

RAVINIA FESTIVAL NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, 2 November 2021

6:30 PM

Virtual Meeting

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

On behalf of the City and Ravinia Festival, Mayor Rotering welcomed everyone to the meeting.

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

- Mayor Nancy Rotering, City of Highland Park
- Councilmember Michelle Holleman, City of Highland Park
- City Manager Ghida Neukirch, City of Highland Park
- Commander Gerald Cameron, City of Highland Park Police Department
- Jeff Haydon, President & CEO, Ravinia Festival
- Jim Schmitz, Director of Park Operations, Facilities and Grounds, Ravinia Festival
- Patrick Gipson, Manager, Photography and Video, Ravinia Festival

There were approximately 28 people 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 and electronic newsletter (enews). Meeting notes and agendas are located on the City’s web site.

RAVINIA FESTIVAL REPORT

Festival President Jeff Haydon provided the following information:

- Video highlighting the Ravinia season, prepared by Director Gibson.
- Guiding Principles for the 2021 Season:
 - Safety is the top priority
 - Science-based approach
 - Mission focused: live, in person music events
 - Re-open Ravinia Park
 - Maintain integrity of the Ravinia brand & experience
 - Prudent use of resources and manage risk
- Chicago Tribune featured an article, “The healing role of music: Ravinia 2021”. The article nicely summarized the season. The Festival led pivotal changes such as lawn pods, managing pavilion capacity limits, enforcing masks indoors and others.
- The Ravinia Music Box opened in the fall, 2019 but didn’t have a proper opening until this year. The Music Box is open by appointment and will reopen to the public for other events in the future.
- Ms. Marin Alsop, Chief Conductor and Curator, provided notable leadership.

- Ravinia Festival collaborated with a number of Chicago area arts organizations such as the Joffrey ballet, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, an area Mariachi band and the Chicago Children's Orchestra.
- Several pop shows were held at the Festival such as Train, Willie Nelson, The Roots, Larry Bird, John Legend, Lake Street Dive, Indigo Girls, Jazz at Lincoln Center, Brian McKnight, Gladys Knight, Black Violin and more.
- The 50th Annual Fiesta Ravinia was held in September.
- Many new initiatives were coordinated such as digital ticketing, improved efficiencies in the parking lots, free Metra rides with an admission ticket and more.
- The Festival sold at least one ticket to every person in the United States!
- Ticket sales information was reported:
 - Year 2021 232,836 tickets
 - Year 2020 0 due to the pandemic
 - Year 2019 467,040
 - Year 2018 485,058

Although the volume of ticket sales was significantly lower in 2021, it was important in order to keep attendees safe and manage operations effectively. The Festival also did not operate every day; there were 80 concerts versus 115 concerts.
- Ravinia Festival's partnership with the City includes reimbursement to the City for police, fire, transit and public works services.

CITY REPORT

City Manager Ghida Neukirch & Commander Cameron provided the following information. From a public safety perspective, police received minimal calls for service related to parking, traffic or patron issues from residents in 2021 which resulted in minimal community police response. Based on public input and the City's operational plans, we will continue to assess all facets of the City's operation in order to help ensure a safe and successful season for Ravinia Festival while continuing to maintain the quality of life for residents and businesses in the area.

- City COVID-19 Response & Management Plan Highlights – highlights were provided of the City's response in the pandemic which included the following:
 - The City led regional efforts to provide communication to the public via various communication modalities, namely the City's enews which is issued twice per week. Information continues to be shared from health organizations such as the CDC, IDPH and Lake County Health. The enews also include other City news and information. Residents can sign up for the City's enews via the following link: [City of Highland Park, IL \(cityhpil.com\)](https://www.cityofhighlandpark.il.gov/cityhpil.com)
 - Despite notable decreases in revenue, the City provided more than \$1.8M in financial assistance to residents and businesses in 2020.
 - The City implemented a number of new initiatives to support businesses such as no cost permits to use the City's public right of way for outdoor dining and curb side pick-up.
 - The City reduced its staffing by approximately 10% or 18 FTE's.
 - In 2021, the City donated \$300K to its partner agency, the Highland Park Community Foundation for grant purposes to non-profit organizations serving the Highland Park area.
- Ravinia Fire Station Redevelopment Update – redevelopment of the Ravinia Fire Station at 692 Burton is underway. The temporary station is being constructed in Brown Park off Roger

Williams. The new station will be construction at the current location. Construction is anticipated to start in early 2022 and will conclude in March/April, 2023.

- The City's Transit Division reports that the Park and Ride service for the 2021 season concluded on Friday, September 24. Between July 3 and September 24, Park and Ride provided shuttle service for 26 events and over 40,000 passengers. Preseason planning and continuing communication with Ravinia Festival and Pace identified the safest and most efficient ways to provide service in keeping with current pandemic protocols, including:
 - Reducing concert attendances and ticket sales
 - Using more buses per event (if needed) to reduce passenger loads
 - Increasing bus trip frequency to enhance social distancing and reduce the time passengers spent on buses
 - Installing protective barriers on buses and reducing passenger loads
 - Enforcing required face-covering mandates per TSA
 - Using fewer remote parking lots to reduce round-trip bus travel times
 - Observing recommended disinfecting protocols

Bus idling was closely monitored throughout the season; supervisors adjusted the number of buses operating during each event in response to actual demand. The Equipment section worked diligently throughout the season to help maintain a safe and reliable operating fleet.

