



MEMORANDUM

Date: April 1, 2026

To: Honorable Mayor and Commissioners

Via: Brian L. Barroso
City Manager

CC: Marcus Davila
Director of Community Services

From: Kelli Funkhouser
Special Events Manager

Subject: **[File ID: 26-5235] Recommendation to approve the “44th Annual Conch Republic Independence Celebration” from April 18, 2026, through April 25, 2026**

Introduction

The City Manager’s Office requests the approval of the Annual “44th Annual Conch Republic Independence Celebration”, which consists of numerous events during April 18, 2026, through April 25, 2026.

Background

The City Manager’s Office has received an application for the “44th Annual Conch Republic Independence Celebration” for numerous events and at different locations through town starting on April 18th and ending on April 25th, 2026. This will be their 44th annual event and it is benefiting many local nonprofit charities. These events are free to the public. The Conch Republic was born on April 23, 1982, in response to a United States Border Patrol blockade of the Florida Keys. Since the United States insisted on treating the Keys like a foreign country, Mayor Dennis Wardlow seceded from Union. Today we stand proudly as a community of who have “Sovereign State of mind” and as the People who seceded where others have failed.” The seventeen-mile traffic jam immediately ensued as the Border Patrol stopped every car leaving or entering the keys, supposedly searching for illegal drugs and aliens who might be hiding under the front seats and trunks and thus the Conch Republic was born.

There are a total of 5 events under the Conch Republic Independence Celebration Resolution:

Conch Republic Street Fair: Saturday, April 18, 2025, from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Duval Street between Eaton and Greene Streets

Conch Republic Drag Race: Saturday, April 18, 2026, from 2:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. on the 700 block of Duval Street

Conch Republic Parade on Duval: Thursday, April 23, 2026, from 8:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. on Duval Street from South to Greene Streets

Great Sea Battle of the CR – LAND FORCES: Friday, April 24, 2026, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the T Pier at Mallory Square

Julie Hanson Memorial Conch Republic Bed Races: Saturday, April 25, 2026, from 1:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Duval Street between Olivia and Southard Streets

Procurement

There will be no additional expenses to the city as all service costs (Police/Fire/Community Services) are covered by the applicant, based on the Special Event Matrix.

Recommendation

The City Manager's Office recommends the Mayor & City Commission approve the "44th Annual Conch Republic Independence Celebration" on April 18, 2026, through April 25, 2026.