

Alton F1 Powerboat Championship Approved By City Officials; Jobe Discusses Economic Impact

by Dalton Brown, News Reporter
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ALTON - A Formula 1 powerboat championship race is moving forward on the Alton riverfront following approval from Alton city officials at their meeting on Wednesday.

The unanimous vote to approve followed a presentation from Cory Jobe, the President /CEO of the Great Rivers & Routes Tourism Bureau, who shared more details and insights into the powerboat race and its potential economic impact on Alton and the surrounding area.

“I’m here tonight to speak in support of the ordinance in front of you to bring the F1 powerboat championships to the Alton riverfront this summer in June,” Jobe said at the meeting, adding that the city hasn’t held an event like this since the early 1990’s.

The event, titled the "2024 Alton Midwest Nationals," will take place from Friday, June 21, 2024 to Sunday, June 23, 2024. The race course consists of a seven-turn loop near the Alton riverfront area of the amphitheater, where there will also be “fan viewing” and “pit area” seating areas.

The last event [F1 Powerboat Championship](#) held in the region was in Sheboygan, Wis., which saw about 40,000 spectators generate over \$4 million over the course of a weekend, including lodging, sales tax, and more. Jobe estimated Alton would bring in about half the amount of spectators and revenue, estimating about 20,000 spectators to generate over \$2 million.

“Obviously F1 Powerboat wants to be in the marketplace,” Jobe added. “We’re in a good location, we’re minutes from downtown St. Louis, we’re in a great media market.”

While Jobe gave rough estimates of the event’s economic impact, more detailed budget information was not available for city officials to review at Wednesday’s meeting. However, he announced Great Rivers & Routes would contribute \$20,000 towards the event and would also handle the promotion and advertising, an additional value of approximately \$10,000.

Director of Alton Parks and Recreation Director Michael Haynes suggested the city contribute \$60,000 to \$100,000 to get the event organizers to come to the city and accommodate certain requirements, such as the purchase of new portable boat docks, which he said could later be repurposed at Gordon Moore park when the event isn’t taking place.

Other incidental costs may include EMTs, portable bathrooms, and possibly a private security force to supplement the Alton Police Department if the department doesn’t have adequate staff to work the event. While Haynes suggested the City plan to commit \$60,000 to \$100,000, he and Jobe added that the final cost to the city could be much lower once sponsors have been secured for the event.

Alderman John Meehan raised the question of the river flooding, to which Jobe responded that they’ve been in constant contact with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Coast Guard, both of whom are “100% on board” with the championship event being held on the Alton riverfront. However, if the river were to flood on the weekend of the event, it would most likely not be rescheduled later the same year due to the championship’s strict schedule.

To find out more about the F1 powerboat championship proposal, see [this related story on Riverbender.com](#). A recording of Jobe's presentation at the meeting followed by the discussion and vote to approve is available at the top of this story or on the [Riverbender.com Facebook page](#).