



February 26, 2019

MEMORANDUM

To: Planning and Parks Committee Members

From: Department of Planning and Parks

Re: **2019 Version of the Barbeque Bash and its Management** (Wards - All)

Cc: The Honorable James R. Bowlin, Mayor
Administration and Public Works Committee Members
Economic Development Committee Members
Steve Cross, Co-Interim City Administrator
John A. Young, City Attorney
Rick Brown, P.E. and P.T.O.E., Director of Public Works
Kathy Arnett, Assistant Director of Planning and Parks
Gary Crews, Superintendent of Parks and Recreation

Background >>>

The Wildwood Barbecue Bash will celebrate its eleventh year of being held in the City this year. This event has seen growth in almost all of those years. This growth was reflected in the number of participants, the size of crowds, and the amount of money raised for charitable organizations. The event has also grown in the number of days, starting at a day and one-half to three (3) days. This event has become a staple for many west St. Louis County residents, particularly from Wildwood.

For the last two (2) years, the event has been held at the St. Louis Community College - Wildwood Campus. This change was caused by the absorption of land by new development at its old location within Town Center Area, where it was held for the first eight (8) years. The relocation of the event to the campus has created new opportunities, but has defined a trend of greater expenses, given the size of the venue and the parking issues associated with the area. These expenses have been increasing each year, but 2018 was the first year that they now have exceeded revenues for the organizer.

With this situation, the sustainability of the barbecue bash in its current form has come into question, which, again, is the major community event and has provided the City name recognition in regards to it. With its benefits, the City has incurred costs to participate and maintain the core needs of it, which include public health, safety, and welfare components. These needs related to police, waste management, trash collection, and ground maintenance and cleanup. With assuming these needs, the costs to the City have grown as well. Collectively, the event has grown, but so have associated expenses.

Assessment >>>

The event is the highlight of the fall calendar for west St. Louis County, and the entire region. If the expenses continue to rise, without a corresponding increase in revenues, the event is, more than likely, not sustainable. Therefore, the organizer and the Department have discussed possible options to ensure the longevity of it. These options assume changes by both the organizer and the City. The options are as follows:

- a. The City assumes the management of the event to a greater degree and would engage the current organizer as a consultant in this regards, with that entity managing the entirety of the event. Under this option, the organizer would receive a fee from the City and it would collect proceeds of the event to offset as many of its costs, as possible.
- b. The organizer continues in the current role, under a similar agreement, but the City increases its financial contribution to the event beyond its current levels.
- c. The City does not change its role or commitment, and encourages the organizer to reduce expenses and increase revenues, including potential sponsorships.
- d. Reduce the size of the event and control expenses in that manner.
- e. The event concludes in its current form.

The Department does believe a decision needs to be made in this regard. If not, an outcome may occur without the input of all the participating parties.

Recommendation >>>

In defining these options, the Department of Planning is seeking direction in this regard. The City of Wildwood has supported this event for ten (10) years and committed major resources to it, which makes a decision of this nature the type the Committee needs to participate in for a successful outcome. The Department does believe one (1) of these options, or others, can be employed to address the sustainability of the event. With the input of the Committee in this regard, decisions can then be made between the event's organizer and the City for the future.

Other >>>

If any of the Committee Members should have any questions or comments regarding this information, please feel free to contact the Department of Planning and Parks at (636) 458-0440. A presentation is planned on this matter at tonight's meeting. Thank you for the opportunity to present this information to the Committee on this important matter.