

# Tiburon plans Little League party, Juneteenth, Diwali on Main Street

Critics question alcohol sales at youth fundraiser

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A Little League block party

and Juneteenth and Diwali celebrations are officially among this year's festivals returning to Main Street, while Nowruz is heading

to Zelinsky Park.

The three Main Street closures were formally approved in separate unanimous votes by the

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Town Council on Feb. 7 — with debate over alcohol sales at a children's festival — leaving three more for the Tiburon Peninsula Chamber of Commerce to promote local businesses.

Executive Director DeAnn Biss told The Ark last week she hopes to host Friday Nights on Main festivals in June and August, plus the annual Tiburon Holiday Festival in early December. Those still need the town's formal approval.

Meanwhile, Nowruz has been bumped from the Main Street docket. Organized by the Tiburon Diversity Inclusion Task Force, the town held its inaugural celebration of the Persian new year on lower Main last year. This year it will be held 3-5 p.m. March 30 at Zelinsky Park and the civic plaza between Town Hall and the Belvedere-Tiburon Library. It will feature live music, cultural dance, food and merchandise related to the holiday.

The task force is also hoping to debut an

Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month Celebration at Zelinsky Park in May as it expands its lineup of cultural festivals.

But the Tiburon Peninsula Little League's March 15 Opening Day parade and block party is back on lower Main Street for the third year, despite the council's instructions last February for organizers to find another venue. With more requests to close the street but opposition from Ark Row shops that say the closures hurt business, the town limited annual festivals there to six last May.

The request to move the Little League party elsewhere wasn't mentioned during last week's council hearing, with Mayor Alice Fredericks and Councilmember Jack Ryan both saying after the meeting that no businesses or members of the public objected.

The council did, however, impose a limit that alcohol sold at the Little League festival be consumed within 40 feet of a bar to be set up in front of Malibu Farm.

As in previous years, the Little League plans to kick off its season with a 4:30 p.m. parade, with players and families gathering

## main street festivals

Tiburon will close lower Main Street to vehicle traffic for the following street festivals:

- **Tiburon Little League Opening Day Parade and Block Party:** 4-9 p.m. March 15, with 4:30 p.m. parade on downtown Tiburon Boulevard.
- **Friday Nights on Main:** June 14, tentative.
- **Juneteenth:** 2-8 p.m. June 15 celebration commemorating the end of slavery in the U.S.
- **Friday Nights on Main:** Aug. 23, tentative.
- **Diwali:** 2-6 p.m. Nov. 2 festival of lights and triumph of good over evil celebrated by Hindu, Sikh, Jain and some Buddhist adherents in South Asia and its diaspora.
- **Tiburon Holiday Festival:** Dec. 8, tentative.

at the southern end of the Old Rail Trail, across from the Belvedere-Tiburon Library, and marching down the Tiburon Boulevard sidewalk to Main Street. The block party will run from 5 to 8 p.m., with games for kids, a booth selling league-branded shirts and caps, a silent auction and a fundraising wine-and-beer bar. Lower Main will be closed to cars from 4 to 9 p.m.

The alcohol sales at a youth fundraiser again raised eyebrows on the council

and attention from two nonprofits, Marin Healthy Youth Partnerships, which works to combat youth substance use, and San Rafael-based Alcohol Justice, an advocacy group that works to reduce alcohol harm.

During public comment, Healthy Youth Partnerships' Executive Director Kelsey Fernandez asked the council to bar alcohol sales at the event, citing higher-than-normal trends of drug and alcohol use in the Tamalpais Union High School district, which includes the Tiburon Peninsula, according to data from the California Department of Education's School Climate, Health and Learning Surveys.

The 2021-2022 survey showed 44% of the district's 11th-graders surveyed drank alcohol or used other drugs at least once in the 30 days prior to taking the survey, compared to 19% for high-school juniors statewide.

In a letter to the council, Cruz Avila, Alcohol Justice's executive director, and Tiburon's Michael Scippa, the organization's public affairs director, recommended alcohol sales

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and consumption be in enclosed tents with enforced carding. They also recommended alcohol vendors make silent, fixed-amount donations to the league, with no sponsorship acknowledgment or reliance on actual sales at the festival to determine the donation amount.

Fredericks and Councilmember Jon Welner also expressed their own reservations.

Little League President Dan Etchevers said that while he understood the concerns, alcohol sales are part of the league's fundraising efforts. He questioned whether pizza parlors or burger joints should stop serving alcohol because they're also popular with kids and families.

He said the organization would work with the Town Council and the state Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control to ensure a safe event. He also added volunteers supervising games and activities would not drink, following questions from Fredericks

on drinking parents intermingling in children's spaces.

Welner moved to approve the event without alcohol sales altogether, saying there was a difference between Main Street restaurants serving alcohol to indoor diners and "folks buying alcohol and drinking at a kid's event in our downtown."

However, colleagues Ryan and Isaac Nikfar said they were more comfortable. Both said the festival portion has morphed to become a general neighborhood outing, similar to Friday Nights on Main, with Nikfar anecdotally noting "more people that don't even have children end up showing up."

"Because it is a community event, I feel like it sort of disentangles the link between kid and alcohol enough," Ryan said. "We haven't had anything go wrong in the past. We haven't really had any complaints. I think the event has been very well received."

Vice Mayor Holli Thier said that while she did not think alcohol should be prominent at the event, her issue was barring it for the Little League when other events for children

in Tiburon had alcohol sales. She suggested the town develop an alcohol-use policy for future events.

The council's approval of the other two Main Street closures went smoothly.

Lower Main will close from 2 to 8 p.m. June 15 for the fourth annual celebration of Juneteenth, which commemorates the end of slavery in the U.S. It will also close 2-6 p.m. Nov. 2 for the third annual celebration of Diwali, the festival of lights and triumph of good over evil celebrated by Hindu, Sikh, Jain and some Buddhist adherents in South Asia and its diaspora.

In a separate vote, the council allocated \$8,000 each from the fiscal year 2023-2024 operating budget to the Diversity Inclusion Task Force to organize the Juneteenth and Nowruz celebrations, with an additional \$8,000 to be included in the coming fiscal 2024-2025 budget for the task force to organize the Diwali festival.

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