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City of West Allis Matter Summary

7525 W. Greenfield Ave.
West Allis, WI 53214

File Number

Title

Status

2006-0604

Discussion Item

In Committee-Discussion Item

Chief's Police communication

Discussion regarding recommendations for fines, penalties and possible security deposits to reduce and resolve issues at the Knights of Columbus.

Introduced: 10/3/2006

Controlling Body: License & Health Committee

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

POF

	MOVER	SECONDER		AYE	NO	PRESENT	EXCUSED
ACTION DATE:	_____	_____	Barczak				
<i>4-17-07</i>	_____	✓	Czaplewski	X			
	_____	_____	Dobrowski	X			
	_____	_____	Kopplin	X			
	_____	_____	Lajsic				
	_____	_____	Narlock	X		✗	
	✓	_____	Reinke				
	_____	_____	Sengstock	X			
	_____	_____	Vitale				
	_____	_____	Weigel				
			TOTAL	<i>55</i>		<i>0</i>	

SIGNATURE OF COMMITTEE MEMBER

Krist Kopplin _____
 Chair Vice-Chair Member

COMMON COUNCIL ACTION **PLACE ON FILE**

	MOVER	SECONDER		AYE	NO	PRESENT	EXCUSED
ACTION DATE:	_____	_____	Barczak				✓
<i>APR 17 2007</i>	_____	_____	Czaplewski	✓			
	✓	_____	Dobrowski	✓			
	_____	_____	Kopplin	✓			
	_____	_____	Lajsic	✓			
	_____	_____	Narlock	✓		✗	
	_____	✓	Reinke	✓			
	_____	_____	Sengstock	✓			
	_____	_____	Vitale	✓	✗		
	_____	_____	Weigel	✓	✗		
			TOTAL	<i>6</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>1</i>



CITY OF WEST ALLIS

WISCONSIN



DEPARTMENT OF POLICE

*Dean Puschnig
Chief of Police*

August 4, 2006

Members of the License and Health Committee
West Allis, WI 53214

RE: Problems with Knights of Columbus

Dear Members of the Committee:

On June 30th, at 11:38 pm two people were shot at the Knights of Columbus Hall located at 1800 S. 92nd. Because of the large crowd, and numerous problems in the building, parking lot and surrounding neighborhoods it was necessary to have all officers on duty respond to this incident. This included 10 officers from the late night shift, and 6 officers who were working overtime from the early night shift. In addition, we were forced to call other agencies (West Milwaukee Police Department and the Milwaukee County Sheriff's Department) for mutual aid. A total of 24 officers responded and they still had trouble controlling the unruly crowd.

Initially, I was told that the hall was rented for a birthday party. Patrons who rented the hall then charged a \$10.00 per person cover charge at the door and used a metal detector to scan people as they entered the building. This type of activity should have been an indication to employees of the Knights of Columbus of potential problems, but no one alerted our Department.

There were hundreds of people (estimate of at least 300) at this event and because of the over crowding inside the building some people were forced to wait outside for other people to leave before they could even enter the building. Because of recent problems with events of this type at Knights of Columbus including: aggravated assaults, illegal drug use, disorderly conduct, large crowds loitering, noise complaints and a complaint of shots fired on June 17th, an officer was assigned to watch for potential problems.

The shooting occurred shortly after the officer arrived. Officers had trouble entering the building because of the large crowd and the chaos that followed the shooting. Several people were fighting in the hall and officers had a difficult time even locating the victims. This was a very dangerous situation, as our officers had no idea who fired the shots or where the weapon or weapons were located.

While officers were attempting to secure the crime scene, other officers were calling for help in the parking lot for several people fighting. As one fight was broken up, other fights began in different locations. Due to the volatility of the situation, the last thing we wanted to do was to make any arrests. In situations where the police are drastically outnumbered there is a concern that the mob mentality will take over resulting in additional problems. Eventually we were forced to arrest several people for disorderly conduct.



