

**DUBLIN CITY COUNCIL
WORK SESSION
NOVEMBER 12, 2024**

Minutes

Mayor Amorose Groomes called the Tuesday, November 12, 2024 work session to order at 6:04 p.m.

Council members present: Vice Mayor Alutto, Mayor Amorose Groomes, Ms. De Rosa, Ms. Fox, Mr. Keeler, Ms. Kramb and Mr. Reiner.

Staff present: Ms. O'Callaghan, Mr. Earman, Ms. LeRoy, Ms. Goliver, Ms. Blake.

Also present: Kevin Wright and Brooke Klejnot, Yard and Co. and Jerome Barth, Town Square.

Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Amorose Groomes invited Ms. Fox to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

Community Events Roadmap Update and Next Steps

Ms. Blake provided an update on the Events Roadmap Project (Project) beginning with the outline and scope. This Project is in furtherance of Council's Goal #4 (Develop Dublin's "Destination of Choice" Next-Generation Community Events Vision). Yard and Co. conducted a holistic review of Dublin events. They reviewed external event organizers' permitting experience, internal operations, opportunities for improved efficiencies and the scheduling tempo of events at parks and facilities. Tonight's conversation will include a review of event management models and provide recommendations for future events based on specific locations within Dublin. Ms. Blake shared the schedule for the Events Roadmap Project. Yard and Co. were onboarded in July 2024 and quickly began to learn about Dublin's event landscape. They completed the "Explore" phase in September resulting in the Summary of Understanding that was provided to City Council as part of packet materials. Currently, the Project is in the "Test" phase. Tonight's conversation will help shape next steps. The "Build" phase is expected to be completed in January with Yard and Co. returning to a Council meeting in the first quarter of 2025 to present the final roadmap for Council's feedback prior to adoption. Ms. Blake introduced Yard and Co., a Cincinnati-based company with significant experience in an array of projects from planning, activation, operations and branding. She introduced Kevin Wright, Co-founder and Principal and Brooke Klejnot, District Experience Operator with Yard and Co.

Ms. Klejnot stated that Yard and Co. is a design-build company that changes the way places change. The three objectives for this work session are:

1. Get confirmation that Yard and Co. has an accurate and adequate understanding of City leadership's values and priorities as summarized in the Summary of Understanding.
2. Focus heavily on operating models, which are part of the scope.
3. Work together to create a path forward forming more tangible recommendations.

Ms. Klejnot introduced the Summary of Understanding. Yard and Co. met with 34 key stakeholders including elected officials, city staff, leaders of local associations and cultural organizations and event organizers. They have reviewed a number of planning and operational documents and reports. A

survey was conducted in person and online, and Yard and Co. attended the Dublin Irish Festival (DIF) to observe operations and programming.

Ms. Klejnot shared key survey results. The majority of respondents were in the 50-64 age range. Their favorite events were the DIF, Independence Day and the Dublin Market. Their favorite aspects of the event were that it is family-friendly, brings the community together, and is fun and enjoyable. Events activate public spaces and parks. When asked about the size of events, survey respondents shared that they would like to see smaller, more community-focused events. They are looking for a balance of large and small events. Missing event types were stated as live music, concerts, holiday events (Christmas Market) and food and culinary events. Preferred locations for community events are locations that are already being activated with events by the City and third parties. Some additional sentiments that Yard and Co. heard:

- Events are important for community building and quality of life. Secondarily, events serve as an element that makes Dublin attractive to visitors and developers.
- City events are for residents. Key stakeholders said that if the City is going to be investing in events, they should serve residents first.
- The number of events should grow.
- Event production should not be shouldered by the City alone.
- Certain locations are better than others.
- The future is exciting. There is a lot of momentum building around the West Innovation District and Metro Center and what role events could play in creating a distinctive brand and experience for those districts.

Ms. Klejnot shared Yard and Co.'s observations around City operations. Events require a lot of resources, not only the Events Department staff, but Parks and Recreation, Public Safety and Public Services. Already the City is looking for solutions by leveraging third party providers and contracts. Event organizers who go through the permitting process shared some opportunities for improvement around sponsorship strategies, different regulations and artist engagement in parks. Regarding DIF operations, Yard and Co. found a cohesive and interconnected team. It was impressive to see the cross training. DIF requires year-round staff attention and a significant number of resources leading up to and during the event as well as following the event. It relies on many volunteers. Through the DIF, the City maintains a great connection with charitable organizations and different sport groups around the City.

