

## Exhibit A

August 15, 2022

The following are emails exchanged between the Parks and Events Committees concerning pavilion use and banner display. They are in chronological order.

Submitted to the Village Clerk to be included in the August 2022 Village Board minutes.

Margaret Keylin, Parks Trustee

**Peggy Keylin** <parcs@villageofdowns.org>

**To:** Mike James

Sun, Jul 10 at 7:20 AM

Mike,

I went to the pavilion yesterday to be sure it was clean for our renters today and was shocked at its condition. It's never been left like this.

Both bathrooms were a mess with paper all over the floors and spilling out of the garbage cans. The floors were not swept or wiped down. A sucker was stuck to the floor and melting. The tables were not wiped down. There were pieces of popcorn and sticky spots maybe from pop on most of the tables.

The fans were left on.

The faucet in the women's room wasn't turned all the way off. The sink was stained from the dripping water.

There was garbage in every can. The garbage contained food containers and spilled soda which was drawing insects.

Parts to a canopy were left on a table.

4 plastic tables that don't belong to the pavilion were left leaning against the kitchen counter. [I set them outside the pavilion door so they wouldn't be in today's renters' way.]

I know the pavilion was very clean when people came in for the 4th. I had vacuumed the building and completely washed down both bathrooms the week before the 4th.

Whoever was in charge of clean-up had to know the condition they were leaving the pavilion in. I wasn't able to get to the pavilion to check until Saturday, July 9th because I was taking care of Mom. I can understand coming in the day after the 4th to clean up, but not coming in at all I don't understand. Please pass this information on to the Events Committee. No matter who uses the pavilion, they are expected to follow the rules on clean-up that are stated on our checklist.

Peggy

**NOTE:**

**I received no reply to this email nor was it shared with the Events Committee until the July Events Committee meeting.**

**Peggy Keylin** <parcs@villageofdowns.org>

To:downsfestivalsandevents-g@wiu.edu

Sat, Jul 16 at 5:50 PM

Events Committee,

I informed the rest of the Parks Committee of the Events Committee's responses to our questions about the state of the pavilion after the Fourth and about the banners on the fence. Here's our reply.

Pavilion requirements are the same for all who use the space. We expect those who use the pavilion to be respectful of the place and of renters who come after them. Parks' expectations are laid out clearly in the rental agreement,

"4. I am responsible for all damages caused by myself or my guests to Dooley Park Pavilion/property, the surrounding premises, the furniture, fixtures, and equipment contained therein during the rental period. I am responsible for cleaning the building and surrounding premises during and immediately following the rental period. I have received and read the Dooley Park Pavilion Clean-up Checklist. Failure to carry out these responsibilities will result in loss of ability to use or rent Dooley Park Pavilion."

Parks Committee hold Events' use of the pavilion to the same rules. We have never had a problem with Events use until now. Even after Stephanie's explanation, it was unclear whether she was ever going to come back to clean. From now on Parks Committee expects any Event Committee use of the pavilion to have a signed rental agreement on file in the office and to leave a signed clean-up checklist on the kitchen counter when completed.

It's unfortunate that Events didn't contact the Parks Committee about hanging advertising banners on the fence. Downs Parks are not billboard spaces. They are natural spots people visit to relax and play and get away from the constant bombardment of advertisement. They are green space where people can be closer to nature, not commercial space to promote sponsors. I think if you'd brought the idea up to Parks, we might have agreed to have the signs on the fence for the parade but not beyond the Fourth.

To keep problems and situations like this from arising in the future, contact Parks Committee with your ideas in time for us to consider them and give our reply.

The banners need to be removed by Monday, July 18. Perhaps you could hang them on the semi-trailers by the Haunted House or rotate them in the banner space next to the Village Hall.

The Parks Committee

**NOTE: I sent this email to the only email address I could find that referred to Events which was the one listed on the Newsletter. It did not reach the Events Committee. (Peggy Keylin)**

**Village of Downs Mayor** <mayor@villageofdowns.org>

**To:** Peggy Keylin

**Cc:** Clerk, Cyndi Miller, Jill Kasprzak, Ken Kasprzak, Mel Pilchard and 4 more...

Tue, Jul 19 at 12:27 PM

Peggy,

I did not reply because I needed to discuss with the committee. Since you came to the meeting so there was no need to reply to the email. During the discussion, no objection was raised to our Nov 1 display date of the banners that I heard. Stephanie indicated she was going to move some of the banners.

The fact the coordinator, Stephanie Adkisson, was sick and couldn't clean the pavilion was unfortunate but happens. You're cleaning it was appreciated as a big help to a village event/tradition. Stephanie understood and recognized your concern, at the meeting, the need to communicate with the Parks committee, but Stephanie is new and learning so some slack needs to be given. Helping would be the best way to achieve working better together.

In fact, having someone from Parks join her group of volunteers would be certainly appreciated. Especially since this event happens primarily in the park and everything that is done would, by your standard, need to be run by the Parks Committee. A person working with Stephanie could make this happen and help her in the process as she has a lot to think about. FYI, all this has been done in the past without objection, so I don't understand what has changed? Another thought is to give this event back to the Parks Committee to run since it is primarily a park event. This would allow it to be ran the way your committee wants it to operate.

