

Memorandum

City of Lawrence

City Manager's Office

TO: David L. Corliss, City Manager

FROM: Jonathan Douglass, City Clerk/Assistant to the City Manager

DATE: October 18, 2012

RE: Color Run 2012 De-briefing



The former Border's building, now leased by the city and being prepared for use as the temporary public library location, was used for packet pickup for the Color Run.

On Saturday, October 6, 2012, the Color Run was held in Lawrence. With around 7,000 registrants, it was perhaps the largest organized street event held in Lawrence to date. City employees in the City Manager's Office, Police Department, Public Works Department, and Transit Office were heavily involved in the planning of the event. City services and approvals required to support the event included:

- Initial write up of the event for consideration by the City Commission.
- Approval of Temporary Use of Right-of-Way Permit for the closure of streets.
- Mailing of notice to properties along the race route.
- Drafting, approval, and publication of an ordinance allowing possession and consumption of alcohol on the public right-of-way.
- Review and amendment of traffic control plan proposals.
- City provision of additional traffic control devices (electronic message boards) beyond that which was privately provided.

- Planning and implementation of reroutes of all downtown and east Lawrence bus routes, and relocation of downtown hub to Vermont Street.
- Providing extra trash barrels and a dumpster at the start/finish area
- Providing “no parking” signs.
- Supervising the use of the former Border’s building for pre-race packet pickup.
- Police Traffic Control and security support on the day of the event.
- Standby medical support on the day of the event.
- Sweeping streets after the event.



Several thousand runners lined up to start the Color Run on the 700 block of New Hampshire Street.

Lessons Learned

Representatives from various city departments and the Lawrence Sports Corporation met on October 16 to de-brief on the Color Run and discuss lessons learned that could be helpful in planning for similar events in the future. A few of the takeaways from that meeting follow:

- Traffic control on 10th Street was challenging. The stretch of 10th Street from Delaware to New Hampshire was one of the longest stretches of a single street that was closed, and one of the higher traffic volume streets. It was difficult at times to get neighborhood traffic across 10th Street. The Color Run was a non-timed, non-competitive race, but in a competitive race it would have been even more difficult because runners would have been upset if they had to be delayed to let traffic through.
- While the permit holder is responsible for meeting conditions of the permit regarding traffic control, it may be necessary to have someone from the Public Works Department on hand to check the actual set up of the traffic control devices on the day of the event to make sure they match the approved plan. At the Color Run there was one advance warning sign missing initially that caused minor traffic issues when a few drivers found themselves in an area that was somewhat challenging to exit from. It was not a safety issue, but a convenience issue for the drivers.
- Input is needed from the downtown business community regarding what time of day is best to hold such large events that both bring business to downtown but also cause significant disruptions to traffic and parking.

- It may be easier on all parties (Police, Public Works, the City Commission, the neighborhoods, downtown, and the applicants) if we create an official downtown 5K route. Approval of requests for races could be streamlined, traffic control plans would be standardized, residents and businesses would learn how to best navigate race days, and the plans would be tweaked and improved with each event, rather than starting from scratch every time a new route is proposed.
- Broader notification of larger events may be necessary, even if it is costly. For the Color Run, postcards were sent by the city to all properties along the route and others that were uniquely affected. Expanding the notification to neighborhoods nearby, even if not on the route, may help residents be more prepared for traffic issues.
- Having the organizers sign a written agreement setting forth the city's expectations for the placement of volunteers along the race route, and their duties, may help relieve some confusion on race day. During the Color Run there were not as many course marshals as the city expected, and in some cases these volunteers left their posts when police officers arrived in the same areas, assuming they were no longer needed at that location. If another event of the scale of the Color Run is held, we would likely require course marshals at each and every street and alley intersection. In East Lawrence and Old West Lawrence, that would be a lot of course marshals for the race organizers to provide, but it may be necessary to minimize the disruption to the area residents.
- Hard barriers around areas where alcohol is allowed may be necessary. Kansas Alcoholic Beverage Control requires a physical barrier delineating the area where alcohol is allowed during an outdoor event, but that barrier can be as little as tape or rope. During large events, people tend to wander out of the areas where alcohol is allowed onto the general public right-of-way, where possession and consumption of alcohol is normally illegal. We may need to require more significant barriers, such as crowd control fencing, to achieve effective control over the movement of alcohol. This is a cost event organizers would have to bear.



Runners approach the first Color Zone near 7th and New Jersey.

Conclusion

Lawrence has proved an attractive venue for both local and regional events. Many of these events are fundraisers directly held by non-profits, or a portion of the proceeds benefits a non-profit. The events may attract visitors and their dollars to local businesses. While there is no way to completely eliminate the disruptions inherent in bringing thousands of runners to the public streets of Lawrence, we are striving to continually improve our ability to manage such events within the staffing and other resources we possess.



Runners pass through a Color Zone at Hobbs Park on Delaware Street.