Ms. Klejnot shared Yard and Co.'s observations on the event ecosystem. The bulk of events around the City are occurring in the summer. Riverside Crossing Park, Bridge Park and Coffman Park are the most popular locations. Crawford Hoying followed closely by the City organizes the most events. Event types are mostly market, sports, and run/walk events. Bridge Park is well-represented on the list due to an active developer and several tenants doing programming. Cultural events are becoming more frequently seen types of permit applications for Riverside Crossing Park. Civic organizations, non-profits and sporting groups are well-represented, while music and visual arts are underrepresented. In the City's sustainability plan, opportunities exist for programming around nature and the environment. Building a holistic downtown Dublin experience, potentially through partnership with the Downtown Dublin Strategic Alliance, appears to be an opportunity. Dublin is served by fantastic spaces that are well-activated. With future planning for the West Innovation District, Metro Center and Downtown Dublin, Dublin is a place-focused organization. Some of Dublin's existing tools are:

- Dublin Community Improvement Corporation
- Commercial Façade Improvement Grant Program
- Hotel/Motel Tax Grant
- City Sponsorship of Events and Programs
- Neighborhood Block Party Packages.

Ms. Fox expressed interest in creating a comprehensive event calendar as a way to create connectedness in the City. Mr. Wright stated that there is a calendar on the City's website, but it is not all-inclusive. He thinks it would be helpful to include all types of events there and get the word out so that people know how to find the information. Ms. O'Callaghan stated that all permitted events are included on the City calendar. Ms. Fox stated that because this comprehensive list is being created, some things might not be permitted because they are happening in a location that does not require a permit. Ms. O'Callaghan stated that other cities market other organizations' events similar to their own. She has been discussing that with Communications and Marketing. Community Calendar was a vendor at the International City Managers' Association (ICMA) conference that staff is considering.

Ms. Klejnot shared preliminary benchmarking. The Project is in the middle of the "Test" phase. Direction for further benchmarking can be taken from the conversations held today. Cities benchmarked were Carmel, Indiana, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Lancaster, Ohio, Westerville, Ohio and Grapevine, Texas. Some commonalities are that a lot of these cities have a place-based focus so many events and investments are held in the same single or same few locations. The benefits of this approach allows for consistent event production and a maximum return on investment (ROI) in event facilities and infrastructure. Events are key to civic identity and brand. Cities are using events to drive economic development boosting traffic to commercial districts and creating economic impact from tourism.

Carmel customizes its involvement to each event. They have a tiered system where certain events require certain resources while others require less.

Milwaukee does very little event planning. It predominately permits events and supports them with safety measures. Many third parties contribute to a very robust event program for their annual calendar. They are called the City of Festivals and the City does not play a large role in any of the events. For example, Milwaukee World Festival Inc. is a non-profit that leases the Henry Maier Festival Park from the City and provides all programming, maintenance and physical improvements to that site. The City does not do any permitting because it is not considered their property.

Lancaster is being researched to learn more about how that city interacts and supports the downtown destination district and art council groups which do the bulk of event programming.

Westerville was a great example of everyone finding their lane. The City hosts approximately 150 smaller events while Uptown Westerville Inc., an Ohio Main Street organization, holds the larger Fourth Friday festivals. Uptown Westerville Inc. was established by the City and is partially funded by the City. Funding is supplemented by grants, donations and program funds. Other organizations that were serving that area have adjusted their roles.

Grapevine does a bulk of the programming and they do several massive festivals per year. They house all of their events under their convention and visitors bureau, which is a department in the City.

Ms. Klejnot referenced an article shared by Ms. LeRoy regarding the decline of music festivals. Some reasons were rising costs and generational shift. There are some challenges, but things can work if approached the right way. Mr. Wright added that music festivals are different than music series.