- Traffic Management - Highland Park Police and three other partner agencies provided traffic and security services at more than 70 summer concerts during the 2021 season.
 - Traffic congestion complaints continue to decrease and were at a minimum, one compared to five in 2019.
 - Police continue to address the challenge created by ride share increases and media directions for new patrons unfamiliar to the area.
 - Meetings with LYFT and UBER in the off-season, along with Festival web-based information and police initiatives with patrons, had a positive impact on "drop-off" and "pick-up".
 - No motor vehicle accidents reported that were related to Ravinia Festival traffic. There were four minor damage accidents on Ravinia property.
 - Ravinia Park Road will continue to be closed to pre-staging on large concert nights until officers are on site. Based on traffic and projected crowd size, the barricades are removed no more than 15 minutes prior to opening of the west lot.
- Parking Information
 - There were 16 parking complaints (Less than 1 per every 4 performance nights) in 2021.
 - The City's Traffic Management Committee worked with neighbors east of Sheridan Road to include Ravinia Permit restrictions in these areas. City Council approved these recommendations, and additional signage was posted.
 - A total of 26 parking citations were issued, which is less than half of the previous season.
 - Drop-Offs Pick-Ups
 - Primarily, Obstructing Driveway / Drop-Off enforcement was limited to verbal warnings and directional assistance as a primary initiative.
 - Three No Stopping, Standing, Parking / Drop-Off citations and;
 - Two Other Prohibited Parking Violation Citations were issued to non-compliant drivers.

- Crowd Control & Emergency Medical Service
 - Ravinia Security “Bag Check” locations along the Green Bay Trail were adjusted creating a “Thru-Lane” to lessen the impact on resident pedestrian, bicycle, commuter traffic.
 - Five paramedic transports from Ravinia for sick or injured patrons including a team effort life-saving response in the Pavilion by Ravinia Staff, Police and Paramedics
 - Smaller crowds did not dictate the assignment of a reserve paramedic ambulance on site.

- Enforcement
 - 0 Minor/s in possession of alcohol; 0 last reporting year
 - 0 Illegal Drug Law violations; 0 last reporting year
 - 0 arrests; 4 last reporting year
 - **36** Other non-arrest complaints or requests for police services related to Ravinia including, but not limited to 1 theft of unattended property, lost property, three vehicle lock-outs, and other minor disputes. Sixty last reporting year.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

1. Do you plan to do an announcement preview for the neighborhood like you did last year?
Yes, a preview of the season will be introduced at the spring, 2022 Neighborhood Meeting.

2. Another house in the neighborhood recently sold to Ravinia. Does Ravinia have plans to continue to buy up houses in the area?

Ravinia Festival sold a house on Lambert and they are in the process of purchasing a home on Delta. The home is closer to the park which better serves their operation. There is not an increase in the number of homes the Festival owns.

3. Concern about a private party that rented the facility recently and played excessively loud music. Similar events have been held in the dining pavilion since the facility opened. It was agreed that the noise level should have been addressed. The Festival will ensure that noise regulations are met in the future.

4. Since the Oct. 23 event (Northwestern alumni) event, the west field has not yet been cleaned up. There's still cans, posters, fast food containers, etc.

Ravinia Festival will address.

5. Concern with the litter in and around the neighborhood after larger events.

Ravinia Festival will explore placing additional signage such as “No alcohol past this point” and reminders about disposing trash appropriately, plus additional cans.

6. Appreciation for the carousel and for bringing local acts such as Larry Bird. Attempted to access the Music Box on a number of occasions with no success. Request that Ravinia Festival review the policy on access for the Music Box and open it during a concert.

Ravinia Festival noted that staffing was a challenge this past year. The Festival can access opening the Music Box, but will need to evaluate staffing appropriately.

7. Concern about using police and police dogs during certain concerts with a large minor presence.

Ravinia Festival and the City indicated that Ravinia’s security presence is based on crowd size, not the type of concert or any other factor. Cmdr. Cameron indicated that police staffing is likewise based on crowd size. The City does not adjust staffing levels based on the type of concert. The dogs are not there for crowd control; they are trained specifically for explosives. They check the park before concerts and are

available throughout the concert to review unattended bags and packages to make sure they are safe before anyone tries to open the package.

8. How are the Ravinia Houses used?

The homes are used by Ravinia Festival staff, guests and people working for Ravinia during the off season, but mostly during June through September.

9. Appreciation for the bolder on the path to prohibit people from driving on the path.

10. It would be helpful to have signage on the traffic horses at Delta Rd. saying, "No Ravinia Entrance/Drop Off" or similar language.

The City has been addressing the signage. Several adjustments will be made for 2022. Along the Lincolnwood corridor, there will be signs specifically stating "No Ravinia Access/Parking" in addition to other signs in the area.

11. Enjoyed the lower volume of people and traffic in 2021 compared to the several years prior to 2020 and hope that Ravinia Festival will seriously consider maintaining a similar level of attendance moving forward. There was notably less anxiety in the immediate neighborhood re frequency of traffic, crowds, etc..

Ravinia Festival noted that going into 2022, they don't anticipate reaching the 2018/2019 levels. There will be greater attendance than 2021, but not as intense as the past.

NEXT STEPS

Special thanks to everyone for attending the Neighborhood Meeting. Meeting notes will be posted to the City's web site and emailed to interested individuals. The next meeting will be held in spring, 2022 in advance of the Festival season. If individuals have questions or feedback anytime, please contact the City or Ravinia Festival representatives.

The meeting adjourned at 7:35 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ghida S. Neukirch
City Manager

Reviewed by Ravinia Festival staff