

October 31, 2007

The work assigned to the Ad Hoc Committee for Use of the Green was taken up earnestly nine weeks ago with the goal of addressing a number of concerns regarding multi-day events on the town green. A history of ongoing concerns by towns' people, businesses, Public Works, Police, and the Board of Selectmen has prompted this evaluation of the Green and its use.

The work began with a clear understanding that the Guilford Green is held dear by all who live in Guilford. It is much more than simply the center of town. It is the spiritual center of the greater life and activity that makes up our town. It is the core of much of our town commerce, where we celebrate, take time to play and enjoy the solace that it provides. The job of maintaining the Green so that it might accommodate all the varying needs requires that we remain aware always of our larger community. Our work began with the study of the rules to examine their adaptability to large events and where the areas of concern existed.

It was determined that under the existing rules a number of events would likely have to seek other locations in order for the events to be held. The present operational plans of some of the larger events demand the use of equipment, and extended time for setup and dismantling.

The committee did proceed by examining the ways in which impact of large events could be diminished through understanding of present activities and practices. It was only after examining all facets of operation that the recommendations were set forth.

The committee did not examine several other aspects because they spoke more to governance than to operational feasibility. It did not examine legality governing types of events nor did it consider the impact of population growth. It also did not consider making recommendations regarding diminishing or limiting size of events. It did not consider other sites as an alternative to the Green for large events, although it was informed about large groups that had relocated elsewhere with success. It did give consideration to how issues of precedent or the existing rules might affect the use of the Green and the events held there in the future.

The committee's recommendations came from a focus that addressed administration of activities, financial responsibility, protection of the Green environment, and the safety of the public on and around the Green. Advice and opinions were sought from experts in the areas of public safety, tenting and stakes, electricity, grounds keeping, and bonds and insurance.

The charge given was to examine feasibility of multi-day events under the existing rules. In general, the committee determined that size and length of events require greater planning and greater attention to detail by all involved. It also determined that regardless of size, large or small, all events should abide by the same procedures if the Green is to flourish and remain safe. It also concluded that there were a number of measures that if taken could improve the way events are managed.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve on this committee and to work through these issues.

Sincerely,
Ad Hoc Committee on Use of the Green