



**CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM**

**SUBJECT:** Large Group Activity Permit – Heart of the Game Beach Series

**STAFF CONTACT:** Laura Waldrop - Assistant Director of Recreation & Cultural Affairs

**COUNCIL MEETING CYCLE:** March 16 COW/March 23 Council

**RECOMMENDED COUNCIL ACTION:**

Approve the application as presented.

**BACKGROUND/SUMMARY:**

The application requests approval for the Kathy DeBoer – Heart of the Game Beach Series, proposed for Gulf Place West Public Beach in conjunction with the AVCA Beach Volleyball Championship. Kathy DeBoer’s influence on collegiate athletics is widely recognized, but her impact on beach volleyball is especially profound. As Executive Director of the American Volleyball Coaches Association, she championed the sport for more than a decade—guiding it from a niche emerging activity to full NCAA championship status. Her leadership, persistence, and advocacy were instrumental in the NCAA’s historic decision to adopt beach volleyball as its 90th championship sport in 2016, opening doors for thousands of student-athletes and elevating the sport’s national profile.

Hosting this event in Gulf Shores—home of the inaugural NCAA Beach Volleyball Championship—creates a meaningful connection between Kathy’s legacy and the city where the championship era began.

The Heart of the Game Beach Series serves as a celebratory tribute to her role in shaping the sport’s trajectory and honors the partnership between the AVCA, the NCAA, and the City of Gulf Shores in growing collegiate beach volleyball nationwide.

This volleyball community-focused event is small, but its symbolism is significant: it highlights Gulf Shores’ place in the sport’s origin story and reinforces the city’s reputation as a premier destination for collegiate beach volleyball.

**RELATED ISSUES:**

None



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**PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTIONS:**

The City Council has approved this event in previous years, and it has been successfully executed.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

The 2025 event generated 93 contract room nights and an estimated economic impact of \$61,574, reflecting continued value to the local hospitality sector.

**KEY DATES:**

- Begin set-up: April 6, 2026
- AVCA Small College Championship: April 18–19, 2026
- Transition to NCAA Beach Volleyball Championship: Immediately following completion of the AVCA event

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Large Group Activity Permit Application