



Wildwood Celebration Commission Minutes

Meeting Date:

- November 2, 2022
- 6:00 p.m.

Commission Members Present:

- Libby Wilson
- Vicki Helfrey
- Karen Jehling
- Sharon Hutson
- Deborah Coleman
- Holly Ferris
- Charlie Siebert
- Kristin Naeger, Staff Liaison

I. Call to Order and Opening Remarks by Co-Chair Wilson

Co-Chair Wilson called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. and requested roll call be taken.

II. Roll Call

A roll call of members was conducted, and the following individuals were in attendance, both in-person and via the Zoom Webinar Platform:

Commission Members:

Libby Wilson, Co-Chair
Vicki Helfrey
Karen Jehling
Sharon Hutson
Deborah Coleman
Holly Ferris
Charlie Siebert
Kristin Naeger, Staff Liaison

Absent Member: Council Liaison and Co-Chair Joe Garritano

Other Officials & City Staff:

Joe Vujnich, Director of Planning and Parks
Officer Steve DeGhelder, Wildwood Precinct

III. Approval of Minutes from the October 5, 2022, Meeting of the Commission

Motion was made by Commissioner Hutson, seconded by Commissioner Jehling, to approve the meeting minutes of October 5, 2022. A voice vote was taken to approve the motion, with unanimous, affirmative result. The motion was declared approved by Co-Chair Wilson.

IV. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

V. Discussion of the 2022 Celebrate Wildwood Event

a. Revised Budget for 2023 Event

Discussion began with Director Vujnich identifying the proposed budget for 2023; the budget presented to City Council was \$90,000 (from previous \$100,000), so the City's overall budget would be balanced; the Department is re-presenting the budget for 2023 in the sum of \$90,000; there is also an expectation to increase revenues from \$15,000 (the amount raised in 2022) to \$30,000 in 2023; the Department is requesting endorsement of the \$90,000 budget. Director Vujnich stated the City generally spends between \$100,000 to \$110,000; and, if revenues are raised, it shouldn't change how the event is managed and presented. Commissioner Siebert noted the budget is flat from previous years and asks how much greater is the revenue stream from 2017 to 2022. Director Vujnich responded that revenue for the City has also been flat, as sales tax has had minimal growth and there are no internet taxes.

Discussion held on the revenues raised over the years; City Council would like \$30,000 in revenues; other cities charge for ice, electric service, percentage of sales; where money will be raised – booths, sponsors, charging for things that Wildwood does not normally; the Department has some ideas and options and will present them and let the Commission decide how to increase revenues; concerns if we start charging more for things, that will deter participants that come – especially having a one day event; that a two day event is not practical with the budget; the increased revenues will go back to the event, as budget numbers do not change.

A motion was made by Commissioner Jehling, seconded by Commissioner Hutson, to approve the budget. Having no further business to discuss, and hearing no objections, a voice vote was taken to approve the motion, with unanimous, affirmative result. The motion was declared approved by Co-Chair Wilson.

b. Revenue Options for 2023 Event/Comparison of Other Surrounding City Event Fees

Discussion was started by Director Vujnich on how to increase the revenue to \$30,000; various options were presented after checking into other municipalities' events; note that other events are primarily multiple days, and they charge more; discussed the ways to increase revenue – raise fees across the board, including booth fees, food vendor fees, increase tent rentals, adjust sponsorship levels, allow sponsorship banners to non-Wildwood businesses, auctions of baskets, with donations from local businesses, and solicit donations from Wildwood contractors and consultants. Commissioner Helfrey mentioned raising one price instead of nickel and diming; approaching nurseries to get them involved more and maybe decorating a street corner; and an auction basket to win the decorations on the corner. Director Vujnich mentioned the new Economic Development Manager, Tom Lee, has a good rapport with businesses, so the Commission will rely on him to reach out.

