

RAVINIA FESTIVAL NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING

MEETING NOTES

Tuesday, 3 November 2022
6:00 PM, Fire Station Headquarters

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

On behalf of the City and Ravinia Festival, City Manager Neukirch welcomed everyone to the meeting.

City of Highland Park (“City”) and Ravinia Festival (“Festival”) representatives were introduced:

- City Manager Ghida Neukirch, City of Highland Park
- Commander Gerald Cameron, City of Highland Park Police Department
- Dan Reisner, Ravinia Festival Trustee
- Jeff Haydon, President & CEO, Ravinia Festival
- Jim Schmitz, Director of Park Operations, Facilities and Grounds, Ravinia Festival
- Russell Jenkins, Director of Data Analytics

There were 5 other individuals at the meeting.

MEETING PURPOSE

City Manager Neukirch explained the purpose of the meeting. The City and Ravinia Festival host a Neighborhood Meeting in advance and after each Ravinia Festival season. Property owners within 800’ of the subject site receive written notification of the meeting. The meeting is open to the public and information about the meeting is promoted on the City’s web site. Meeting notes and agendas are located on the City’s web site at www.cityhpil.com

CITY REPORT

Parking Education & Enforcement

Commander Cameron shared that public safety continues to be one of the City’s top priorities and traffic management and parking plans are prepared with public safety in mind and to minimize impact on the City’s residential neighborhoods.

The City (Police Department) and three other partner agencies provided traffic and security services at more than 70 summer concerts, and served nearly 300K patrons during the 2022 season. Ravinia Festival sold out a number of performances and crossed 10,000 patrons five times which does not include well received performances that were impacted by inclement weather.

Traffic congestion was typical for the season. The Department responded to a number of complaints and addressed traffic violations on a regular basis.

The barricades were replaced with the plastic easel-style barricades which are more effective and efficient to maneuver. Approximately 90% of the barricades have been replaced thus far from the large wood-frame barricades that were problematic for residents and staff.

Signs were placed prohibiting left-turns at Marquette and Hastings on large concert nights (except local traffic) for drivers traveling eastbound. These signs and enforcement proved to be effective.

There is some steady progress with the drop off and pick-up of shared driving services. There are two-parking spaces in the Ravinia lot and the Braeside lot for this purpose.

There were no major arrests; two custodial arrests (controlled substance and minor battery) were addressed. Police staff also addressed minor events such as alarms.

Lambert Tree continues to be a hot spot for drop offs; the City continues to try to manage to the greatest extent possible.

There were 136 parking citations issued which included 53 citations for stopping, standing, and parking (drop off) violations. The department addressed 26 parking complaints. There were 10 minor motor vehicle accidents reported.

Transit Service

The following was provided by the City's Transit Division:

- Provided service for 33 events between June 16 and September 11;
- Passenger total for the season = **73,839**;
- **No** passenger or community complaints;
- **No** accidents or incidents on public property.

Ravinia Festival and the City regularly evaluate the use of buses and transportation options for the public. Buses that were empty were discontinued. Ravinia Festival is paying heed to the analytics to understand how people are traveling and when they are traveling. Ravinia Festival is actively trying to be a better neighbor to reduce the vehicular traffic in the neighborhood.

RAVINIA FESTIVAL (RF) REPORT

The following highlights were provided:

- Ravinia Festival exists to inspire people through music.
- Several youth orchestras perform at Ravinia Festival. RF continues to try and reach new areas.
- Breaking Barriers was new and very well received. Women conductors were promoted and events planned such as panels and workshops.
- Ravinia Festival produced a number of concerts as well. A tribute to Ramsey Lewis was conducted before he passed; his son performance as well. An international opera festival was held as well.
- A number of big shows were hosted as well.
- Similar to other employers, RF was challenged with hiring staff.
- Working with the City to reduce congestion in the area. The rides and environmental impacts have been reduced.
- RF partnered with Metra and ticket holders can ride the train for free. Metra ridership increased from the 2021 pilot program by 34%.

- The working assumptions going into 2022 included various initiatives such as trying to keep Monday's dark, running at 75% capacity in order to reduce attendance and best support the public given staffing challenges, and bringing back movies. RF operates May 20 through September 18.
- There were 104 events in 2022, compared to 70 in 2021; 122 in 2019; 125 in 2018.
- 10% of tickets are sold to people in HP.
- RF pays a percentage of ticket revenue to HP, pays for police, paramedics and supports community organizations.
- RF hosted an event with Congressman Schneider, and hosted the Northwest Municipal Conference consisting of mayors/managers from the region. RF staff also serve on the Chamber Board.
- RF closed July 6-10, 2022 following the 7/4 tragedy. The food service team and staff prepared meals for first responders in the commander center. They also worked with the HP Community foundation and RF patrons were encouraged to donate. RF donated \$120K to the HP Community Foundation.
- Year-round, RF hires 90+ individuals.
- RF is very involved in the schools – Focus on the Arts, performances for HPHS band and more.
- Reach Teach Play reaches over 75K community members. 1600 tickets are distributed. The program started in 1965 and has grown significantly.
- Significant maintenance has been conducted on the property including diseased tree removal (working in partnership with the City Forester and immediate neighbors). Tree planting will be conducted.
- There are some modest concerts in the fall; 14 performances from October 15 through May 5, 2023.

QUESTIONS/ANSWERS/COMMENTS

- Concerns were expressed with the significant number of shared driving services being picked-up and dropped off in front of residential homes throughout the district.

Cmdr. Cameron indicated that this topic remains an important area that is being evaluated and tested. Various initiatives have been tested. The group discussed using barricades, posting officers/different staffing strategies and other considerations. It was noted that there is more traffic, even on CSO nights because barricades that have historically been placed in certain locations are no longer being used. The Police Department/Ravinia Festival no longer has civilian staffing at non-high traffic locations; these individuals had no authority and there were more challenges with having civilians at intersections.

- Inquiry about drop-offs

Drop offs are available to the main lot at Burton and Blackstone until ½ hour before the end of the concert. When the main lot is full, staff directs drivers to remote parking areas to downtown HP. Burton/Blackstone is the safe drop off location.

Drivers can also go to Ravinia train station (north lot) and Braeside (south lot).

No stopping, standing or parking are also at strategic locations. Staff takes images of license plates and drivers who fail to comply with regulations are mailed a citation.

Information is posted on Ravinia Festival's web site and information is mailed to ticket holders. Schmitz indicated that pre-pandemic, Uber was amenable to setting up a system whereby individuals couldn't pin their location until they were at authorized areas.

- Inquiry about signage for ride-share drop offs

Signs have not been used as there are tremendous signs throughout the area and it is challenging to see the signs in the evening. Ride share information is provided on the web site, mailed to ticket holders, noted on the tickets. As noted above, the City and Ravinia Festival will work together with the ride share companies so they designate drop off/pick up locations from their mobile applications.

- Positive feedback about Ravinia Festival's thoughtful programming and community outreach.
- Inquiry about a permanent screen to the north lawn.

A screen will be placed for movies, but a permanent screen is not anticipated due to other pressing needs.

The City and Ravinia Festival thanked everyone for their attendance, feedback and questions. Continued communication was encouraged.

Stay safe and healthy.

Contacts:

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Respectfully,

Ghida S. Neukirch
City Manager