



Legislation Text

File #: 1505-2015, Version: 1

This legislation will assist Stonewall Columbus in their effort to install 150 “Pride” banners along streets in the central downtown business district in 2015.

More than 117,000 commuters drive through downtown Columbus every day and more than 44.3 million visitors come to Columbus on an annual basis. The “Downtown Banner Program” allows local organizations to promote annual events via banners hung throughout the city which bring attention to these organizations in a highly visible manner.

In the late 90’s, Stonewall Columbus participated in this program, with fifteen bold, bright banners lining the streets of Columbus, promoting and celebrating Columbus’ annual Pride Festival and Parade during the month of June. In 2011, Stonewall Columbus raised private donations to cover the costs for creating and hanging fifteen new banners, allowing thirty total Pride banners to be purchased and installed along High Street in the downtown area. In 2012, this number was doubled, and in 2013 increased again to 100 banners. In 2014 a record 125 banners were installed.

Stonewall Columbus has a goal to install 150 banners in 2015, and a long-term goal to expand the program throughout the downtown, and to raise sufficient sources to replace older, distressed flags and sustain the program from year to year. The fundraising goal for 2015 is \$25,000 which would install banners throughout the entire Short North, with a long-term multiyear budget estimated at approximately \$170,000.00 over five years for banners throughout the downtown.

The investment proposed by Council President Ginther would provide significant support toward the 2015 funding goal, and allow Stonewall to leverage private resources to achieve the short- and long-term goal of installing Pride banners throughout the downtown.

This particular banner program is unique in that it does not promote a single one-time event, or even an individual neighborhood, but a commitment to diversity and promoting Columbus as open and welcoming community where LGBTQ residents are a vital component in making our city dynamic, productive and authentic.

Funding for this request is sought now to coincide with the culmination of the 2015 Pride Festival and Parade June 19-21, 2015. Organizers expect 300,000 to 400,000 people will be in Columbus for the weekend festivities. It is the second largest in the Midwest (after Chicago) and one of the top five in the country generating millions in direct and indirect spending. Experience Columbus and the Greater Columbus Sports Commission use the increased awareness of the city that results from the Pride celebration and city’s growing gay-friendly reputation to reach out to LGBT tourists and events.

Emergency designation is requested so that funding can be in place ahead of the 2015 Pride Festival.

To authorize and direct City Council to enter into a grant agreement with Stonewall Columbus for installation of banners in downtown Columbus for the promotion of the 2015 Pride Festival and Parade; to authorize the appropriation and expenditure of \$10,000.00 from the Jobs Growth Fund; and to declare an emergency. (\$10,000.00)

WHEREAS, More than 117,000 commuters drive through downtown Columbus every day and more than 44.3 million visitors come to Columbus on an annual basis. The “Downtown Banner Program” allows local organizations to promote

annual events via banners hung throughout the city which bring attention to these organizations in a highly visible manner and;

WHEREAS, In the late 90's, Stonewall Columbus participated in this program, with fifteen bold, bright banners lining the streets of Columbus, promoting and celebrating Columbus' annual Pride Festival and Parade during the month of June. In 2011, Stonewall Columbus raised private donations to cover the costs for creating and hanging fifteen new banners, allowing thirty total Pride banners to be purchased and installed along High Street in the downtown area. In 2012, this number was doubled, and in 2013 increased again to 100 banners. In 2014 a record 125 banners were installed and;

WHEREAS, Stonewall Columbus has a goal to install 150 banners in 2015, and a long-term goal to expand the program throughout the downtown, and to raise sufficient sources to replace older, distressed flags and sustain the program from year to year and;

WHEREAS, The investment proposed by Council President Ginther would provide significant support toward the 2015 funding goal, and allow Stonewall to leverage private resources to achieve the short- and long-term goal of installing Pride banners throughout the downtown and;

WHEREAS, City Council amended the 2015 budget to further emphasize the importance of making strategic investments in projects that will ultimately improve the quality of life within the City, and Council deems this project an appropriate use of \$10,000.00; and

WHEREAS, an emergency exists in the usual daily operation of the City in that it is immediately necessary to authorize a grant agreement with Stonewall Columbus so that funding can be in place in time for the 2015 Pride Festival and for the preservation of the public health, peace, property, safety and welfare; now therefore,

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS:

SECTION 1. That the City Auditor be and is hereby authorized and directed to appropriate \$10,000.00 in the Jobs Growth Fund, Fund 015, to City Council Department No. 20-01, Object Level One 03, Object Level Three 3337, OCA Code 200115.

SECTION 2. That City Council is hereby authorized to enter into a grant agreement with Stonewall Columbus in the amount of \$10,000 and to expend said funds appropriated in Section 1 for the installation of banners in downtown Columbus for the promotion of the 2015 Pride Festival and Parade.

SECTION 3. That for the reason stated in the preamble here to, which is hereby made a part hereof, this ordinance is hereby declared to be an emergency measure and shall take effect and be in force from and after its passage and approval by the Mayor, or ten days after passage if the Mayor neither approves nor vetoes the same.

