



November 30, 2021

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

Dear Councilors,

I am writing today on behalf of Visit Freeport. We are a 501C6 nonprofit organization founded in 1977 to provide Freeport with destination marketing collateral, information bureau services, and plan large scale annual events in shoulder seasons. These include Flavors of Freeport, Makers on Main, The Freeport Fall Festival, Early Bird Sale-A-Bration, Sparkle Celebration and new for 2022, The Maine Oyster Festival.

We are a small but mighty board and staff, and we are funded 100% through membership dues from participating Freeport businesses. We lost 33% of our anticipated revenue in 2020, and we are still working to rebound from the pandemic. During the holiday season, Visit Freeport provides and pays for the town's Talking Christmas Tree, wreaths, and we also purchase, maintain and replace the snowflake lights you currently see on the utility poles. The Public Works Dept. installs the snowflake lights every year, for which we are extremely grateful.

In addition to the challenges caused by the pandemic, we've lost our Sparkle Express train event due to intersection safety concerns. This event generated the additional income that enabled us to foot the bill for the festive decorations throughout the town.

In 2014, when we were still hosting the Sparkle Express, we were asked to pay for the police detail for the Sparkle Celebration Parade of Lights. Prior to that the detail had been free of charge. Of course we were happy to support our local police and agreed to the new fee. Now, with the financial challenges we're working through, the nearly \$3,000 fee for the parade is becoming increasingly difficult to afford, and we are requesting that the town consider sponsoring the Parade of Lights police detail once again.

My peers in Portland, Kennebunkport and Bath organizations partner with their local government to provide holiday festivities for their communities, and we hope you will consider joining us to do the same.

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

Kelly Edwards
Executive Director
Visit Freeport

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