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CITY COUNCIL PASSES AMENDMENTS TO DECADES-OLD PARADE ORDINANCE

Amendments Clarify Process, Allows Public Assemblies to Become Parades Without Penalty

The City Council approved today an update of the decades-old parade ordinance that modernizes the permitting process and offers additional protections of First Amendment rights to public assemblies.

Under the ordinance changes, parade organizers will now be able to follow a clearly defined permitting process that allows traditional parades to apply as early as December and public assemblies to become unpermitted parades without penalty. These amendments update a parade ordinance created in the 1930s which has received minimal revisions since.

"Chicago is home to many diverse cultures and communities who celebrate their heritage with a variety of parades in different neighborhoods," said Mayor Emanuel. "Adopting this ordinance helps ensure that parades with longstanding ties to their communities continue, and at the same time, it ensures that public assemblies do not face penalties if they suddenly become parades as residents exercise their rights to free speech."

Revisions to the ordinance include:

- A provision for a waiver of fees and insurance if such requirements would prevent First Amendment activity.
- Early submission dates (December 1-15) for organizers of traditional parades, defined as those held every year for at least five consecutive years.

- Extension of the time frame for the submission and first right of refusal of all other parade permits from the first two business days of the year to the first five business days of the year.

Other updates include limiting the time in which amplified sound is allowed from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. as a courtesy to residents as well as increasing the permit application fee from \$35-\$50 to support administrative expenses. The minimum fine for violating this ordinance will rise from \$50 to \$200.

“We are responding to the need to clarify a process that has been convoluted and inefficient,” said Michelle T. Boone, Commissioner of the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events. “This is now an easy process that all parade organizers can manage so that they can continue to offer the pageantry and enjoyment that parades provide to the residents of Chicago.”

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