

**Approved  
March 30, 2009**

**REGULAR MEETING  
(CONDUCTED AS A COMMITTEE-OF-THE-WHOLE)  
OF THE COUNCIL  
CITY OF SOUTHFIELD  
March 9, 2009**

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**March 9, 2009**

MINUTES

The meeting of the Council convened at 8:15 p.m. in the Council Conference Room of the Municipal Building, 26000 Evergreen Road, Southfield, Michigan, with Council President Donald Fracassi in the Chair. PRESENT: Council Members: Donald Fracassi, Myron Frasier, Sylvia Jordan, Sidney Lantz, Bill Lattimore, Joan Seymour and Kenson Siver. ALSO PRESENT: Deputy City Clerk Susan Silva, City Administrator James Scharret and Assistant City Attorney Susan Ward-Witkowski. There being a quorum, Council was in session.

Bill Waterhouse gave an update on upcoming Summer Special Events.

Mr. Waterhouse stated that the American Heart Association's Annual Heart Walk will take place on May 16, 2009 on the front lawn of the Municipal Complex. The event usually draws 20,000 people. The American Heart Association does an excellent job of planning the event. The City is reimbursed for any services provided by the City. The contract has not changed from previous years.

Councilwoman Seymour asked if the event creates more work for staff. Mr. Waterhouse replied that it does require staff time, however, the City is reimbursed for staff time.

Mr. Waterhouse stated that a meeting has been scheduled regarding the Chaldean Festival with Martin Manna of the Chaldean-American Chamber, Parks & Recreation, Public Works, Police Department and Legal.

Council President Fracassi asked if the City could receive a portion of the ticket sales. Mr. Waterhouse responded that he would talk to Mr. Manna about ticket sales and will also ask the Chaldean-American Chamber to help sponsor the fireworks.

Councilman Lattimore questioned the need to assess a percentage of their ticket sales given that the Chaldean-American Chamber is a non-profit organization.

Council President Fracassi replied that use of the front lawn for commercial reasons would cost a large sum of money.

Councilman Lattimore replied that the Chamber is already paying a hefty sum. Mr. Waterhouse added that the Chamber paid the City \$16,000 last year.

Councilman Fracassi answered that the cost of hiring private security and trash pickup services would be even greater than what they pay the City.

Councilman Lattimore asked what the City usually charges for use of the front lawn. Council President Fracassi replied that the circus paid \$25,000. Mr. Waterhouse responded that the Jazz Fest pays between \$4,000 and \$5,000, last year was the exception.

Councilman Lattimore voiced his opposition to asking for a percentage of ticket sales.

Mr. Waterhouse noted that the Jazz Fest would be at Chene Park in Detroit. They could not find enough sponsors.

Councilman Siver stated that at one time the City talked about having the Chaldean-American Chamber making a donation to the Southfield Community Foundation or the City. He asked if there was a rule about one non-profit giving to another non-profit.

Ms. Ward-Witkowski replied that there are restrictions on the City regarding non-profits.

Councilman Siver recommended pursuing a donation to the Southfield Community Foundation.

Councilman Lantz voiced his opposition to asking for more money. They are already reimbursing the City for any costs it incurs.

Councilwoman Seymour stated that the circus was an event for the whole city as are the fireworks. She has a problem with using the front lawn for commercial purposes. She expressed concern about setting a precedent.

Mayor Lawrence stated that the Chaldean-American Chamber have lost sponsors due to cutbacks. They don't know if they will even make a profit this year. The Chaldean community has a strong presence in Southfield. If the Chamber makes money this year, next year the City can charge for use of the front lawn or a percentage of sales. The City can't change the rules now.

Council President Fracassi stated that the Council only approved the event not the agreement. He encouraged Council to adopt a standard policy for the use of the front lawn so that people know up front what the requirements are.

Councilman Lattimore noted that for the past two years the festival has had lousy weather. The carnival is costing the Chamber a lot of money up front. He would like to wait and see what type of profit the Chamber makes on the event. What the City does for one group, the City needs to do for all groups. Special provisions have been made for the Jazz Fest and the Chaldean Festival in the past.

Councilwoman Seymour stated that it is not the City's responsibility to help an organization to make money for their charity.

Mr. Waterhouse stated that all advertising will prominently display the City of Southfield as a sponsor of the event. He will talk to Mr. Manna about the Chamber being more prominent in their sponsorship of City events or in finding sponsors. The Police Department will require additional coverage this year. The Jazz Fest is very expensive to set up and the organizers have been unable to find sponsors this year. He has talked to the radio station that hosts the Jazz Fest and asked them to become involved in city events such as the fireworks and the concert series.