Regarding, to the banners blocking the view, I walk and drive that way all the time. There was not a problem with the banners blocking the ability to see at the stop sign on Lincoln and Washington. If there is you follow rules of the road: Stop, pull out to see and continue with caution.

Regarding the "contract" with the sponsors to allow them to display their company banner until Nov 1 as a events thing and not a park thing. I will be curious as to how this position will be perceived by local businesses supporting our Village.. I now more clearly understand where the Parks Committee is at regarding the Village as a whole.

Mike

**Stephanie Adkisson** <>

**To:**Village of Downs Mayor

**Cc:**Peggy Keylin,Clerk,Cyndi Miller,Jill Kasprzak,Ken Kasprzakand 4 more...

Wed, Jul 20 at 8:48 AM

Peggy, Mike, and members of the Board and Events Committee,

Because I stepped into the roll of heading up the 4th celebration, I feel that I need to voice my concern and opinion in response to these emails.

I had agreed to head up the 4th events due to no one from Parks being willing to volunteer to coordinate this huge, time consuming, and quite frankly difficult task.(And would be happy to include anyone willing to volunteer in the future) I am absolutely happy to be a part of the Village and look forward to a future of service to our community through the events committee or other areas it may open up. That being said, I am disappointed that as no effort was put forth by the Parks committee, no guidelines set prior, no interest in the event or its happenings have been discussed, it is only after the fact that we are here. I truly hope that you all understand that by contract I should be allowed to rehang the banners on the fence as we have contracted with our sponsors to do so unless the Parks Board is willing to reimburse the business owners for half of the sponsorship as it has been taken forcefully from them. This makes the village as a whole look horrible. As the Park is not involved, has not been involved, and had not set any guidelines during the public meetings held to discuss the celebration, and there is no ordinance against the banners, I will need to make this right by the several local sponsors that made our celebration possible.

I would like to say as well that Peggy sat in on our events meeting for the first time since I became a part of this committee nearly two years ago and I addressed the direct concerns brought forward. Not cleaning the pavilion due to extreme dehydration and flu was addressed. I agreed that in the future I will be sure to have a back up person in charge in case I need them and THANKED her for picking up my slack after I had nearly hospitalized myself running this event in 100 weather with very little help. The sign placement was addressed in regards to moving the church sign from the corner as it may be hard to see around the corner. I did agree to move the corner sign as well as remove the 4th specific sign in the meeting and directly to Peggy. I want to note that I too, travel this road multiple times a day and have had no issue as well as tested this before hanging the signs. The fence sits over 10 feet from the corner and is not a privacy fence. I hung the banners with space between purposely for a clear view of traffic. Yesterday, she decided that without a phone call or addressing it further, she would remove the signs. That were paid for and are the property of sponsorships to the village events and paid for by the business who provided them. Including my own, I have had 4 phone calls today regarding the missing signs, why they were removed when it was discussed that we would display the signs until Nov 1 in order to show their sponsorship of this Village and our events. Unfortunately, we are now at risk to lose further sponsorship due to this action by a Village Board Member. We truly look to those sponsorships to raise money not only for the massive fireworks display, but all of the other events that benefit the park via the Freedom Run AND in my efforts to include younger and more active members of this community, I have now seen the true colors of the Parks committee as they try and blackball our 4th of July celebration. It is very difficult to get people involved in events when this is the outcome of one of our own Board Members.

Moving forward, I will be addressing this at the Village Board meeting accompanied by the few other business owners that are disappointed at this outcome. I will be looking into alternate options for the celebration or asking that the Parks committee write up guidelines for the events we hold in the park if they are not going to be involved in them but feel that they are able to police them this way. In Peggys response to Mayor Mike's email, she states that the Parks Board will "consider all requests and accommodate with what is best for the Downs Parks." My question is, how is NOT providing our sponsors for an event IN THE PARK what they paid for, best for the Parks? and is this setting the Parks board up

to disallow a long time Downs tradition of the celebration in the park? Or further, not allow the Freedom Run, Halloween, Cookies with Santa, if it doesn't suit one member? Had this concern been brought to me during my illness, I would have gladly asked for help or put one of my family members on it. Had the banner issue been brought to my attention post Parks Meeting, I would have happily worked together to find a solution that suits us both. Had I been allowed to defend my sponsors and their dedication to this Village, we may have found compromise. Unfortunately, none of those things occurred, making it difficult to trust that my volunteers and sponsors will continue to support the village events. This should concern all of you, considering the Events committee are the majority of people in this village that provide these long time traditions to our children and members of the community.