11301 WEST LINCOLN AVENUE WEST ALLIS, WISCONSIN 53227
PHONE (414)302-8000 ■ FAX (414)302-8099 ■ TTY (414)302-8000 (HIT SPACE BAR)
<http://www.ci.west-allis.wi.us>



Members of the License and Health Committee
RE: Problems with Knights of Columbus

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Several officers described this situation as a small riot. Very few people if any in this large crowd were following officer's orders. People simply disregarded police orders by refusing to leave the area. Some people even pushed officers, while others confronted officers and attempted to re-enter the building.

As the building and parking lot area were finally cleared, the patrons who attended this "birthday party" held their own private parties on the streets and in residential neighborhoods in the area of the Knights of Columbus. They deliberately blocked traffic in the surrounding areas and refused to move. The station received numerous calls from residents reporting many different problems. The residents were very concerned that these types of problems have become a regular occurrence at Knights of Columbus events. It should also be noted that when officers were in the neighborhoods attempting to eliminate problems, several residents approached them and voiced the same concerns.

Some partygoers refused to leave and started to continually cruise the surrounding area with their stereos blaring. We eventually moved groups of people off of the Knights of Columbus lot to find some of these same people parking their cars (in the middle of the street) and dancing in the street or on their cars near 91st and Orchard. After being forced to leave this area they went to the Jewel Osco parking lot on 92nd and Greenfield, where we once again forced them to leave. They then started to cruise Greenfield Ave. and 92nd Street. Even though we had most of our staff in the area, it took over an hour to encourage everyone to leave the area. Because of these problems, we were forced to place a number of calls for police service on hold while our officers took care of these problems in the area of the Knights of Columbus.

Due to conflicting stories, a lack of credible witnesses and a number of other reasons, I don't believe we will be able to make an arrest in the shooting incident. The report is over 50 typed pages and our investigators have spent numerous hours tracking down witnesses. A number of officers received overtime and I estimate this incident cost the city approximately \$4,000 in police manpower.

This situation was a serious concern not only for the safety of everyone in area of the Knights of Columbus, but also for our police officers. It should be noted that we have experienced other similar problems with patrons who have rented the hall at Knights of Columbus. This year, we have experienced problems at events held on April 8th, May 27th, June 17th and most recently, this incident on June 30th. As you may recall a few years ago, a resident who lives across the street was shot.

On July 10th, because of problems over the last few months and the seriousness of this shooting incident, we met with representatives of Knight of Columbus to discuss this issue. They also were very concerned and looking for assistance in helping to resolve these types of problems.

Members of the License and Health Committee
RE: Problems with Knights of Columbus

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At the meeting we exchanged information and I provided some recommendations to help reduce problems. I also informed them I would be sending a letter to the License and Health Committee.

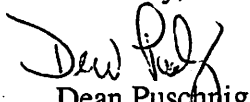
In my opinion the following recommendations would help eliminate future problems.

1. Limit hall capacity to 150 people
2. Hire a security company to monitor each event (patrons can't hire their own security)
 - Security guards should be stationed at all doors (including fire exists in main hall)
 - 2 security guards in the parking lot area
 - Security Guard at entrance to main bar checking identification and not letting anyone leave main bar with a drink
3. Restrict drinking to the main bar area.
4. No patrons will be permitted to charge a cover charge for their event.
5. Security deposit of \$3,000 for each event. If there is no problem the money will be returned. If police are called to the scene, the bill for services will be paid from this deposit.

Note: The deposit check should be a certified check or money order. It must be cashed at least two weeks prior to the event to ensure the check is valid.

The intent of this letter is to make you aware of these problems and to work cooperatively in an attempt to resolve these issues prior to someone being seriously hurt or killed at the Knights of Columbus. Should you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,


Dean Puschnig
Chief of Police

cc Police and Fire Commission
Mayor Bell and Common Council
Mr. Gerald Falk, Knights of Columbus