



## Portland commissioner: Washington Park concerts will go on

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PORTLAND, Ore. -- It looks like a public-private partnership will save Washington Park's summer concert series this year.

City joins hotelier to save concerts

A local hotelier stepped forward Friday with half the money needed to save the Washington Park Summer Festival and challenged Portland businesses to raise the remaining funds within one week.

The festival, which costs about \$100,000 and was funded by private sponsors, was canceled by Portland Parks & Recreation on Tuesday after a major contributor pulled out.

The Sondland Durant Foundation, the Hotel deLuxe and Hotel Lucia offered \$50,000 to save the festival, which attracts as many as 30,000 a year. Local businesses had until May 15 to pony up the rest of the money.

But Portland City Commissioner Nick Fish told KGW on Friday that whatever money local businesses didn't match, City Hall would.

"I'll go on out on a limb for you, if we get close I'll make sure City Hall makes up the difference ... I'll go to my colleagues ... we'll make up the difference," Fish said.

Fish oversees the Parks & Recreation department.

"Portlanders deserve good news and we are thrilled that we can assist with this fun, free event that supports our city's tradition of music, culture, and unity," said Gordon Sondland, CEO of the two hotels.

Fish thanked the foundation and its co-principals, Sondland and Katy Durant, for issuing the challenge and their "civic leadership" in trying to save the 60-year-old festival.

"This is a tremendous opportunity for us to save this much-loved Portland tradition," Fish said.

Daimler Trucks North America, which had been the major sponsor the last four years, announced earlier this week it could no longer underwrite the festival due to corporate reductions.

In past years Washington Park Summer Festival has featured as many as 18 continuous nights of performances.

It was established in 1949 by Dorothea Lensch, the first recreation director for Portland Parks & Recreation, and ran in various forms until 1988, when it was suspended for budget reasons. The festival got an encore in 2005 when Daimler stepped in as sponsor.

Businesses or individuals that wished to donate funds to save the festival were asked to call Fish's office at (503) 823-3589 to contribute.