



WILDWOOD®

February 26, 2019

The Honorable City Council
City of Wildwood, Missouri
16860 Main Street
Wildwood, Missouri 63040

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

Council Members:

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 now 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 had discussed possible options to ensure the longevity of it, which were presented to the Planning and Parks Committee at its February meeting. 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 Committee believed a decision needed to be made in this regard, to prevent an outcome from occurring without the input of all the participating parties.

Committee Action ♦♦♦

In defining these options, the Committee noted the City of Wildwood has supported this event for ten (10) years and committed a great number of resources to it, which makes a decision of this nature the type the City Council needs to participate in for a successful outcome. The Committee voted unanimously to support Option C, outlined above, and encourage modifications to the event, by the organizer, to reduce expenses and increase revenues as an effort to address the sustainability of the event. Regardless of option, the Committee Members did note the efforts of the organizer in the past and was appreciative of them.

If any of the City Council Members should have questions or comments before tonight's meeting about this information, please feel free to contact the Department of Planning and Parks at (636) 458-0440. The Department of Planning and Parks will be available at the March 11, 2019 City Council meeting to respond to any questions or comments in this regard. Thank you for your review of this information.

Respectfully submitted,
CITY OF WILDWOOD

Debra Smith McCutchen, Chair*
Planning and Parks Committee

Cc: The Honorable James R. Bowlin, Mayor
Steve Cross, Co-Interim City Administrator
John A. Young, City Attorney
Kathy Arnett, Assistant Director of Planning and Parks
Gary Crews, Superintendent of Parks and Recreation
Frank Schmer, St. Louis Home Fires, BBQ Bash Organizer

* The Department of Planning and Parks developed this report, in conjunction with the Planning and Parks Committee. Content reflects the Committee's consideration of this subject, and not necessarily an individual's position or opinion.