
WHITEMARSH TOWNSHIP

To: Richard Mellor, Township Manager
From: Thomas Blomstrom, Director of Parks and Recreation
Subject: Recommendation for Cancellation of the 2021 4th of July Parade
Date: May 6, 2021
CC:

It is with great regret that the leadership of the Whitemarsh Township 4th of July Parade Executive Committee has made the unanimous decision to recommend cancelling the 2021 Parade.

The 4th of July Parade Executive Committee leadership included – Emergency Management Coordinator/Fire Marshall (Nick Weaver), Police (Chief Ward, Lt. Nowak, and Lt. Keenan), Spring Mill Fire Company (Chief Bob Shoemaker, Jr.), Barren Hill Fire Company (Chief Chris Schwartz and Deputy Chief Renard Rose), Lions Club of Whitemarsh (Joe Moore), Business Sponsor (Bill Green), Parks and Recreation Board (Vice-Chair Tom Manley) and Parks and Recreation Department Staff (Tom Blomstrom and Jon Walker).

The 4th of July Parade Executive Committee held a Zoom call on Tuesday, April 27th at 8am. The above attendees carefully discussed the viability of operating the 2021 4th of July Parade given COVID CDC regulations and the current changing guidelines. It was determined unanimously to recommend cancelling the 2021 4th of July Parade given the current available information and COVID guidelines, and out of an abundance of caution for public safety.

In addition, on Friday, April 16th, the Department spoke with the Montgomery County Office of Public Health – Anita Capone Weil, Environmental Health Specialist, regarding Special Events in Montgomery County and the Whitemarsh Township 4th of July Parade. She directed that all CDC Guidelines would need to be followed and enforced for the event to take place. This included masks, social distancing, and all required sanitizations. She noted that large event gatherings are currently at 250 people in attendance. She commented that it is rapidly changing and may increase to 500 by the time for the parade. She was not sure how we could operate a mass parade gathering safely with enforcement given the structure and numbers for our Whitemarsh event.

Also, the Department has spoken to Peter Erndwein, Risk Senior Manager, from DVIT (Township Insurance Carrier) to review Special Events and operations and received guidance only to proceed with full COVID compliance and caution.

Furthermore, the Department and Committee had been closely and carefully monitoring the fluid situation and those of surrounding communities in the region that hold special events in the summer and for the 4th of July holiday. The overwhelming majority of those Townships and Boroughs have chosen to cancel given the CDC and COVID parameters. In addition, the health and safety of our residents, participants, sponsors, vendors, entertainers, volunteers, and staff was a priority in making this difficult decision. The Committee noted that even after immunizations have increased and current CDC public guidance protocols relax; many of our fellow citizens will be reluctant to subject themselves to large crowds in the immediate future and may create community conflict.

The 4th of July Parade Executive Committee and Department make this recommendation at this time given timelines including the need to make immediate PADOT road closure permit requests and the contractual windows for the cancellation of entertainment and the ability to receive refunds.

We look forward to hosting the event on the 4th of July in 2022.

Please let me know if you have any further questions and thank you for your consideration.

Best, Tom B.

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