The City of Detroit fireworks are on June 22<sup>nd</sup>. The City has a contract with Zambelli Internationale to do the fireworks display. He recommended that the City schedule the fireworks for the same date as Detroit.

Councilwoman Seymour asked about overtime costs for the Police Department. Mr. Scharret responded that last year it cost \$35,000.

Mr. Waterhouse added that P & R spent \$15,000. The total cost of the event is \$75,000.

Council President Fracassi questioned whether the City should do fireworks given the current economy.

Councilman Frasier stated that he is a strong supporter of the fireworks. It is a popular event for the residents. He would like Bill Waterhouse to take the lead on the Chaldean festival. He suggested looking for entertainment that is acceptable to everyone in an effort to cut costs.

Councilman Siver expressed concerns about safety. The Police Department is kept fairly busy at the fireworks. He does not have a clear picture of the number of incidents that take place at the fireworks. He would like more information so that he can make an informed decision.

Councilman Lantz replied that Police Chief Joe Thomas told him there were only a few incidents last year and the Police Department could handle it. He voiced his support for the fireworks.

Councilman Lattimore stated that the fireworks is a feature event with the loss of the Jazz Fest. The Police Department integrates with the crowd and is capable of handling any situation that occurs. He supports having the fireworks.

Councilwoman Seymour expressed concern about the cost of the fireworks. She loves the fireworks but the City needs to cut back somewhere.

Council President Fracassi stated that the City needs to evaluate each and every event and determine if the City should continue holding the event. He is very concerned about providing the services people expect. He would like to set a policy regarding the use of the front lawn at a future Committee-of-the-Whole meeting.

Mr. Waterhouse asked if Council President Fracassi was suggesting an evaluation by Council. Council President Fracassi responded in the affirmative and added that Council only hears rumors and they need to have the facts.

Mr. Scharret replied that it is easier to do the evaluation immediately after the event.

Mr. Waterhouse replied that staff always does an evaluation after every event. There are incidents at the fireworks and Council should know about them. He has sat through Police Department briefings and is satisfied that the fireworks will be safe. Staff has talked about having designated family areas. Music and entertainment are adjusted each year.

Councilman Frasier suggested enlisting members of the teen center committee. The Police Department has changed to a less confrontational looking approach. The police dogs are no longer visible and there are no sheriffs on horseback.

Mr. Waterhouse replied that kids tend to behave better when they see people they know.

Councilman Frasier asked if the City makes any money off the concessions. Mr. Waterhouse replied that the City charges the vendors a flat fee.

Mr. Waterhouse stated that for the Gus Macker Tournament last year the City partnered with another group to run the event. This year the City is going to run the event on its own. It was a break even event last year. Gus Macker would like to comeback to Southfield and are looking for ways to defray costs. They are going to pick up a lot of the costs that the City incurred last year. Gus Macker is cutting their profits to keep it a viable event. Last year there were 102 teams and the City is hoping to have 150 teams this year.

Mayor Lawrence stated that last year the City tried to include many events. Mr. Waterhouse replied that the kids triathlon was successful. It did not cost a penny. They would like to have another one this year. People came from Canada to participate and said our facilities are beautiful compared to theirs.

Mayor Lawrence asked if Mr. Waterhouse was confident that the City can increase the number of teams that participate. Mr. Waterhouse replied that they are looking to increase advertising. Staff learned a lot last year. He believes the number of teams will increase.

Mayor Lawrence asked that the City makes sure that events are advertised on all available resources such as the web and e-blasts.

Councilman Frasier agreed with the need for a policy. He asked who should be involved in writing the policy.

Council President Fracassi replied that Council, the P & R Board, Community Relations, and the Police Department.

Councilman Frasier replied that he would like it to be inclusive rather than exclusive. The policy needs to be flexible enough that Mr. Waterhouse can manage it.

Ms. Ward-Witkowski responded that there needs to be a demarcation line between city-sponsored and non-city sponsored events.

Councilman Fracassi stated that the City needs to get a reading of the public who attend the events. Mr. Waterhouse replied that P & R surveys those in attendance. There needs to be better communication between P & R and Council. He will bring the contracts for the American Heart Association's Heart Walk and the Gus Macker Tournament back before Council. He will be bringing the site plan back before Council for the Chaldean Festival.

There being no further business, the Regular Meeting (conducted as a Committee-of-the-Whole) adjourned at 9:20 p.m., March 9, 2009, until the next Regular Meeting (conducted as a Committee-of-the-Whole) on March 24, 2009, at the John W. English Administration Building, 24661 Lahser Road, Southfield, Michigan.

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Donald Fracassi, Council President

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Susan D. Silva, Deputy City Clerk