



**TOWN OF OCCOQUAN**  
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**Occoquan Town Council**  
**Work Session Meeting**  
**July 21, 2020 | 7:00 p.m.**

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Regular Business**
  - a. Summer Events Discussion-Craft Show Update
  - b. Update on Kayak Ramp Project
- 3. Closed Session**
- 4. Adjournment**

# Events and Community Development Follow-Up, July 2020

## Event Planning During COVID-19

Considering current event guidelines, health and safety conditions, and limited financial resources available for events during these uncertain times, staff recommends a conservative approach to events for the first two quarters of FY2021. It is important to reflect and evaluate the investment of both revenue generating and business support initiatives and determine Council priorities for allocating resources.

## Revenue Generating Event Ideas

In lieu of Craft Show revenue, the Town needs to generate funds for CIP reserves. Staff will consider adding additional stand-alone events or revenue-generating components of previously planned events. The key factors in considering revenue-generating events are essentially all Phase III limitations: size, crowd control, social spacing, sanitation, etc., though it is also difficult to charge for tickets for events that have otherwise previously been free. Small ticketed events can take place in the parks; size can be more easily limited and spacing can be enforced. Additionally, staff will plan a marketing campaign to stimulate park rentals with the intent to offer a solution for those who have had events recently canceled.

- Food themed events
  - Taste of Occoquan
  - BBQ Contest or Chili Cookoff
  - Pottery Ice Cream Bowl Event
  - Wine Tasting
  - Ghost Pub Crawl
- Athletic Fundraisers
  - SUP lessons with Mayor Earnie Porta
  - Virtual 5K “Part Deux”
  - Team-Themed Park Walks – pass baton
  - Wacky Dress-Up 5Ks
  - Color Fun Run for Kids
  - Obstacle Course for Kids / Climbing Wall
- Date Night Fun Tournaments in the Park
  - Garden Games Contest
  - Old Fashioned Horseshoe Tourney
  - Trivia Night (Each team books a picnic circle)
- Family Fun
  - Concerts (Adult and Kid-friendly)
  - Drive-In Movie
  - Petting Zoo / Baby Farm Animals / Reptile
- Outdoor
  - Birdwatching
  - Painting in Park
  - Yoga in the Park

- Holiday
  - Virtual or Hybrid Christmas Market
  - “Candy Cane Lane” in the Park (sell hot chocolate at entrance)
  - Sell vendor spaces
  - Carriage rides
- “Rent our Park” Campaign
  - Weddings
  - Anniversaries
  - Graduations
  - Kid Birthday parties
  - Giveaway Wedding package
- Water Fun
  - River Cruises
  - SUP Lessons with the Mayor
  - Kayak/SUP Races
- Merchant Auction / Raffle Packages
  - Personal Styling Session with Cathy + gift card
  - Personal Wine Tasting with Denise + gift card
  - Custom Beauty Services + Makeup Package by Nicola + gift card

## Business Support Initiatives

The goal of creating business support initiatives is to focus on events that support a vibrant downtown business environment and that encourage new business growth. These initiatives are promoted on social media and this compelling, relevant, and consistent information creates increased town visibility and stimulates commerce and tourism.

- Best Kept Secrets Bingo
- 50 Top Things To Do in OCQ
- #OccoquanStrong
- Wedding Giveaway
- Girls Night Out
- Family Portraits
- OCQ service businesses
- Ghostie Pub Crawl
- Scavenger Hunt with mobile app

## Consideration for creating a virtual craft show

With expenses ever increasing and fears of not attracting enough vendors to fill booth spaces or patrons to support event costs, or simply fear of spreading the virus by not social distancing, many event directors are considering converting to a virtual format using platforms such as Booth Central or Event Hub.

### Pros

- Legacy of 50-year Craft Show continues
- Craft show with no virus concerns
- Low overhead; low risk

- Low expense for platform (under \$2000)
- Keeps relationship with vendors in tact
- Can include Town Businesses at no fee
- Can extend for one month beyond show dates at no cost
- Low maintenance event management
- Volunteers not required
- Opportunity to test a new format
- Potential for new consumer markets
- Creates a whole new marketing campaign  
("Missing the Fall Occoquan Arts & Crafts Show? Now you can shop your favorite artists and crafters virtually...")
- Test case provides a pathway for a potential virtual or hybrid revenue-generating Christmas Market

**Cons**

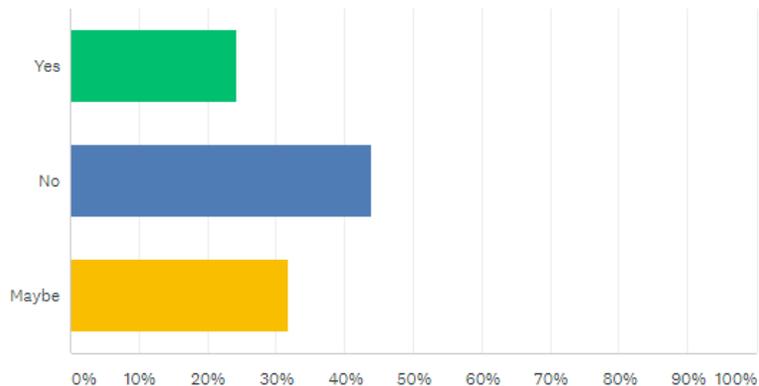
- Requires marketing to be successful for vendors
- Time and effort to build platform
- Low entry fee may entice vendors to sign up, but generates little net revenue

**Recent poll**

Last week, staff polled 167 Occoquan Craft Show artists and crafters:

We're considering a two-day live event where vendors could chat with customers during a 3- or 4-hour window. We'd likely add additional days to the event for attendees to browse vendor sites. Because a virtual event won't replace the experience of an actual craft show, the fee scale would be substantially restructured. We would market heavily, which includes a 15,000 person reach on social media channels. Would you be interested in a virtual event?

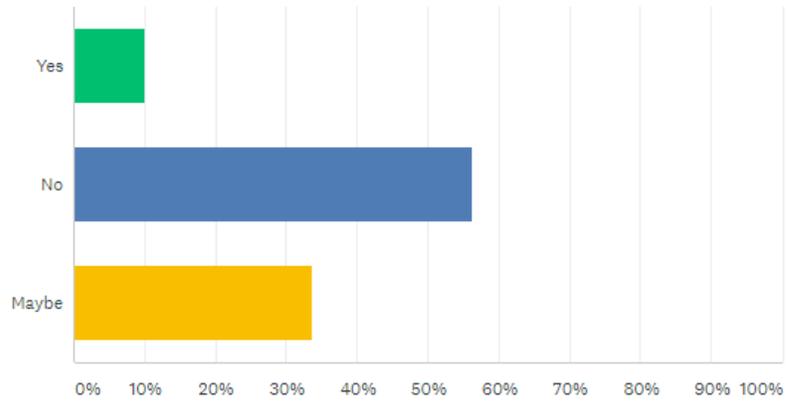
Answered: 91 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	24.18% 22
No	43.96% 40
Maybe	31.87% 29
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>91</b>

# Would you be interested in participating for \$75 a day?

Answered: 89 Skipped: 3



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	10.11% 9
No	56.18% 50
Maybe	33.71% 30
TOTAL	89

## Feasibility

A virtual craft show this September is a low risk opportunity to test a new format and potentially new markets. While the test event may not initially be revenue generating, staff recommends. It could be an excellent beta platform to build and develop as a long-term solution. Additionally, the extra sales outlet for town businesses and craft show vendors during a difficult time might be appreciated.