

From: Council
Sent: Wednesday, November 25, 2009 1:40 PM
To: eric@edickman.com; Council
Cc: Joan McGilton
Subject: RE: Use of the City's Television and Radio to Promote Arts Events

Dear Mr. Dickman:

I have been asked to respond to your email correspondence of November 19, 2009. Your email and this reply will be included in the Correspondence for the Record for the next City Council meeting.

While your desire to publicize the Burien Little Theater is understandable, a staff committee responsible for the City's external communications has concluded that if a City radio, TV or website promotional opportunity is provided to one entity it must be provided to all who ask, whether or not it is an organization that the City might wish to support or promote. Therefore the staff committee has determined that the City should exercise caution and not provide such an opportunity to any outside organizations.

Thank you-

Lisa Clausen
Burien City Manager's Office

-----Original Message-----

From: Eric Dickman [mailto:eric@edickman.com]
Sent: Thursday, November 19, 2009 6:29 PM
To: Council
Cc: Joan McGilton
Subject: Re: Use of the City's Television and Radio to Promote Arts Events

Dear Council,

As you know the City of Burien operates a radio station and a cable television station. Burien Little Theatre has wanted to promote its performances through these outlets, but has been told that the City does not want this.

Before the beginning of Burien Little Theatre's 29th season, BLT contacted Dean Tatham about promoting BLT's productions, including its free play readings on the City's radio station. BLT offered to record the message (BLT has people with voice-over experience). Of course, the message quality and content would have to be approved before it could be broadcast. At that time, BLT was told that because the radio station was, in the most part, for emergency messages, the City did not want non-City events promoted on the City's radio station.

Since that time, Burien Little Theatre has been working with a professional videographer to produce a short 1 to 2 minute promotional video for each of BLT's productions. The upcoming "Christmas with the Crawfords" (opening November 27 and running through December 20 / <http://www.burienlittletheatre.com/page2.html>) is the first show where this has worked out. BLT will have its promotional video ready during the first week of December.

Burien Little Theatre contacted Mr. Tatham about airing this short video on the City's cable television station. BLT had heard that the City's cable television station was often looking for content. While confirming that the City's cable television station is looking for content

CFTR: 12/7/09

BLT was told the City rejected the idea of showing a Burien Little Theatre's promotional video on the City's cable television station.

BLT does not know why BLT's request was denied. However, because the City operates this cable television station and the station appears to be looking for content, BLT would like to see if the Council would look at this decision.

As the Council knows, there are a number of non-profit arts organizations in Burien. They are always looking for a way to get the word out about their programming. Many local merchants have postcards and posters up about events. In Burien Little Theatre's case, this is true. It is also true that Burien Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs will sometimes put BLT posters in the kiosks in and around downtown.

However, a very powerful marketing tool is going unused. It seems very logical that the City would want to promote cultural events being produced by local non-profit organizations. The City could support its local non-profits at no or next to no cost if the City allowed the broadcast of information about these events on either the City's radio station or cable television station.

Once again, the City should have the right to review material and make sure the quality of the promotional material is of high enough quality to justify broadcast, and it is understandable to limit broadcast to local non-profit arts organizations that are holding events open to the general public. However, a blanket refusal to use the City's mass media outlets to support local non-profit arts organizations seems counterproductive and not in the spirit of support for the arts.

As the Council has seen, whenever possible, I come before the Council ahead of BLT's productions to tell the Council what BLT is up to. I have seen the ticket sales and number of hits to BLT's website (<http://www.burienlittletheatre.com>) rise after I appear before the council. I can only guess at the positive impact of playing a short clip of Burien Little Theatre's productions would have on spreading the word about these productions. Broadcast of the promotional video on the City's cabled television station would also allow those who have not yet made it to one of BLT's productions to get a sense of the high quality of those productions.

I request that the Council consider allowing local non-profit organizations to have access to the City's radio station and or cable television station to promote local events open to the general public, provided the local non-profit produces the material to be broadcast and those promotional materials are of a high enough quality to justify broadcast.

Thank you.

Eric Dickman
Artistic Director for Burien Little Theatre