Ms. Klejnot shared preliminary recommendations. The first recommendation is to re-establish Dublin's "Why". Dublin has always prioritized quality of place and quality of life. It invests in things important to residents and building a sense of community and connection. The results of that are evident in the large amount of volunteers. The purpose of events in Dublin is to build community. An outcome of that is an increase in tourism. Things Dublin should consider are designing and building spaces conducive to people, activity programming and events; a mix of everyday

experiences and special events; and embracing winter activities to boost hotel stays. Economic development/growth is another outcome. Considerations under this outcome would be building better multimodal connections between districts and places so that employees can experience all parts of Dublin during the day; curate programming to keep the spending power of office employees in the City; and create intention in the event strategy to support local businesses. The final outcome identified is brand identity/marketing. Dublin has been and continues to be a city that stays true to its brand promise. High-quality and well-managed experience is what residents, business owners and visitors experience. Some considerations are embrace modern trends and technology while staying connected to history and tradition; connect and curate events to each place and neighborhood; convey a hyper-local feel while embracing a global audience; and aim for zero waste per the City's Sustainability Framework.

Ms. De Rosa expressed appreciation for the organization of the presentation. She referenced the consideration of embracing modern trends and technology and asked for examples. Ms. Klejnot stated that there is a lot of connectivity between people who have lived here for a really long time, so they have a sense of tradition that is well-maintained through the City's organized events. Without disturbing tradition or history, there is opportunity to introduce modern trends and technology. Mr. Wright stated that DIF keeps the history and tradition by maintaining familiar vendor locations. It uses technology by going cashless, using mobile apps, and by creating interactive experiences to attract a new audience so that it does not die out over time. Mr. Wright stated that locations could move to provide an interactive element. Ms. De Rosa stated that work and life and the age of the City are changing. People might expect something different than the history. Mr. Wright stated that people may think of events differently, like a single performer outside a restaurant on a Thursday evening.

Ms. Fox stated that there are events that build community. There was a small community of people cleaning up the creekside at Ferris Wright Park. These are small community events that create connection that are not listed as events. She suggested that there be additional explanation about these smaller events. They are worth sharing with the whole community.

Mr. Keeler thanked the consultants for clarifying the music events. Survey respondents were interested in music events. Smaller, more intimate events may be more appropriate. There are different demographics in different parts of the City. There are still questions to be answered like whether the City is comfortable operating at a deficit. There are different problems to address. The Community Health Needs Assessment indicated that some residents do not feel connected. Bringing people together may require many different things for different people.

Mayor Amorose Groomes stated that it is important to delineate events from "things to do." The problem Dublin is trying to solve is important. Is it finding revenue streams to keep current events while not over taxing the City's operating budget?

Mr. Wright suggested Council start thinking about those questions as this presentation moves into operations.

Ms. Klejnot stated that the second preliminary recommendation is to be intentional about places and spaces. By focusing on certain areas, efficiency and economy of scale can be built. For purposes of this discussion, event frequency is identified as annual, seasonal or regular, and event size is identified as small (0-1,000 attendees), medium (1,000-10,000 attendees), and large (10,000+

attendees). Yard and Co. is proposing distinct areas with distinct attitude, attendees, etc. Ms. Klejnot shared proposed areas as follows:

Historic Dublin

The purpose for Historic Dublin events is connecting with residents and families, small business activities, and reinforcing the history and small town feel of Dublin. The audience would be local families, visitors with kids and date nights. The attitude would be small town, historic, romantic, laid-back, interactive and surprising. The event frequency and size would be regular small events. The trails are a great example of how this area has been activated.

Riverside Crossing Park

The purpose for Riverside Crossing Park events is to showcase Dublin's diversity, recruit medium-sized events to Dublin, bring visitors to the riverfront, differentiate Bridge Park from Historic Dublin while connecting the two, and embrace retail and the arts. The audience would be regional visitors, Bridge Park and Historic Dublin residents and visitors. The attitude would be vibrant and energetic, colorful, interactive and resident-organized. A variety of event frequencies is recommended – annual, seasonal, and regular. This is Dublin's signature park. Event sizes would be small and medium.

Bridge Park

The purpose for Bridge Park events is to build demand for future development, support existing businesses, recruit future businesses, continue to be a regional draw and provide amenities for residents of both sides of the river. The audience would be residents of Bridge Park, regional and national visitors, and future commercial tenants. The attitude would be active, trendy, always evolving, always a reason to come. The event frequency is regular, and the event sizes would be small and medium.

