance with the Commission’s approval and reduction in impacts to surrounding property owners” within 60-days of the Sale.

Compliance with Commission Requirements

The following report card reviews compliance with the Commission’s requirements.

Stipulation	Comments	Completed
Appoint a neighbor liaison by January 1, 2019.		✓
No Scouting program activities may be held onsite during the Tag Sale period.		✓
Parking agreements must be in place with Ring’s End and the privately held parking lot at 37 West Ave. for volunteers’ parking.		✓
Removal of trees as needed to be completed by April 1, 2019		✓
Tag Sale Layout to comply with the approved “Transitional Tag Sale Layout 2019-2020”.	Changes made to meet Fire Code requirements	✓
Set up time to be reduced from four weeks to three weeks		✓
Clean up time to be reduced from two weeks to one week.		✓
Daily volunteer activity outside to be completed by 10pm.		✓
All tents larger than 200 sq ft. and more than 10 ft. in height to comply with principal structure setbacks for the R1/2 zone.		✓
No merchandise for sale shall be stored or displayed in the required front yard. On the weekend of the sale, the front yard may be used for display and the temporary holding of sold items.		✓
At least 9 parallel parking spaces are to be maintained onsite during the Tag Sale set up for volunteers when the Ring’s End Employee Lot and 37 West Ave parking lot are not available.	9 parallel spots will be available in the Future Tag Sale layout. 6 spots were available in the Transitional layout.	See comments
During the day of the Sale, ASMT shall provide shuttle service for volunteers from the privately-owned lot at 37 West Avenue.		✓

In addition, the Commission recommended to the Darien Local Traffic Authority that no parking be allowed on West Avenue and that no parking signs be placed on Old Parish Road as appropriate. This was also completed.

2019 Darien Scouts Tag Sale Schedule

The 2019 Tag Sale Schedule removed one full week of preparation and one full week of clean-up. The permitted three-week set up period began on Sunday, April 14, eliminating one Saturday pick up versus previous years.

The three-week set up period coincided with School Vacation Week (April 15 – 19) and the Easter holiday weekend (April 19 – 20), reducing the availability of both donors and volunteers.

Darien Scouts Tag Sale Schedule – April and May 2019						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
				Supplies delivered	Tents and Fence installed	→
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Donations pick up			Donation drop off (limited hours)			Donations pick up
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
Easter			Donation drop off (limited hours)			Donations pick up
28	29	30	1	2	3	4
Pricing						→
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Tag Sale	Charities pick up			Tents down		Clean up completed

Impact Assessment: 2019 Darien Scouts Tag Sale

Measured by the ability of the 300+ Scouts and parent volunteers to adjust to the new requirements, the 2019 Tag Sale was a resounding success. Significant effort went into communicating with volunteers. Our post-Sale survey shows that most volunteers understood the new parking requirements, hours of operation, and restrictions on merchandise collected to reduce the scale of the Sale.

The installation of no parking signs on Old Parish Road reinforced the parking restrictions and the neighbors voiced no complaints to us regarding parking. In fact, a few younger neighbors found the signage helpful, repurposing it for their own sale.



Our expanded lot enabled us to create more room between the tents and comfortably fit merchandise behind our new green barrier fence, ensuring that the front yard setback was maintained until the day of the sale.



The green fence also reduced visibility for the neighbors and was positively regarded, as noted in the following email exchange. It is also important to note that the designation of a neighbor liaison, Todd Morgan (ASMT Trustee) has resulted in ongoing, active communication between the neighbors and the Trust.

From: Todd Morgan <todd@morgan@gmail.com>
 Date: Sun, Apr 21, 2019 at 8:44 AM
 Subject: Re: Thank you
 To: Lucia Palmiero <lucia1974@sbcglobal.net>

Hi. A sincere thank you and especially for reaching out. I don't quite remember where the fence idea came from but I am glad to hear that it is making a difference - I think it does a lot as well. We are really trying to look hard at what we can do differently and I hope that everyone feels like they can step forward with ideas.

Happy Easter. Todd

On Sat, Apr 20, 2019 at 8:57 AM Lucia Palmiero <lucia1974@sbcglobal.net> wrote:
 Todd,
 Please thank everyone for making a huge difference on the appearance of the tag sale. If this is the way you can shield the view going forward I will greatly appreciate it.
 Lucia Palmiero
 147 West
 Sent from my iPhone

On the other hand, the 2019 Tag Sale was much less successful when measured against our invaluable program objectives consisting of:

1. Serving the Darien community by recycling unwanted items
2. Raising annual funds needed for the Darien Scout program and Cabin operations
3. Building community among the Scouts/parents/alumni volunteers

Less Darien "clutter" was recycled. Donations were down 25% as a result of one fewer Saturday available for donation collection.

Darien Scout Tag Sale Donations - 2019 vs. 2018			
	2019	2018	% diff
# of pickups	104	120	-13%
donation hours			
available onsite	47	44	7%
# of donations	574	761	-25%

We attempted to compensate for reduced Saturday pickup and drop-off hours by adding a Sunday pick up and donation drop off times. The reality is that Saturday is the most productive day. With two vs. three Saturdays, we performed less community service, serving fewer Town residents, and recycling less "stuff".

Revenue to support Scout programs was down substantially. Gross revenue was down 20%. While it rained on Sale Day our previous experience taught us to expect a loss of 7% of revenue due to weather. We believe that the remaining loss may be attributed to fewer weeks to build awareness of the Sale and the impact of reduced visibility on West Ave during set up (no parking, no merchandise visible to the public) to build anticipation for Sale Day.

Furthermore, expenses were up 21% due to the new fence and necessary day laborers. The net effect is that we did not raise the funds needed to fully underwrite next year's Scouting programs and Cabin operations.

This was our most stressful Tag Sale in memory. With reduced time to implement, volunteers were asked to donate more hours per day. When it was clear that the work could not be completed with volunteers only, day laborers were hired to help both install the tents and clean up after the Sale. Yes, we met the time requirements set by Planning & Zoning, but at the expense of the fun, camaraderie, and community building that has always characterized this activity.

In summary, the results of the 2019 Tag Sale are mixed. We all agree that this was a learning experience. We tried new processes, incurred significant new expenses, and tested new ideas. Some results were positive:

- less parking on the town's streets, and
- reduced visibility for the neighbors during set up.

Some results were not. We learned that

- we need three Saturdays dedicated to collection, and
- volunteers need more time to juggle the demands of family, regular Scout programs, and the Tag Sale.

Thank you for working with us through these changes. We hope to reach an equilibrium where immediate neighbors concerns are well-balanced with the Tag Sale's recycling benefits to Darien residents, educational and fundraising benefits to Scouts, and charitable benefits to the people and organizations who become the new stewards of Darien's gently used donations.