

# Independence Day fireworks canceled

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GREENFIELD — The annual Independence Day fireworks celebration has been canceled.

The event, which was originally scheduled for July 5, has been canceled due to the ongoing public health and safety concerns amid the COVID-19

pandemic, according to a statement from the Greenfield Recreation Department.

“While we are extremely disappointed to have to cancel fireworks this year, our primary concern is the health and safety of our community,” said Recreation Director Christy Moore. “This decision was made after very careful consideration, consultation with

city department heads, the mayor, and the Recreation Commission, as well as a review of local communities facing similar challenges. We look forward to the future when we are once again able to come together and celebrate as a community.”

Several uncertainties contributed to the decision to cancel, including the difficulty

with adherence to social distancing and current public gathering guidelines.

In downtown Greenfield on Friday morning, several locals expressed similar feelings about the cancellation: that it was understandable, considering the fact of the pandemic, but still disappointing.

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**Hundreds of people gather at Beacon Field for the 2019 Independence Day fireworks in Greenfield. This year, the fireworks have been canceled as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.**

STAFF FILE PHOTO

## Canceled

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“I was expecting them to have the fireworks this year,” said Tiffany Johnson, who lives in Greenfield. She said her family goes to the fireworks every year because it overlaps with her brother’s birthday.

“I think, because of COVID-19, that it’s a good thing,” Johnson said. “But I’m very surprised.”

“There’s no way to appropriately social distance in a sit-

uation like that,” added Michelle Wait, who lives in Montague. She said she has been going to Greenfield’s fireworks every year for the last 15 years.

Brenda Martinez, who lives in Greenfield, said she was not surprised by the cancellation.

“To put people at risk — I’d rather not have the fireworks,” she said.

According to the Recreation Department’s statement, funding for this year’s event was also a challenge, since the event is supported by local businesses, community

members and event vendors — many of whom have experienced financial hardships during the pandemic.

“We tried hard to come up with a safe plan that worked under the current restrictions around large public gatherings, but were not able to resolve the issues,” Mayor Roxann Wedegartner said. “Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the city’s goal has been to keep the community healthy and safe. The city is hopeful that 2021 will see a return of the fireworks celebration.”