Coffman Park

Coffman Park is home to large-scale and smaller resident-focused events. It is a park that belongs to the people of Dublin but is open to the region and country from time to time. Events here promote physical/mental health and well-being. The audience is local, regional and national. The attitude is a mix of experiences; it can be both peaceful and surprising and encourage exploration. This park can house all event frequencies and sizes. There is already great infrastructure at Coffman Park.

Scioto Park

The purpose of events at Scioto Park is resident and family entertainment, performance art, resident parties and gatherings. The audience is local families, as well as local and regional art supporters. There are constraints on the site based on the available parking. The shelters are heavily used. The recommendation for this site is seasonal, small events.

Ms. Kramb stated that she likes the idea of a community calendar. She would like to look at key events the City is currently doing (St. Patrick's Day, Fourth of July, DIF), review the financials of those and decide what events to keep and any events that should be added or ended. She would like to see financial reports from existing events, and determine if there are ways to make them more fiscally sustainable. She does not think the City is interested in being an "events city" like Grapevine, Texas. She suggests starting with assessing existing events and exploring how to make them more efficient.

Ms. Fox stated that the community calendar is great for the everyday small things. It is important to know what we have now and what is successful. Success is not always dependent on breaking even. Part of the economic development incentive in Dublin is to create quality of life, and there are some things that the City might offer the people in the community for which the City can pay. She

is also interested in the future. Dublin must consider what community events would address some of the identified needs. The City has a standard of identity and quality, and we do not want to lose that.

Ms. Klejnot stated that the third preliminary recommendation is to expand and diversify operators. The right mix and quality of events must be determined as well as who is responsible for them. Mr. Wright stated that Yard and Co. began looking at three potential operating systems for the path forward. One is a new non-profit organization. The second is using a contracted private firm. The third option would be a hybrid between a new non-profit and a private firm. City-only was not a recommendation as an operating system. Mr. Wright shared pros and cons of a new non-profit organization. There could be greater efficiency and increased fundraising opportunities. There is the potential for the loss of control and the cost of creating a strategic plan and additional annual operational costs. There could be a goal of making this non-profit self-sustaining from an operational cost standpoint. With a contracted private firm, there could also be increased efficiency, increased profit and less staffing needs. This option could lose some community feel, involvement of volunteers, loss of connectivity with local non-profits, and loss of creative control. This option would still require oversight. The hybrid option could provide many of the same pros as the other options, and the cons would be some loss of creative control and the potential loss of community feel. Yard and Co. is beginning to lean into the idea of the hybrid entity. The hybrid entity would take on building and managing new events. They would hire private contractors where necessary. They could help City staff with existing large events. The City needs to give more thought to the role of collaborators as part of this roadmap.

Mr. Wright stated that the final preliminary recommendation is for the City to align its inner workings to meet new goals. This includes better alignment of the Hotel/Motel tax grant policy with Goal #4, improving the event permitting process, and considering food truck regulations. There have been conversations about what commercial uses are desired for parks and the opportunity of building on the neighborhood block party packages.

Ms. Fox stated that City staff does a great job with existing events. The Event staff handles the larger events, and there are other staff members putting on other events. She asked if the hybrid solution would be a team solution with the City. She requested clarification on how the hybrid solution would operate. Mr. Wright stated that much of the operations would be worked out by the creation of a strategic plan, mission, vision and board of directors. The current thought is that the hybrid solution should not do the proposed holiday market but could help facilitate it while also helping the Events staff achieve better efficiency for their events. This hybrid organization could take on the smaller events in places like the West Innovation District or Metro Center until those events become self-sufficient. The City would maintain connection with the organization for control.

Ms. De Rosa stated that she would like to see exploration of both the non-profit and hybrid model. She does not understand how the hybrid model could work without staff. One of the goals was to look at operating efficiencies, new models and best practices. \$500,000 was lost on the DIF this year for a variety of reasons. The financial implications are important. She would like to see more research done regarding sponsorship models.