Commissioner Siebert mentioned that many of the crafters/food vendors are mom and pop operations and are least able to absorb cost increases; focus more on where the most money is made and those entities doing business with Wildwood that are more able to afford contributions; certain things should be off limits for increases, including the food and craft booths; there are other avenues to obtain money; as a community, go to those entities that haven't participated, with the Economic Development Manager. Commissioner Jehling believes it is how you approach the contractors – offer to put their name up to sponsor certain items (ice, fireworks, etc.) for a better response. Director Vujnich states there are a lot of opportunities, some learned from St. Louis Home Fires, Frank Schmear, during the BBQ Bash, including naming rights; some cities take a percentage of sales, so we could ask for a percentage in beer sales; creating a one-time fee for kids to enter into that area, with unlimited access; and can add carnival rides and take a percentage of ticket sales. Commissioner Helfrey reiterated how many things were going on in the community that day and asked if that helped/hurt our event and that she is opposed to taking percentage of sales. Director Vujnich suspects that the other events do impact us, but switching to

another date might have a negative outcome as well and Frank Schmeier did research and says this is the best weekend weather wise. Commissioner Helfrey would like to make a motion to put the 2023 date out, so people in the community know it.

A motion was made by Commissioner Helfrey, seconded by Commissioner Siebert, to think more about the revenue options. Having no further business to discuss, and hearing no objections, a voice vote was taken to approve the motion, with unanimous, affirmative result. The motion was declared approved by Co-Chair Wilson.

A motion was made by Commissioner Helfrey, seconded by Commissioner Ferris, to approve the date of the event - September 23, 2023. Having no further business to discuss, and hearing no objections, a voice vote was taken to approve the motion, with unanimous, affirmative result. The motion was declared approved by Co-Chair Wilson.

c. Social Media Analytics for 2022 Event

Director Vujnich mentioned there had been discussions held early on to promote the event in other ways; the electronic message boards, yard signs and Silver Tablet Marketing were used as promotional tools; Debbie Ward did a wonderful job and the scavenger hunt was wildly popular. Commissioner Ferris asked for last year's report, as a comparison, which the Department will email to the Commission.

VI. Discussion of Memorial Program for Event

Director Vujnich began the discussion of the Memorial Program by identifying the situation with Virgil Schmidt being chosen as the Grand Marshal and then his passing; how Mr. Schmidt's family appreciated honoring Virgil at the event; how to take the Commission's desire to look at individuals or organizations that have had a major role in the event and memorialize them; components to include are the criteria for selection of the individual and how best and where to display such; could be a member of the Celebration Commission, the City Council Liaison, a longtime volunteer, a business entity that has supported the event, like Three French Hens, or an organization that is always there; and the permanent display location will be in Village Green, with a plaque listing name and years of service, or a paver.

Discussion followed about the program as Ms. Helfrey thought it was for people who made a difference in general; there is a Business Appreciation Award for businesses; the Jeannie Hood Award is what Commissioner Helfrey is describing and will be presented at Celebrate Wildwood; Commissioner Helfrey believes there are more people to be honored and that it should be the Grand Marshal that is chosen, not the Commission Members; that crossover and duplication needs to be avoided; and Commissioner Siebert stated there are quantitative (years of service) and qualitative (Grand Marshal) awards and he doesn't see a problem with a Commission Member being recognized, as long as everyone knows what the ground rules are at the start, and he doesn't think it should be limited to people on this Commission. Director Vujnich noted that the Council is considering a Veterans Program, and there is also a Historic Preservation Commission program, while the Jeannie Hood Award recognizes an individual that has contributed to Wildwood. Ideas presented that the Grand Marshal should be part of the program, or the Grand Marshal and a volunteer, with Director Vujnich stating as long as it is in the context of the event, such would be appropriate. After additional discussion, this topic will be postponed to the January meeting.

A motion was made by Commissioner Helfrey, seconded by Commissioner Ferris, to postpone the matter to the January 2023 meeting. Having no further business to discuss, and hearing no objections, a voice vote was taken to approve the motion, with unanimous, affirmative result. The motion was declared approved by Co-Chair Wilson.

VII. Next Meeting Date – Wednesday, January 4, 2023

The Commission was reminded the next meeting date will be Wednesday, January 4, 2023, at 6:00 p.m., in person or Zoom (hybrid), at Wildwood City Hall.

VIII. Adjournment

A motion was made by Commissioner Helfrey, seconded by Commissioner Hutson, to adjourn the meeting. Having no further business to discuss, and hearing no objections, a voice vote was taken to approve the motion, with unanimous, affirmative result. The motion was declared approved by Co-Chair Wilson. The meeting concluded at 7:02 p.m.