

James Ressler  
Knights of Columbus,  
Incarnate Word council 9981  
14350 Stablestone Ct.  
Chesterfield, MO 63017

August 18, 2022

Ms. Barbara McGuinness  
Chesterfield City Council Ward 1  
City of Chesterfield  
690 Chesterfield Parkway W.  
Chesterfield, MO 63017

Dear Council Member McGuinness,

This letter is to bring to your attention the impact of a resolution and decision by the City of Chesterfield that will affect many persons with developmental disabilities in the St. Louis area. I have lived in Ward one since 1997, member of Incarnate Word parish, past Grand Knight of council 9981 (2019 – '21) and chairman of the Knights of Columbus (K of C) developmental disabilities (DD) drive from 2014 – '19. I continue to serve in fundraising for several worthwhile K of C causes, The DD drive is most meaningful to me because of it helps children and their families get help and thrive while living with autism, downs syndrome, and other disabilities.

On Aug. 1, 2022, City Clerk Vickie McGownd sent an email to Donald Mueller, a member of the Incarnate Word council 9981 of the K of C. Don requested permit for Oct. 6-9, 2022 to collect donations to our Developmental Disabilities (aka "tootsie roll") drive on street corners in the city of Chesterfield, a benefit Incarnate Word's K of C council has enjoyed in Chesterfield for over 20 years. Unlike previous years, Ms. McGownd denied the request by citing city Ordinance No. 3185, which now prohibits solicitation of any kind upon a roadway. Ms. McGownd provided Don Mueller a copy of the resolution in Bill 3383, signed by Mayor Nation and dated on 21 March 2022. The first reading of Bill 3383 was held on 3/7/22, of which our council members were unaware.

By the restrictions in Ordinance 3185, Ms. McGownd was correct in denying our request. I'm writing to make you aware of the consequences of this decision by the City of Chesterfield and offer a solution that benefits all. The Knights of Columbus have an annual drive for persons with developmental disabilities on the Columbus Day weekend in October. We receive donations in the streets, at a few grocery stores, and our church parishioners. We collect on the streets of Chesterfield on Thursday afternoon, Friday and Saturday from 7:00 AM to 6 PM. Our average collection in the City of Chesterfield the past 8 years is \$16,518, from which an average of 52% are raised come from the streets of Chesterfield, with a high of 65% (\$14,200) collected on the streets in 2021. This Ordinance will also halt the yearly "Old Newsboys" collection and the Monarch fire department's "boot" collection on the streets of Chesterfield,.

We distribute **100% of funds collected** to five chartable organizations in St. Louis and Missouri (see letter of distributions in 2019, my final year as chairman). The impact of losing the privilege of collecting on the streets of Chesterfield is great and could cause these organizations to cut back their services. In the latest *Chesterfield Citizen*, it states

that this Ordinance was passed to discourage “street beggars” in Chesterfield. If that is the primary motive of the ordinance, then it should be amended to allow legitimate charitable organizations to obtain a permit to safely solicit donations on the street corners and major intersections of Chesterfield. I suggest the following changes to the Ordinance:

Require applicants for a permit to solicit in Chesterfield streets to provide the following:

- a. Letter of IRS 501c(3) status as a non-profit, tax-exempt charitable organization.
- b. Liability insurance policy covering the members of the organization and other volunteers from personal liability from accident in the service of the organization for the specific event.
- c. A list of the members of the organization participating in the charitable solicitation in Chesterfield.
- d. A report of funds collected on streets in the City of Chesterfield for the dates requested.

In addition, Chesterfield can restrict solicitation at street intersections with traffic signals which have a raised median or broad shoulder on which to stand.

Please consider making these changes to Ordinance 3185 to prevent the terrible harm caused by loss of donations to the Knights of Columbus and other charitable organizations. These amendments would show Chesterfield is led by benevolent persons who support their citizens volunteering of time and talent to help others. If any action on this matter can be taken before Oct. 1 2022, it restores K of C council 9981’s ability to contribute to the 2022 DD Drive

You are welcome to contact me by email or my phone number below.

Sincerely,

James L. Ressler

james.ressler@sbcglobal.net, 314-453-9437

Attachment:

- 1) 2019 Letter of disbursement of DD funds to charities by K of C council 9918.