

**For Immediate Release
May 4, 2020**

**2020 MEDFORD ART, WINE AND MUSIC FESTIVAL and
INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATION/FIREWORKS EVENTS
BOTH CANCELLED DUE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

Sponsors Exploring Possibility of Combining Events with Oktoberfest and Music Festival to be held on September 19, 2020

The Medford Business Association (“MBA”), Medford Celebrates Foundation, Inc. (MCF) and Medford Township officials jointly announced that the COVID-19 pandemic has forced the cancellation of this year’s editions of two traditional Medford annual community events—the June 14th MBA-sponsored *Art, Wine Music Festival and Classic Car Show* and the July 3rd Medford Celebrates-produced *Independence Day Celebration and Fireworks* event.

However, both non-profit organizations have initiated discussions with Medford Township officials on the possibility of combining aspects of each event with the annual Medford Oktoberfest and Music Festival organized by the MBA and scheduled for September 19, 2020. Any plans that may emerge from this collaboration would necessarily be tentative, but with optimism that public health conditions in September will allow the combined as-yet-unnamed “jubilee” to go forward.

“To state the obvious, the current circumstances make it impossible to plan events with any sort of confidence that the gatherings of the thousands of people that traditionally come to these events will be allowed, or show up even if they are permitted,” said Theresa Freedman, MBA’s President.

Medford Celebrates President, Robert Egan, added, “The trustees of both sponsoring organizations are very disappointed, but there was no choice. However, capitalizing on the energy that our volunteers have always brought to these community activities, we are actively exploring the possibility of consolidating the events with Medford’s Oktoberfest.”

The Art, Wine and Music event is traditionally held in the downtown area, primarily on Main Street, on the second Sunday in June and features live music, artists, crafters, local wineries and food vendors. The Fireworks event takes place at Freedom Park around the 4th of July each year, and offers music, food and souvenir vendors, and a fireworks display. Medford’s Oktoberfest has traditionally been held on the third Saturday in September. For the last three years, it has been presented at Freedom Park and combined with a music festival that features two sound stages and an acoustic stage, in addition to traditional Oktoberfest foods, soft drinks and beers.

Township officials and representatives of the sponsoring organizations will be exploring options over the next two weeks, to determine if a consolidated event in September will work from a logistics and cost perspective, whether the necessary approvals can be obtained, whether vendors have an interest and whether they can obtain commitments for the many volunteers who are needed to work the event.

“There are many similar aspects of all three events that we believe could be combined into a daylong “fest”, hopefully celebrating the winding down of many of the restrictions that the pandemic has brought with it, and perhaps even the start of a new school year,” said Medford Mayor Chuck Watson. “But, public health factors will determine whether we can pull this off, and they are unknown at this point. Therefore, any plans will be tentative and subject to change as the event draws nearer.”

Dave Vaughn, MBA’s Executive Director, said that he expects the MBA, Medford Celebrates and the Township to determine within the next two weeks if the event is feasible and continue planning. If so, a final “go or no-go” decision should be made by early June, when the general contours of a contingent plan should be in place, further details will be announced and vendors solicited.

“We really are not certain that this will be workable at this point, but we are going to give it a try with a healthy dose of both optimism and reality, Vaughn said. “The Medford Police & Fire Departments initial response to a combined event have been positive, so we are keeping our fingers crossed.”

Refunds will be issued to vendors who have already registered to participate in the June 14th Art, Wine event and the July 3rd Fireworks event. New registration and payment arrangements will be made if the consolidated September event will move forward.

Further information about the plans for these events can be obtained mid to late May from the MCF website at www.medfordcelebrates.org, the Township website at www.medfordtownship.com/events; the MBA website at www.medfordbusiness.org, the MBA Facebook page at www.facebook.com/medfordbusiness, or by sending an email to events@medfordbusiness.org.

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