

2021 Sausalito Art Festival Canceled Due To Event Location Uncertainty

SAUSALITO, Calif., May. 20, 2021 -- The Sausalito Art Festival Foundation (SAFF) regrets to announce that it has canceled production of its signature event, the 2021 Sausalito Art Festival, due to the uncertain prospects of a homeless encampment being relocated to Marinship Park, the traditional location of the Festival.

In December of last year, a man erected a tent to live in on the Sausalito waterfront next to Dunphy Park. Since then, an entire encampment of homeless people has congregated on the park. Thereafter, the Sausalito City Council has been trying to relocate the homeless encampment from its central and prominent location near Dunphy Park to the less visible area of Marinship Park.

The Sausalito Art Festival Foundation has a multi-year agreement to use Marinship Park over Labor Day Weekend (Sept. 4-6), for the Festival. However, movement of the homeless encampment to Marinship Park would negate the use of the park for the 2021 Festival and potentially beyond 2021.

Since becoming aware of the City's intention to move the encampment to Marinship Park, SAFF members have been working with the Sausalito Parks and Recreation division to find an alternative location for the 2021 Festival. In the process, the group identified Dunphy Park as the most viable location for the event, assuming the homeless encampment would be moved to Marinship Park.

However, during public meetings with the Sausalito Parks and Recreation Commission, opposition to the use of Dunphy Park was voiced by Commissioners as well as Sausalito residents. In an attempt to find a solution to the opposition of the iconic Sausalito Art Festival, a sub-committee was formed to address the issues addressed by the opposition. "Unfortunately, we are simply out of time to work through the opposition voiced to the movement of the Festival to Dunphy Park, and we can no longer wait for Judge Chen (U.S. District Court Judge Edward M. Chen), to make a decision on whether or not the City has the right to move the homeless encampment to Marinship Park in the first place," stated Sausalito Art Festival Foundation Chairman Louis Briones.

For months, the local chapter of the California Homeless Union has opposed the movement of the encampment to Marinship Park, and the Sausalito City Council has been fighting their opposition. "We've been uncertain about our ability to use Marinship, so we started to create production plans for both Marinship and Dunphy Park. However, the events industry is rapidly coming back to life and we can't wait any longer to start ordering and reserving materials. It's impossible to do so because the park requirements are vastly different," added Briones.

As of last week, Judge Chen has yet to make a definite decision on the encampment relocation to Marinship Park, and it's clear that it will take weeks if not months for SAFF to work with the Parks and Recs sub-committee to come to a resolution and agreement with the various stakeholders required to hold the Festival at Dunphy Park. "At this point, we owe it to the artists who have committed to exhibit at the Festival, to release them so they can attend other Labor Day Weekend events," stated Briones.

The city is restricted in its options by a recent legal decision impacting public property. In *Martin v. Boise*, the United States Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit affirmed that people cannot be punished for sleeping outside on public property when a city is unable to offer them a suitable alternative shelter option.

In addition, the pandemic has created a new level of complexity to the situation. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), encampments should “remain where they are,” to prevent infectious disease spread. On May 14, Judge Chen asked the City of Sausalito to provide within three days information on how many individuals residing at the encampment had received their first and second COVID-19 vaccinations in an effort coordinated by the City and the County of Marin Department of Health and Human Services. This information may or may not result in a final decision about the relocation by Judge Chen.

“This situation is extremely difficult for everyone involved. After spending the last year to reimagine the 68th annual Sausalito Art Festival, we very much looked forward to bringing the Festival back to the community of artists, locals and visitors. We were confident that we could meet the requirements imposed on us by the Feds and State in regards to Covid restrictions, but the pandemic has created a chain reaction of events that we could not anticipate. It impacted the homeless, which impacted the parks, which impacted the City, which impacted the Festival. There clearly is no winner here but with help, we’ll all be in a better place next year and the Festival will return” stated Briones.

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About the Sausalito Art Festival Foundation

The Sausalito Art Festival Foundation is a non-profit 501 (c) (3) cultural and fine arts organization. The mission of the Sausalito Art Festival Foundation is to encourage, promote, and support the arts for the community.

The Sausalito Art Festival Foundation Board of Trustees governs the Foundation’s activities, including the annual Sausalito Art Festival and other year-round community programs. The Board of Trustees is composed of civic, community, and business leaders who volunteer their time, service, and expertise in support of the Foundation’s public purpose.

Proceeds from the annual Festival support Bay Area arts and community non-profits through grants, artist awards, and scholarships. Through this support, the Foundation makes a significant investment in the future of its community, totaling over \$1,600,000 in recent years.