

Minutes for the November 23, 2021 Safety Committee meeting

Meeting was called into session at 6:30 pm.

David Phares - Chairman
Councilman Malta - Committee member
Councilwoman Bisbee - Committee member
Councilwoman Antosh
Councilwoman Koudela
Police Chief Turner
Fire Chief Tennyson
Chief Building Inspector Sean Brennan
Economic Development Manager Monica Drake

Chairman Phares began the discussion on event/party centers which have seen two approved to move into the city and one more possibly on the way. He mentioned some options on possibly limiting them or coming up with rules or regulations regarding them. Councilwoman Bisbee asked what would be the reason for limiting them? Chairman Phares referenced the first party center on E 305th street that opened in March and had numerous police calls and ended up leaving within a few months. Also referenced was a party center in Eastlake that was causing problems and one in Wickliffe. He also brought up these centers taking away revenue from the City owned facilities.

Councilwoman Bisbee stated that Bayridge Apartments has their own rental facility and Lakefront Lodge is also available and she doesn't feel that these new party centers have taken revenue from City or other private facilities. She did stress possibly giving these places a set of rules to abide by to keep them in line. Similar to what the City does to people that rent City facilities.

Councilman Malta didn't like the idea of keeping businesses from coming into the city. He referenced the limit on gaming centers that was passed recently. He questioned if it was the alcohol consumption that was driving this? Maybe requiring a police officer present would prevent problems from arising.

Councilwoman Antosh stated that the City derives no income from these types of business because they have no employees. Councilwoman Bisbee brought up the fact that foot traffic in the City will be increased when these events are taking place.

Lt. Mastroianni cited problems with all of the local event centers such as fights and shootings and the age group they attract which is 18-24. They are not good for the Police Department. It started with people renting houses and then word would get out on social media.

Councilwoman Bisbee asked Law Director Langraff if putting together a list of rules is something we could do. The Law Director stated that the City could do that and it would be presented by the Plan Review Board to the owner. You could put into an ordinance a list of regulations that they would have to follow. She also cited our ordinance that requires businesses to not run their business in a way that causes more crime or problems. She does not suggest banning them outright..

Councilwoman Antosh brought up the scenario of 20 of these types of businesses trying to come into the city. Law Director Langraff stated that that is where the Plan Review Board comes into play. Chairman Phares asked if they could tell them that we have too many and you can't come here. Is that a good enough reason? It isn't but you would have to cite safety concerns, security concerns etc. It would be hard to defend in court that there are just too many in the city.

Chairman Phares asked if the hours of operation could be regulated and the Law Director stated that that is traditionally put before the Planning Commission along with other basic questions on how they plan on running their business. They could have public hearings through the Planning Commission also.

Economic Development Manager Monica Drake brought up the fact that the event center on E305th Street had a bring your own alcohol policy which is legal in Ohio. Is this something to address and what time do the problems start? Should parties remain in building and not spill into the parking lot? Just some things to consider and how will it impact other non-event centers in the City.

Chairman Phares suggested we look into getting the list of rules from Julie Kless at the Rec Department and Bayridge Apartments also.

Law Director Langraff asked Lt. Mastroianni if there are any changes we could make to assist the Police Department in regards to these types of businesses. He stated that limiting the time they are allowed to have the parties would help but another problem is getting officers to work the parties.

Councilwoman Antosh asked if it needs to be a Police officer or can it just be a security officer or armed security officer? Councilman Malta suggested that as the number of guests increases then the security has to increase. You should put the responsibility of security on the owner instead of the City.

Monica Drake suggested that we require lease language from the business owner at the time of application to the Plan Review Board for review before they get approved. Possibly make it part of the application process so the business owner can be prepared when they come before the Plan Review Board.

Chairman Phares stated we should look at the list of rules from the City and other private event centers as the first step and then meet again to discuss further action.

Meeting adjourned at 6:55 pm.

David Phares