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Press Release

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Middletown, CT---Mayor Sebastian N. Giuliano weighed in today on the continuing Common Council debate regarding the waiver of user fees for the city owned showmobile. As far as anyone can remember, the City Council waived user fees for virtually all organizations which requested showmobile use.

Giuliano, who as Mayor, presides over City Council meetings, emphasized the same point he made during this past Monday's meeting, by stating, "When considering a fee waiver we have to first ask, what is the benefit to the community as a whole? Truth be told, the Council has historically taken these fee waiver requests in isolation and has not really considered the bigger picture. The ordinance [§188-3(C.)] provides the guidance we should be following when considering a waiver request. It gives the Council 'sole discretion' and then first requires that the waiver may be granted if 'it will help to promote an event which has been recognized by the Common Council as being beneficial to the entire community.' If so, the Council must then consider 'such factors as the cultural, educational, artistic, humanistic, charitable, scientific, literary, historic and other benefits to the community of the event.' I cannot recall an instance where the Council has gone through this analysis when considering a request for a waiver."

He added, "For-profit and non-profit organizations that use the showmobile can equally testify that it is a useful tool in reaching our community, providing entertainment and bringing our community together. But the years of use have taken their toll; the

showmobile is beginning to show signs of its age. Its maintenance and upkeep should fall equitably on the direct beneficiaries as well as on the taxpayers.”

The City Council, for its part, is also requesting a change to the fee waiver application process and form. The council and Giuliano agree that it should be more detail driven, affording the Council more information to support its waiver decisions. “I think a new waiver form is needed that provides more information, like the true cost to the city of the event, and the time frame of the event. All events are not created equal. There is a difference between an event that might take place on a weekday, during the City’s regular hours, and one that will take place over an entire weekend. The costs associated with the latter are much higher. This is information the Council should have in order to make an informed decision; it also provides transparency to the public in that the costs associated with supplying the showmobile for a given event will be brought forth and given due consideration.” said Giuliano.

The fee waivers will continue to be placed on the Common Council for review