Ms. Klejnot asked if Council was interested in some of the funding currently allocated to partners being specifically applied to events. This would be an expansion in partnerships. Ms. De Rosa stated that there is a revenue problem. She would like to explore a variety of options. Other than quality, safety and professionalism, everything else should be up for improvement consideration.

Vice Mayor Alutto stated that she would like to understand how CIC could be leveraged. She asked how to parse who should run what events. She would not be comfortable outsourcing DIF. There needs to be discussion regarding philosophy as well as finances. She is also curious about how the hotel/motel tax grant process would work with this and see where there may be policy gaps. It would be great to have an understanding of micro-events so that they could be touted as part of what makes Dublin special. She would like to explore sponsorships.

Mr. Keeler stated that if the DIF is Dublin's signature event and the City continues to run it, Yard and Co. has identified some areas for improvement. The expenses are somewhat known. The revenue component is subject to the weather. He is in favor of partnerships. The Fourth of July celebration is sponsored, and he has no problem with that.

Ms. Kramb stated that the Summary of Understanding was accurate. The question becomes what events the City itself wants to manage. She would look forward to seeing input on food truck regulations and block party packages.

Mr. Reiner indicated that he would like to hear from Ms. LeRoy on this topic. Ms. LeRoy stated staff has been operating one way for 20+ years. She appreciates having the outside review. There has never been a definite roadmap from Council regarding events. She appreciates the time and work being dedicated to this.

Mayor Amorose Groomes stated that a budget needs to be determined first. Once that is established, decisions could be made regarding what events the City does well and those for which they need to seek partnerships. She has heard from members of the community that some of the larger events like DIF no longer have a community feel. She would start with the end in mind. She knows how hard staff has worked to obtain sponsorships.

Holiday Market Feasibility Study Update and Next Steps

Ms. Goliver stated that Council unanimously directed staff to enter into final contract negotiations with Town Square for the Holiday Market Feasibility Study. She stated that part of the Community Events Roadmap survey that was distributed asked about a Holiday Market and included a prioritization of what activities respondents would like to see at the market.

Q13 If there is a holiday market/Christkindlmarkt in Dublin, prioritize what activities you would like to see included. Rank from 1 to 5, 1 having the highest priority, and write in your own suggestions.

OPTIONS	AVG. RANK
Art / light installations	2.75
Shopping	2.94
performances	3.15
Family activities / games	3.28
Formal dining / bar	4.62
Ice skating	4.72
Other	6.53

Ms. Goliver explained that 82 survey responses were received, and of those, 44 included additional activities as an "Other" option. Common themes expressed by respondents include the following:

1. **Shopping and Food Vendors:** Residents surveyed expressed a desire for casual food and drink options, including mulled wine and cider. Affordability was a common theme for both food and retail options.
2. **Music:** Residents expressed a desire to include a musical component of the market, including caroling, concerts and a choir.
3. **Cultural Diversity and Inclusivity:** Residents suggested hosting booths that showcase how different cultures celebrate the holidays and sell traditional holiday treats. It was mentioned that a holiday market should be inclusive to celebrate all holidays in December and combine all religions. Residents also suggested being inclusive of all ages and having activities that cater to seniors and children alike.
4. **Alternate Features:** Two residents suggested including a charitable component, such as a toy drive for families in need, as part of the market. Other activities were proposed, such as an ice sculpture, trolley and carriage rides by three respondents.

Town Square was in Dublin on October 1st and 2nd to explore potential locations and interview stakeholders (Visit Dublin, Downtown Dublin Strategic Alliance, Historic Dublin Business Association, Council Members and key City staff). Ms. Goliver referenced the information below that was provided to Council in their meeting packet of the consistent themes that appeared through the interviews.

Common sentiments appeared throughout the key stakeholder interviews and are summarized below.

