

SANTA BARBARA NEWS-PRESS



West Beach Festival gets go ahead from city : 4-hour meeting resolves key stumbling blocks

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Jeremy Pemberton

It looks like the West Beach Festival will be held September 24-25, as Twiin Productions and the Santa Barbara City Department of Parks and Recreation have come to an agreement -- based on a four-hour meeting on Thursday. According to Parks Director Nancy Rapp, Twiin Productions has to meet its obligation of a payment of 50 percent of its fees and security deposit by Monday morning, a sum of about \$90,000. The city also extended its deadline for the company to provide a certificate of insurance to Wednesday. "We're assuming they're going to meet those deadlines," she said.

Among the rules for Twiin to operate the West Beach Festival this time around are a reduced number of days -- only September 24 and 25 -- and a reduced audience capacity. The required insurance, which has been a bone of contention between the two parties, has been set at \$5 million per occurrence and \$5 million per aggregate, as opposed to a previous rate of \$5 million per occurrence and \$10 million per aggregate "Our argument was that when we pulled our permit, the fees that we pay goes into the insurance," said Jeremy Pemberton, Twiin Productions co-founder.

He also stressed that his company has been and would be compliant. However, the decreased number of days has meant that the company has had to revise its contracts with the artists scheduled, pulling some off the roster to fit within the festival's shrunken schedule to comply with a requirement put forward by the organizers behind the weekly Arts and Crafts Show that takes place nearby.

The decision comes after months of discussion and friction between the city and the company. Twiin Productions was denied its application for a permit for the 2010 festival six months ago, largely because of complaints from neighbors and health and safety concerns that arose from the three-year-old festival's growing popularity.

Both sides came to an agreement that would lessen the festival's impact on the community, with the fewer days plus a steeply capped attendance, as well as specific parking requirements for the festival to be held at Chase Palm Park. Until recently, they remained at odds over the fees and insurance amounts needed to put the festival forward, to the point where Twiin Productions filed a California Public Record Act Request, questioning the fairness of the city's requirement.

For the city's part, Ms. Rapp acknowledged that at times it had been difficult, but "both sides are trying to do the right thing." While city Parks has adopted a wait-and-see attitude toward the progress of the festival this year, Twiin is optimistic that the event will be a hit, and compliant with the city's requirements. "Our number one goal is to promote this music event, and we want to work with the city as closely as possible... and tickets are on sale," said Mr. Pemberton.