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Rec and Park denies ‘Summer of Love’ concert permit, again

By Joe Fitzgerald Rodriguez
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1 of 2



Fantasy Fair, Mill Valley, 1967. (Courtesy Elaine Mayes)

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Love has been lost — again — over the proposed “Summer of Love” concert in Golden Gate Park.

Boots Hughston, the only known person to be seeking a permit for the concert to celebrate the 50th anniversary of San Francisco's cultural touchstone, has been denied a permit yet again by the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department.

And with no official concert yet announced, that may mean no concert will materialize to celebrate the 1967 Summer of Love.

Hughston explored a permit earlier this year, only to see it denied by Rec and Park. In May, Rec and Park gave Hughston another possible concert date and allowed him to explore a permit again.

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There are no other available dates this year, making the denial likely final.

"Our denial stands," wrote Dana Ketcham, Rec and Park's director of property management, to Hughston in an email Friday.

At the end of May, Rec and Park gave Hughston and a group affiliated with him, the Council of Light, a possible Aug. 27 date for the concert, if a permit was approved. "The first critical step is to identify an event coordinator with recent experience on large event organization in GGP," Ketcham wrote to Hughston.

Hughston shortly thereafter submitted a requested site map and concert information.

The Council of Light also presented a new liaison, MonaLisa Wallace, to work with Rec and Park on permitting, after months of stalled talks between the department and Hughston.

"Her job is to implement requirements and directives established by the department to bring about a smooth interaction with the department and the event," Boots wrote in an email to Rec and Park. "She is intelligent, and highly respected who is part of the Council. She also has background in community development and music production."

The site plan Hughston presented described a free event, with "no fencing needed" except for protecting planted areas and staging. He also announced the employment of Jeff Gutierrez for "event services," as well as an environmental engineer and a promise to soon deliver an

Ketcham also took issue with recent news coverage of the Summer of Love, and with a posting on the Summer of Love website about the Aug. 27 date for the concert.

“The Department and Commission are very concerned that you announced a concert date to the press and began advertising an event this weekend without having a permit,” Ketcham wrote. “As you know, all that we have done is identify a possible date.”

Hughston sent an email to rebut the denial of the permit.

“The mistaken website post made by the volunteer was pulled down immediately,” he wrote. “The site plan you received is extensive and probably much farther along than a typical first week’s draft proposal.”

In his email, Hughston expressed a desire to move forward.

“Dana, I expect to receive instructions on how we can reapply for a Summer of Love permit or the exact foundation from which you are permanently banning our applications,” he wrote.