1. **Aesthetics and Experience:** *Each council member and external stakeholder was asked about the visual and experiential aspects of the project, such as design of the market, lighting and activities. Preference for the style of huts was split between a more contemporary look and a traditional feel but a slight majority of stakeholders preferred the traditional look. All interviewees expressed the desire to have a mix of experiences and vendors and support for including local artisans and restaurants in the event but two shared that preference should not be given to local businesses. Instead, the vendors should be catered to the best interest of the event and offer unique products.*
2. **Community Engagement:** *Stakeholders almost universally agreed that a holiday market should bring people together, create a sense of community and include activities that cater to different demographics.*
3. **Economic Impact:** *Several stakeholders identified the economic benefit of increased hotel occupancy during the winter months as a positive for having a holiday market. Another economic impact benefit mentioned was supporting local businesses.*
4. **Cultural Diversity and Inclusivity:** *It was mentioned by a majority of stakeholders that this event should embrace and celebrate diverse cultures within the community. Most Council Members suggested that the event be inclusive of all demographics and highlight the many different cultures in Dublin. This could include embracing various customs and traditions from different cultures.*
5. **Safety and Cleanliness:** *Dublin prides itself in producing the safest possible events and ensuring a clean environment for patrons. Multiple stakeholders emphasized a desire to ensure that a holiday market continues this precedent. Some Council Members mentioned that, regardless of the management of the event, the City will hear from residents about safety and cleanliness, so the City's involvement will be important.*

Ms. Goliver introduced Mr. Barth with Town Square. Mr. Barth stated that he was pleased to be part of this project and provided a few examples of markets in the United States in which Town Square was involved. He stated that the stakeholder interviews were to really understand the goals around the event. There were two main themes that were present in the interviews. The first was building community in that it should be a positive for residents of Dublin and allow them to create traditions around the event. The second was a business aspect in that the City is willing to take risks and to invest, but only with sound business proposition. He stated there was other consistent feedback around certain issues such as:

- The size of the event – 40-50 booths was the most common suggestion;
- Dates/duration – 20 days of operation, 4 days per week;
- City involvement – third party operated, but City has significant oversight; and
- A “Dublin” Experience – represents Dublin and is authentic, high quality, organized, warm, inclusive and accessible.

Regarding the look and feel of the market, Mr. Barth stated that it should be immediately recognized as a holiday market and should include a mix of vendors and cultures within the City of Dublin. He stated that the preferred style was that of traditional, but only slightly. Other features could include music performance, art/light installations, etc. in addition to shopping.

Mr. Barth shared that there were four locations considered as primary location options. They are:

- Riverside Crossing Park
- Darby Lot
- Longshore Street; and
- Coffman Park.

He stated that there are many parameters to consider when deciding on a location, such as: foot traffic, access, visibility, connection to other destinations and existing infrastructure. He explained that when considering locations, it is important to maximize the conditions for success from the beginning. The primary location that is recommended is Riverside Crossing Park. He stated that this location meets all the criteria and provides the opportunity for expansion in the future if desired. Placement within the park should be centered on the pavilion. He added that this is the axis where the two sides meet with all the foot traffic. It takes advantage of the natural density, hardscape for events and has a natural cozy feel.

Mr. Barth shared inspirational photos from the German/Alpine European markets. He stated that many of these European markets are hundreds of years old with history and tradition. It is embedded in the culture and habits of the people. He shared the principles of market success:

- Layout and Feel
 - Retail facing retail,
 - Create intimacy, density, cozy feeling,
 - Meandering journey,
 - Everything is connected and engaging (no gaps),
 - Visibility to the rest of the shops, and
 - Engaging to all senses.
- Variety and rhythm
 - Views and focal points,
 - Distinct areas with different characters,
 - Provide for a variety of activities and areas of rest,
 - Balanced mix of vendors: food, merchandise, jewelry, art, crafts, etc.
- Operation
 - Quality presentation,
 - Organized, clean and well-run, and

- Clear communication.

Mr. Barth shared a visual conceptual site plan of how a market could be organized within Riverside Crossing Park. He shared how the markets could line the main pathways on the way to the Bridge. The first concept shown was for the first few years of the market and incorporated 52 booths. He showed a second concept that expanded at the five-year mark and incorporated 104 booths. The long-term vision provides options to expand further on either side of the Bridge and incorporate Bridge Park and/or Historic Dublin. Possible additions could include a stage for performances and establishing different nodes of unique market experiences with their own themes and characteristics.

Mr. Barth shared the different operation models of these types of markets.

