



Item Number: 4

CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS AGENDA ACTION REQUEST

DATE: April 15, 2025

TO: Mark Washington, City Manager

COMMITTEE: Committee of the Whole

LIAISON: Mark Washington, City Manager

FROM: Evette Pittman, Special Event Manager
Special Events

SUBJECT: **Resolution Authorizing Certain Special Events Subject to Chapter 53 of the City Code**

The attached resolution identifies certain special events planned to occur in 2025. The attached document entitled Attachment A identifies the name of each event, location, sponsor, date, and time as well as confirmation that the insurance requirement will be met. In addition, the resolution identifies any rule or City Code provision that shall be suspended within the boundaries of the event while such event is being held.

All events will be permitted under Chapter 53 Special Events and City Commission Policy 1100-05. An Emergency Action Plan (EAP) that details the event organizer's plans to mitigate measures including severe weather will be required. The EAP will be reviewed by both the Office of Special Events and the Grand Rapids Fire Department, with guidance from the Kent County Health Department.

Major Nicholas Buck of Armed Forces Thanksgiving requests permission for the presence of military equipment and a UH 72 Lakota helicopter to land in Ah-Nab-Awen Park, on Friday, May 16, 2025, at 6:00 AM and depart at 1:00 PM as part of their annual Armed Forces Thanksgiving event. GRPD and the Parks Department approve of this event.

Gerald R. Ford Museum requests permission for a military flyover of Ah-Nab-Awen Park located at 220 Front Ave NE Grand Rapids MI 49504, on Monday, September 1, 2025, between 8 AM – 2 PM for the Greatest Generation event honoring WWII veterans. GRPD and the Parks Department approve of this event.

The United Veterans Council of Kent County requests permission for a military flyover of Veterans Park located at 101 Fulton St E, Grand Rapids, MI 49503, on Tuesday,

November 11, 2025, between 7 AM and 8 PM as part of the Veterans Day Parade in observance of Veterans Day. GRPD and the Parks Department approve of this event.

Event Organizer Julius Rogers requests a Special Event Permit for a consumer-grade firework display for the Justice for All Juneteenth Jam event occurring at Calder Plaza on Thursday, June 19, 2025. The consumer-grade fireworks will be discharged between 6:00 PM and 8:00 PM for a maximum of 10 minutes from the plaza. GRFD and GRPD will approve of the display. The City Commission has the authority to suspend Chapter 173 – FIREWORKS, Section 9.907 which prohibits the use of consumer-grade fireworks outside of certain days and at certain times.

Singh Sabha of Grand Rapids requests a Special Events Permit for a consumer-grade fireworks discharge at 2525 Leonard Street NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49505. The special effects will take place on Friday, October 24, 2025, between 8:00 PM and 9:00 PM in celebration of Diwali – Festival of Lights. GRFD and GRPD will approve of the display. The City Commission has the authority to suspend Chapter 173 – FIREWORKS, Section 9.907 which prohibits the use of consumer-grade fireworks outside of certain days and at certain times.

Riverbank Events requests a Special Event Permit for a commercial-grade firework display culminating the Grand Rapids Family Fireworks event on Saturday, July 5, 2025. The commercial-grade fireworks will be discharged by a licensed pyrotechnic between 10:00 PM and 11:00 PM from the Gillett Bridge (Inter-Urban Bridge- public property) located between the Amway Grand Plaza Hotel and Ah-Nab-Awen Park in Grand Rapids or the 555 Monroe North Lot or another approved location due to the river restoration. All necessary documentation will be submitted in advance to the Grand Rapids Fire Department and GRFD along with GRPD will approve the location, setup, and discharge, and be onsite to monitor the display. The City Commission has the authority to suspend NFPA 1123 an aerial pyrotechnic display in the proximity of an audience.

Prime Social Group/MiEntertainment requests Special Event Permits for commercial-grade firework displays culminating both the Upheaval Music Festival occurring at Belknap Park on Friday, July 18, and Saturday, July 19, 2025, and the Breakaway Music Festival occurring at Belknap Park on Friday, August 15, and Saturday, August 16, 2025. The commercial-grade fireworks will be discharged by a licensed pyrotechnic between 10:00 AM and 11:00 PM for a maximum of 120 seconds from behind home plate on the ballfield at Belknap Park in Grand Rapids. The displays will include two quick shots after the headliner each night. All necessary documentation will be submitted in advance to the Grand Rapids Fire Department and GRFD, GRPD, along with the Parks Department will approve the set and display. The City Commission has the authority to suspend NFPA 1126 for the use of pyrotechnics in the proximity of an audience and Chapter 173 – FIREWORKS, Section 9.907 which prohibits the use of fireworks outside of certain days and at certain times.

This resolution would suspend Section 9.907 of Chapter 173 Fireworks of Title IX-Police Regulations and would approve Special Event Permits involving the use of consumer-grade fireworks in Grand Rapids on Thursday, June 19, and October 24, 2025; and commercial-grade fireworks for Saturday, July 5, Friday, July 18, Saturday, July 19, Friday, August 15, and Saturday, August 16, 2025. The requirements of the Grand Rapids Fire Department, Grand Rapids Police Department, and the Parks Department as well as insurance requirements will be met before the special event permits are issued.

