

August 12, 2013

Council,

After a long day in meetings to finalize our budget and deal with the recent lawsuit regarding trees along Palm Coast Parkway, I reviewed emails only to find another typical McDonald.

Most Council members received an email from McDonald about the City charging the Supervisor of Election fees to use our Community Center as a polling place. As usual, that is very misleading and not the real issue. Here is the full story.

- **History**

- It has been common to use our Community Center as a polling place on **Election Day**.
- The smaller meeting room at the Center (you turn right at the reception desk) has always been used for elections.
- We have never charged a rental fee for elections.

- **This Year**

- The Supervisor of Election has demanded that next year we allow her to use our Community Center for elections, as usual, and for **early voting**.
- Early voting is two weeks long in August and October.
- The Supervisor of Election has also demanded that she be allowed exclusive use of the **large** meeting (where Council meetings are held) for election day and **early voting**.
- Regularly scheduled meeting and events are held in the large meeting rooms each week, including city meetings, church services, recreation classes, etc.
- The regularly scheduled meeting and events, other than City events, are all paying customers at our Center.
- To meet the Supervisor of Election demands, we would have to tell our regular paying customers they would have to cancel their events for four weeks and we would not be able to accept any other reservations for our most popular space for four weeks.
- Three City Council meetings would have to be canceled or relocated where they would not be televised. Other City meetings may have to be canceled or relocated.
- Many early voting hours are outside our normal business hours and would require City staff to work extra hours during the four weeks.

- **City's Offer**

- The City Administration, through our City Clerk, initially told the Supervisor of Election that the large meeting room at the Community Center would not be available for the elections
- The Supervisor of Election then insisted that she be allowed exclusive use of the **large** meeting room for voting days and **early voting**.

- Our City Clerk asked for my assistance and I instructed her to forward the request to Luanne at our Community Center.
 - I instructed Luanne to attempt to accommodate the election schedule, including early voting, at the Community Center without displacing any existing scheduled customers or regularly scheduled meeting and events.
 - I also instructed Luanne to charge our standard rental fees to recover our after hours staffing cost.
 - Luanne sent the Supervisor of Election our standard reservation request forms and outlined the room availability and rental charges.
 - Today, 8/12, the City Clerk received an email from the Supervisor of Election indicating that Luanne's response use unacceptable and four Council member received an email from McDonald demanding that you correct the situation.
- **My offer**
 - During the next few days I will work with Luanne to confirm that the smaller meeting room at the Center is available on the election days, including early voting weeks.
 - I will also confirm with our City Attorney that State election laws will allow early voting to take place at our Community Center. (I have heard that Florida election laws restrict where early voting may be held.)
 - If the room is available and our attorney confirms that the Center is a legal early voting location, I will offer it to the Supervisor of Election.
 - If she accepts the offer I will then only charge her the hourly rate for our staff time outside our normal business hours. .

This is a very fair offer for what she is demanding. Let me know if you have any questions.