I would also like to add that I need to be directed in how to handle the issue of the business owners money. As they paid for these banners to be placed at the park July1-Nov1 and have only been hanging for 3 weeks, some of them feel that taking their sponsorship check back is the next move. As this pays for your and my fireworks and 4th event, the committee is not prepared to do this as the reasoning is no fault of our own. Again, we were not denied access as no one from the Parks board involves themselves with this event or attends our public meetings to discuss these concerns. Please guide me as to how we as a village can rectify this for these people that whole heartedly love to support our village. They do not recognize this as an "events committee" issue but an issue with the VOD as a whole. I am asking that we hang the banners further down the fence this year until November 1 to uphold our contracts with the already paid sponsorships and not cause a funding issue now or in the future and next year, with the guidelines I have asked for from the Parks Board, we will hang them elsewhere. As representatives of the people and businesses in the community you represent, I would see no one having an issue with compromise here.

**Stephanie Adkisson**

**Peggy Keylin** <parcs@villageofdowns.org>

**To:**downsfestivalsandevents-g@wiu.edu, Mike James, Village of Downs Public Safety Chair, Village of Downs Buildings Trustee, Village of Downs Public Works Chair and 3 more...

Sun, Jul 24 at 12:36 PM

Village Board and Events Committee,

This email is in reply to an email from Stephanie Adkisson sent on July 20.

The Parks Committee is not and has never been an arm of the Events Committee. It became a separate entity when the Events Committee was formed. Originally many of the events were sponsored through Parks, but all were moved to Events when that committee was formed. The reason the Parks Committee did not volunteer to coordinate the 4<sup>th</sup> of July Celebration is because it is not responsible for Events Committee events. That is the whole reason for having an Events Committee.

However, Parks is very supportive of these events. We provide utilities and a clean, stocked venue for Easter Egg Hunts, Cruise-ins, 4<sup>th</sup> of July, Movies in the Park, Haunted House activities and Cookies with Santa free of charge. It takes a decent amount of time and labor to keep the pavilion clean, stocked and repaired for use by renters, service groups, and the Events Committee year-round. Though utility bills continue to rise, Parks budgets to pay all bills. Renting the pavilion is a major part of Parks' income, yet we basically block out a quarter of the year, October, November, and December, for Events use for free. We've gotten requests for additions to Dooley Park from Freedom Run, such as adding a drinking fountain and a public restroom. Parks works with the run committee to see these projects happen. Parks pays for upkeep of these additions once they're installed. What we do is not showy, but it is vital to the success of these events and projects. Parks puts in lots of effort and does its part to support Events Committee activities. Besides being untrue, for anyone to accuse the Parks Committee of "blackballing" any village endeavor is very insulting to people who volunteer their time, funds, labor, and care freely. As Stephanie points out in her letter, volunteers are few and hard to come by. Insulting and belittling their efforts is not the way to encourage volunteerism.

Parks committee is not a part of any contracts created by the Events Committee. For many years Events has thanked its sponsors by hanging signs inside the pavilion for display during the 4<sup>th</sup> of July activities. Parks never had any problems with this. The signs were taken down at the end of the celebration at the time the pavilion was cleaned. This year when signs were hung on park fencing during the parade and extending until after the Freedom Run Event on July 16, Parks had no problem with that. To our total surprise and well after the fact, at the last Events Committee meeting on July 12, Parks learned that the Events Committee had made a contact with local sponsors to hang their banners on park fencing for 5 months. Then we did have a problem. This is a very different use of Downs parks. Formerly the signage was a thank you to sponsors. It was displayed during the event only which is generally how event sponsorship works. Now the signage is advertising that is to be displayed for 5 months. As I wrote to Events in an email dated July 16 in which I asked them to take down the banners, "Downs Parks are not billboard spaces. They are natural spots people visit to relax and play and get away from the constant bombardment of advertisement. They are green space where people can be closer to nature, not commercial space to promote sponsors." It's unfortunate and surprising that Events didn't contact Parks about these changes prior to signing a contract. If we'd known anything about either one of these possibilities, we would certainly have wanted to meet with Events.

As Parks Trustee, I did not, during the July 12 Events Committee meeting, make any agreements about what is to be done about cleaning the pavilion in the future or where and for how long advertising banners could be hung in parks. The Parks Committee had not had a chance to consider the situations. I spoke with Parks Committee members about both issues and emailed our responses to the Events Committee on July 16. Parks decided Events needs to have a signed pavilion rental agreement on file and leave a signed cleaning checklist on the kitchen counter at the end of each event. This is what

we ask of all people and groups who use the pavilion. The committee does not agree that Downs parks should be used as billboard sites for Events Committee or any other group.

It is the lack of communication from the Events Committee, not the actions of the Parks Committee that has created these problems and is putting support for village activities at risk. Parks had no knowledge of the advertising contract until July 12. Parks did not receive a reply from Mike concerning the condition of the pavilion after the 4<sup>th</sup>. We did not receive a reply to our email concerning the banners to Events sent on July 16 until we got the email from Stephanie on July 20.

Parks has asked for a meeting with Events this week. They've agreed. Parks is very willing to discuss these issues and possible solutions to the problems that will work for both groups as well as clarifying guidelines for the future to avoid these situations altogether.

Peggy Keylin and the Parks Committee

**NOTE: I believe this email reached the Village Board members, but it did not reach the Events Committee because of an erroneous email address. (Peggy Keylin)**