



**GALVESTON**  
★ ISLAND ★  
*Park Board of Trustees*

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**Discuss Strategic Direction and planning for July 4<sup>th</sup>, 2023 Holiday Activities:**

After activating a new drone show program to replace traditional fireworks and sponsoring the Seawall 4<sup>th</sup> of July Parade in 2022, staff met with City Leadership to debrief. The 2022 activities drew record numbers to the Seawall and brought into full view the concerns tied to security, crowd control, and safety, all everchanging concerns in relation to large unrestricted gatherings. This inspired both institutions (City and Park Board) to rethink deliverables and activations.

Several thoughts and ideas were presented during the join meeting which include:

- 4<sup>th</sup> of July Parade should be family focused, and the time and location should be shifted to a step-off time of 10am and moved to a location in the Downtown Historic District
- Daytime activities designed to encourage visitation early in the day and through late afternoon should be the focus of future funding and sponsorship. This approach will not only spread-out crowds but offer lift in business to the hospitality community (attractions, recreation facilities, restaurants, and retail)
- Eliminate free evening events which drive unneeded compression on the island and substantial strain on law enforcement and first responders. Instead, open the opportunity to a private promoter to create an evening event behind a paid gate
- Explore the opportunity to produce a Holiday Drone Show on the night of July 3<sup>rd</sup>, presented in the Historic Downtown, to encourage overnight visitation and extend the holiday experience
- If there was a desire by the City of Galveston to move forward with a traditional July 4<sup>th</sup> Fireworks show, a private promoter should be identified who will work with city officials to design and produce a show in a controlled environment at a location and time of the city's choosing, just like any large-scale festival or event
- Explore the opportunity to extend the celebration, bridging Juneteenth to July 4<sup>th</sup> with daytime, visitation-generating activities, establishing "Freedom Days" on Galveston Island

Staff is ready to explore these thoughts and ideas and seeks direction from the Park Board of Trustees. With that direction, staff will take it back to the Board Appointed committees to create an actionable plan. These plans will then be presented for Board consideration and approval.