



February 21, 2024

Freeport Town Council
Town of Freeport
30 Main Street
Freeport, ME 04032

Dear Councilors,

I am writing today on behalf of Visit Freeport, a 501(c)6 nonprofit organization founded in 1977. We provide Freeport with destination marketing resources, information bureau services, and large scale annual events during shoulder seasons. These events include Flavors of Freeport, Makers on Main, The Maine Oyster Festival, The Freeport Fall Festival, Early Bird Sale-A-Bration and Sparkle Celebration.

This year, we will host our 3rd The Maine Oyster Festival (June 29 & 30), and 25th Freeport Fall Festival (October 4-6). These free events attract tens of thousands of visitors to our community, filling our businesses, but also overwhelming our parking lots and backing up traffic on Rt. 1. To alleviate congestion in 2023, we rented a bus during the Freeport Fall Festival to shuttle exhibitors and attendees from the L.L.Bean Corporate Headquarters parking lot to Nathan Nye St.

We are committed to continuing our efforts to reduce congestion in 2024. We will hire police detail, and rent two 14-passenger vans per event, both with a wheelchair lift, to shuttle attendees to downtown festival locations. This is an expensive investment. The shuttles for The Maine Oyster Festival will be \$2,990, and the shuttles for the Freeport Fall Festival will be \$4,290, totaling \$7,280. After collecting multiple quotes, this is the best rate available.

Recently, Visit Freeport's board president, Jay Paulus of Bridgham & Cook, and I supported implementing a trial holiday shuttle in Freeport through fundraising, booking equipment, organizing the route and schedule, and designing the marketing collateral. Through this process, we became aware that the Town of Freeport is making \$10,000 in American Rescue Act funds available in 2024 to further examine the effectiveness of an around-town-transportation-system. Visit Freeport respectfully requests to be considered for a minimum of \$3,640 (50%) to apply towards the free shuttles we will run in June and October.

Thank you for all your hard work on behalf of our community,

Kelly Edwards

Kelly Edwards
Executive Director
Visit Freeport

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