- City-Run Markets: City of Dublin operates all aspects of markets.
- City Contract with Private Firm: This would be a scenario where the City issues an RFP and pays a third-party market manager a fixed fee and the City incurs all capital and operating expenses and keeps all revenues.
- City Invests Capital and Selects a Third-Party Operator: In this scenario, the City would invest capital (décor and huts) and issue an RFP to select an operator. The operator would incur all operational expenses and keep all or a portion of the revenues.
- Third-Party Operator: This scenario would require the City to issue an RFP and select an operator. The operator would pay a fee to the City, incur all capital and operating expenses and keep all revenue.

Mr. Barth explained what the costs to the City may look like, generally speaking, with these different models.

Mr. Barth shared his recommendation with Council. He is recommending the model scenario that requires the City to invest in capital and selects a third-party operator. He stated this scenario allows the City to maintain a quality control aspect, eliminates the capital risk for the operator and allows a lower entry, fixed rent for vendors. The operator would be responsible for set-up and tear-down, point-of-sale money, vendor selection, daily operation, marketing and hospitality and weather-related logistics such as snow removal. With regard to timing, Mr. Barth stated it would be better to plan and hold the first market in December of 2026.

Ms. De Rosa stated that she appreciated the presentation and information provided. She stated that the start-up capital is a sponsorship opportunity rather than a hurdle to overcome. Mr. Barth stated that of the estimated numbers provided, the start-up capital was the most accurate because he priced the structures with different vendors.

Ms. De Rosa stated that she is supportive of Riverside Crossing Park as the location. She stated that the type of market matters in that it must have a theme. She stated that the European markets work so well because they have a consistent theme. She stated that she is a traditionalist in regard to the aesthetic for the market. Ms. O'Callaghan sought clarification regarding if Ms. De Rosa selected a holiday market or a Christkindlmarkt. Ms. De Rosa stated that she is in favor of a heavily themed market. She compared it to the Dublin Irish Festival that is all things Irish. She stated that the lights, music, décor, etc. must all be intentional. It has to feel like a "place" or village. She believes this is a good test case for having something financially viable and good for the community that isn't competing with anything else.

Ms. Krumb stated that she agrees on having a themed market, German or otherwise. She originally thought she wanted to have a holiday market with all the cultures included, but after the presentation, she agrees that it should be a Christkindlmarkt type of market that is a more traditional style. She is supportive of the Riverside Crossing Park location. She also agrees that this is a great sponsorship opportunity for businesses.

Mr. Keeler agreed that it should incorporate the sights, smells and music of the holidays.

Vice Mayor Alutto stated that she agrees with the recommendation of a third-party operator. She also supports Riverside Crossing Park as the location and likes the opportunity for growth. She believes it should be a more traditional Christkindlmarkt market. She stated that the huts or structures should match whatever theme is decided upon.

Mr. Reiner stated that he agrees with this event providing sponsorship opportunities. He stated that the lighting and décor will be important. He stated that the third-party operator will also be important. He agreed it should be the Christkindlmarkt type of market. Mr. Barth stated that there are companies that operate markets such as these. He contacted some of them to get the estimated numbers that he provided.

Ms. Fox stated that she agrees that the theme is important. She agrees that there is nothing wrong with it having a German theme because Dublin was founded by a German. There is a beautiful natural landscape in this location. She is supportive of the Riverside Crossing Park location. The lighting and décor are what make these markets special. She stated that the costs of the structures could be offset if they could be used for the Dublin Irish Festival as well. She prefers the Christkindlmarkt type of market and she prefers the traditional style.

Mayor Amorose Groomes stated that she would be supportive of this model with a capital investment and a third-party operator. She stated that Riverside Crossing Park is the most logical location. She stated that the Christkindlmarkt is most appropriate in that location, because many different cultural events happen in the park. She agrees with the traditional style huts being used and would like to see if they could be used for another event.

Mr. Barth stated that regarding the issue of re-using huts for other events really is dependent upon what kind of huts are chosen. The traditional huts are the easier to reuse.

Ms. Goliver stated that next steps are to formalize the proforma numbers and working on finalizing the market map, which will be the final deliverable on this project. It will be wrapped up in the first quarter of 2025 with the Community Events Roadmap.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:08 p.m.



Mayor - Presiding Officer



Clerk of Council