

**CITY OF SEBASTOPOL
CITY COUNCIL
AGENDA ITEM**

Meeting Date: March 16, 2021
To: Honorable Mayor and Honorable City Councilmembers
From: Vice Mayor Gurney
Subject: Sponsorship of the “Bite-Sized” Gravenstein Apple Fair 2021 at Ragle Ranch Park on Saturday, August 14, one day only; and Traffic Control at the Intersection of Covert Lane and Ragle Road by the Sebastopol Police Department.
Recommendation: That the City Council Discuss and Consider Approval
Funding: Currently Budgeted: ____ Yes ____ No ____ N/A

Account Code (If Applicable) authorized in City Approved Budget AK (verified by Administrative Services Department)

INTRODUCTION/PURPOSE:

This item is for City Council to Discuss and Consider Approval of Sponsorship of the “Bite-Sized” Gravenstein Apple Fair 2021 at Ragle Ranch Park on Saturday, August 14, one day only; and Traffic Control at the Intersection of Covert Lane and Ragle Road by the Sebastopol Police Department.

BACKGROUND:

On February 18, 2020, a year ago, I submitted an Agenda Item Request for the City to sponsor the two-day 2020 Gravenstein Apple Fair at Ragle Ranch Park and provided traffic management by the SPD. The meeting date requested was March 17, 2020. Due to emergencies related to the onset of COVID-19, this matter was not heard.

The event, historically enjoyed by about 15,000 people at its traditional venue and with its traditional activities, was cancelled. Prior festival weekends had provided good old-fashioned fun, with something for everyone and kids welcome:

- live music on two stages, recently programmed by Jim Corbett, aka Mr. Music;
- arts and crafts booths;
- excellent local food, cider, microbrews and wine;
- contests, for instance for the best apple pie baking , and other activities;
- a Children’s Corner;
- a separate Artisan Tasting Lounge;
- a Do-It-Yourself Arena;
- a “Life on the Farm” Arena;
- souvenirs;
- and heirloom Gravenstein apples.

In 2020, the Farm Trails organizers pivoted and created “Grav and Go,” a drive-thru pick-up event in the SCCC parking lot over the same August weekend. Apples were ordered and purchased in advance.

DISCUSSION:

The 2021 Bite-Sized Gravenstein Apple Fair at Ragle Ranch Park

This year, based on their cost benefit analysis of producing GAF 2021 (i.e. fixed costs compared to anticipated greatly reduced income) and the uncertainty of what pandemic-related State and County restrictions will look like

in August, the Farm Trails Board and Executive Director Carmen Snyder have recently definitely decided not to produce the Apple Fair in its historic form this year.

Farm Trails proposes a "Bite-Sized" GAF at Ragle Park, on Saturday, August 14, with two options for public engagement:

1. Park and walk up (or pull into loading zones) to shop for/pick up bulk apples, apple products, and fair food (to go). This would be first come first serve, with no tickets, fees, or reservations needed. If the logistics are not too cumbersome, Farm Trails may end up offering pre-paid drive-thru options for apples, apple products, and select meals.
2. Purchase an advanced ticket for a socially distanced, time-limited, reserved seating experience within an enclosed (fenced) portion of the park. Attendees could purchase food, libations, apple products, and curated crafts, sit at a reserved spot (picnic table, straw bales, or bring your own blanket options) for up to 90 minutes while enjoying live music and a taste of the Fair in Ragle Park. Time slots for entry would be 10am-11:30am, Noon-1:30pm, 2-3:30pm and 4-5:30pm, allowing thirty minutes between seatings for the volunteer team to sanitize and reset the socially distanced seating options.

Farm Trails is modeling the newly proposed experience on currently allowed outdoor dining and on-site agriculture experiences (such as the pumpkin patches this past fall). The number of attendees for each seating slot and the required pandemic protocols will, of course, depend upon unfolding County and State regulations. Hopefully the vaccine rollout will become smoother and more robust. Either way, the organizers and their team of volunteers will proceed with utmost caution, strictly following County and State guidelines, and will incorporate and enforce all best pandemic practices (masks, sanitizing stations, minimum contact exchanges with vendors, distancing, limited capacity, etc.) so the public will feel as safe as possible.

While planning an event much smaller in scope than what's been called "the sweetest little fair in Sonoma County" when held at Ragle Ranch Park, Farm Trails is pleased to be able to provide a bit of seasonal continuity in these turbulent times and to give the public a way to get out and enjoy their favorite Grav treats in the beautiful Ragle Park setting.

History and Finances

The GAF provides the bulk of funding for all Farm Trails operations and initiatives, including the promotion and production of the Apple Fair. When Farm Trails realized in late April 2020 that they would have to cancel the 2020 event, they immediately reduced staff of two to 50% and shaved all possible costs, including the utilities at the office, in order to keep Farm Trails afloat. For comparison, the net income for the 3rd Quarter of 2020 was \$-11,000, compared to \$98,000 in 2019.