Chapter 53 of the Code of the City of Grand Rapids enables the City, in cases of major special events, to define the event boundaries and to provide the event organizers with the authority to manage activities within said boundaries.

YOUR COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE recommends the adoption of the following resolution designating the following special events subject to Chapter 53 of the City Code.

WHEREAS:

1. The City Commission has determined that the following special events are of general interest and importance to the community, and
2. The organizers of the following events have submitted applications seeking authorization for such events to be conducted at the dates, times, and locations indicated; and
3. Event organizers have submitted insurance and an emergency action plan in adherence to city and county regulations and state executive and emergency orders; and
4. The Parks Department, Grand Rapids Police Department, and Grand Rapids Fire Department will respectively review and approve the activities; and
5. Armed Forces Thanksgiving is coordinating a special event to be held on Friday, May 16, 2025, that will involve the presence of military equipment and the landing of a UH 72 Lakota helicopter at Ah-Nab-Awen Park at 6:00 AM and departure at 1:00 PM; and
6. Gerald R. Ford Museum is coordinating a special event, Greatest Generation to be held on Monday, September 1, 2025, that will involve a military flyover at Ah-Nab-Awen Park between 8 AM – 2 PM; and
7. The United Veterans Council of Kent County is coordinating a special event, Veterans Day Parade on Tuesday, November 11, 2025, that will involve a military flyover at Veterans Park located between 7 AM and 8 PM; and
8. Julius Rogers is coordinating a special event, Justice for All Juneteenth Jam to be held on Thursday, June 19, 2025, that will involve the discharge of consumer-grade fireworks at Calder Plaza between 6:00 PM and 8:00 PM; and
9. Riverbank Events is coordinating a special event, Grand Rapids Family Fireworks to be held on Saturday, July 5, 2025, that will involve the discharge of commercial-grade fireworks by a licensed pyrotechnic at Gillett Bridge or another approved property between 10:00 PM and 11:00 PM; and
10. Prime Social Group/MiEntertainment is coordinating two special events, Upheaval Music Festival to be held on Friday, July 18, and Saturday, July 19, 2025, at Belknap Park and Breakaway Music Festival to be held on Friday,

August 15, and Saturday, August 16, 2025, that will involve the discharge of commercial-grade fireworks at Belknap Park between 10:00 PM and 11:00 PM; and

11. Singh Sabha is coordinating a special event, Diwali – Festival of Lights to be held on Friday, October 24, 2025, that will involve the discharge of consumer-grade fireworks at 2525 Leonard Street NE, between 8:00 PM and 9:00 PM; and
12. Title IX of the City Code entitled Police Regulations, Chapter 173 entitled Fireworks, Section 9.907 entitled Firework Safety prohibits the use of fireworks on the above dates; and
13. Title IV of the City Code entitled Streets and Sidewalks, Chapter 53 entitled Special Events, Section 4.210 entitled Chapter to Control, Penalties, provides in pertinent part that it has the force of law and shall control and supersede any other general ordinances, licenses, or regulations for the duration of said special events; therefore

RESOLVED:

1. That the special events detailed in Attachment A are hereby authorized and are made subject to the provisions of Chapter 53 of Title IV of the Code of the City of Grand Rapids for the duration of such events at the times and dates indicated herein; and
2. The presence of military equipment and the landing of a UH 72 Lakota helicopter for Armed Forces Thanksgiving detailed in Attachment A and B shall be deemed a Special Event according to Chapter 53 of the City Code; and
3. The flyover by licensed aircraft for the Greatest Generation detailed in Attachment A and B shall be deemed a Special Event according to Chapter 53 of the City Code; and
4. The flyover by licensed aircraft for the Veterans Day Parade detailed in Attachment A and B shall be deemed a Special Event according to Chapter 53 of the City Code; and
5. The discharge of consumer-grade fireworks for the Justice for All Juneteenth Jam event presented by Julius Rogers detailed in Attachments A and B shall be deemed a Special Event according to Chapter 53 of the City Code; and

6. The discharge of consumer-grade fireworks for the Diwali-Festival of Lights event presented by Singh Sabha detailed in Attachments A and B shall be deemed a Special Event according to Chapter 53 of the City Code; and
7. The discharge of commercial-grade fireworks by a licensed pyrotechnic for the Grand Rapids Family Fireworks Celebration presented by Riverbank Events detailed in Attachments A and B shall be deemed a Special Event according to Chapter 53 of the City Code; and
8. The discharge of commercial-grade fireworks by a licensed pyrotechnic for Upheaval Music Festival and Breakaway Music Festival presented by Prime Social Group/MiEntertainment detailed in Attachments A and B shall be deemed a Special Event according to Chapter 53 of the City Code; and
9. That Title IX, Chapter 173, Section 9.907 entitled Use of Consumer Grade Fireworks Prohibited be suspended by Chapter 53 of the City Code entitled Special Events, and that use of consumer-grade fireworks on public property (Ah-Nab-Awen Park, Calder Plaza, Gillett Bridge, 555 Monroe North Lot, and Belknap Park) on the dates and times stated above be approved; and
10. That the rules or ordinance provisions referenced in the table attached hereto as Attachment A are hereby suspended for the duration of the event referenced therein.

CORRECT IN FORM

DEPARTMENT OF LAW