

Bear Paw Festival  
Chugiak-Eagle River Chamber of Commerce  
907-694-4702  
[info@cer.org](mailto:info@cer.org)

### **Bear Paw Festival Planning**

*Festival planning continues amidst external factors.*

It has been brought to the attention of the Chugiak-Eagle River Chamber of Commerce Bear Paw Festival Planning Committee that there have been individuals and groups lobbying on our behalf to hold the festival in our normal July timeframe. While we appreciate the spirit of community, these actions do not reflect the desire or intent for Bear "Pause" Festival 2020.

The two known groups currently lobbying for the original dates did reach out to the Chamber after letters were sent. It's requested that those interested in helping the festival will reach out to us prior to communicating with our partners, so we can first share current and accurate updates to guide action. We want it known that the actions of those with intentions to help by making demands can actually hurt the goals of the festival by undermining progress made with the Municipality and State.

We also want to address rumors that our festival permits were denied. This is misleading information, as an official denial of approvals was never received. From the onset of the pandemic, we have been working closely with the Municipality of Anchorage and the State of Alaska to ensure we can hold a festival safely. Later, our two Assembly Representatives were looped in. In early June we received communication from our Municipality partners that certain departments were not approving permits for events over 500 attendees. Based on this information, the Planning Committee chose to postpone the festival. There wasn't confidence that necessary approvals could be put in place to meet the requirements of the event and ensure there was adequate time/security necessary to justify our partners and stakeholders spend the upfront capital costs within acceptable risk limits.

Festival organizers (i.e. two staff members and a handful of volunteers) are still trying to determine what an appropriate COVID management strategy will look like. Planning large events with considerations such as contact tracing and social distancing is still new to us - and new to the world. We want to create and implement a plan that will keep the public safe while holding a fun and free festival.

The Planning Committee is actively moving towards hitting the play button on Bear Pause with tentative new festival dates in the works. Our goal is to shift our energy from diffusing well-intended lobbying gone awry and halting the spread of misinformation, back toward the planning of a much-needed community festival that keeps public health and safety at the forefront.

If you have any questions about the festival, please do not hesitate to contact the Chugiak-Eagle River Chamber of Commerce Bear Paw Festival Planning Committee through facebook, email, or by phone.

###