Due to pandemic-related financial hardships for their membership, the Board decided in March 2020 to put a pause on the last leg of the 2020 membership drive and waived fee collection for the remainder of the year (thinking that they would be producing GAF in August 2020), which also reduced annual income. Then the majority of cash sponsorships for GAF 2020, except for Manzana and Farm Bureau who had pre-paid, were lost with the cancelation. The City helped by waiving fees for the new Grav & Go event. It turned out to be a wash financially but it was an important placeholder for the Apple Fair and allowed the community to get their bulk Gravs and apple products and supported a handful of farmers/producers.

Additionally, Farm Trails had historically relied on TOT funds, as much as \$59K per year. That stream of funding shifted in 2020, and grants for advertising reimbursements are no longer awarded, except through (limited) discretionary funds from each Supervisor.

Currently, the 2021 membership drive is underway, with a goal of \$14,000 (reduced by \$10,000 from previous years). Sponsorships are challenging because many long-time sponsors are experiencing the impacts of COVID-19 on their budgets and reducing or eliminating contributions. Farm Trails was able to secure PPP funds during the second round, being ineligible the first time.

City Support:

The City assisted last year with logistics at the SCCC site, as well as by waiving fees.

To my knowledge, the City of Sebastopol has not officially sponsored the GAF event, despite our community's identification with the Gravenstein Apple and with the Apple Blossom Festival. The City has the opportunity to express pride in our agricultural heritage and to promote our community to the attendees. Given our City's history as "Home of the Gravenstein Apple" and current difficulties due to the pandemic, sponsorship appears more critical than ever. Display of the City's newer, "crisper" logo on any print/other media material or by an on-site banner would certainly resonate with Farm Trails, who provided the current image to Holly Hansen from one of its event posters.

Sponsorship Request:

Two levels of sponsorship are available, details in the attachments. The \$5,000 level is for a sponsorship that provides annual benefits, including at the 2021 GAF, whereas the \$3,000 level is limited to the 2021 GAF.

Traffic Management Request:

In the past, GAF volunteers have provided traffic control at the entrance to the Ragle Ranch, for drivers seeking to park on the playing fields converted to parking lots for the weekend.

Formal police help would alleviate the congested situation and conflicts at the main entrance at the intersection of Covert Lane and Ragle Road as drivers enter for their "Bite-Sized" activity. This intersection also receives incoming traffic, northbound from Bodega Avenue and southbound from Mill Station Road.

I request that our SPD provide traffic control at the one intersection, in coordination with event staff. Last year, Acting Chief DeVore offered to provide two days of help from two officers, from 9 AM to 3 PM, during two weekend days. The cost for providing traffic control support will be absorbed in the Police overtime budget.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

As of the writing of this staff report, the City has not received any public comment. However, staff anticipates receiving public comment from interested parties following the publication and distribution of this staff report. Such comments will be provided to the City Council as supplemental materials before or at the meeting. In addition, public comments may be offered during the public comment portion of the agenda item.

PUBLIC NOTICE:

This item was noticed in accordance with the Ralph M. Brown Act and was available for public viewing and review at least 72 hours prior to schedule meeting date.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There are sufficient funds in the City Council Budget from the Other Community Support line item to support this program. The account number is 100-10-01-4890 has adequate funds available to allocate \$5,000 for this proposed event .

RECOMMENDATION:

That the City Council Discuss and Consider Approval of Sponsorship of the “Bite-Sized” Gravenstein Apple Fair 2021 at Ragle Ranch Park on Saturday, August 14, one day only; and Traffic Control at the Intersection of Covert Lane and Ragle Road by the Sebastopol Police Department.

ATTACHMENTS:

Sponsorship Proposals



“Bite-Sized” GAF 2021 Sponsorship Proposal

Sponsor: City of Sebastopol

Level: Community Sponsor

Cost: \$3,000 + **In-Kind:** Police Traffic Support at Ragle/Covert Juncture on Aug. 14

Deliverables:

- Logo placement on GAF website throughout 2021
- Logo placement on GAF newsletters throughout 2021
- Logo placement on all marketing collateral for August 2021 “Bite-Sized” Gravenstein Apple Fair
- Prominent banner placement at August 14 “Bite-Sized” GAF



Sponsorship 2021 Proposal

Sponsor: City of Sebastopol

Level: Apple Sponsor

Cost: \$5,000 + **In-Kind:** Police Traffic Support at Ragle/Covert Juncture on Aug. 14

Deliverables:

- Prominent logo placement on SCFT and GAF website throughout 2021
- Prominent logo placement on SCFT and GAF newsletters throughout 2021
- Branding opportunities for all marketing collateral and outreach associated with Farm Trails initiatives and rolling seasonal tours, including Membership Drive (winter recruitment 2021 and renewal in fall for 2022) and Spring 2021 Virtual Auction
- Prominent logo placement on all marketing collateral for August 2021 “Bite-Sized” Gravenstein Apple Fair
- 10x10 on-site booth (optional) and prominent banner placement at August 14 “Bite-Sized” GAF