



TO: T.C. Broadnax, City Manager
FROM: Kim Bedier, Director, Public Assembly Facilities
COPY: City Council and City Clerk
SUBJECT: Resolution Requiring Background Checks Be Performed for All Firearm Purchases at Gun Shows at Facilities Owned, Managed, and/or Operated in the City's Proprietary Capacity – May 6, 2014
DATE: May 1, 2014

SUMMARY:

Resolution to direct the City Manager to put all necessary and appropriate procedures in place to ensure that any and all contracts, use permits or other agreements relating to use of facilities owned, managed and/or operated by the City of Tacoma in the City's proprietary capacity, include a requirement for successful completion of a background check prior to any firearm sale, purchase or transfer, including where the seller is not a federally licensed firearm dealer.

COUNCIL SPONSORS:

Mayor Strickland, Deputy Mayor Woodards, and Council Member Mello

STRATEGIC POLICY PRIORITY:

Requiring all (licensed and private) firearm sellers to have every purchaser successfully clear a background check at gun shows or other events involving the sale, purchase or transfer of firearms at facilities owned, managed or operated by the City in the City's proprietary capacity would best align with the Council's Strategic Policy Priorities of:

- Strengthen and support public safety, human services, public education, and diverse higher learning opportunities in Tacoma.

BACKGROUND:

Public Assembly Facilities booked the Wes Knodel Gun Show into the Tacoma Dome for the weekend of April 26, 2014. When Mr. Knodel initially inquired about booking the space in November of 2013, staff asked the Police and Legal departments whether there were any restrictions against gun shows and were informed there were none. Staff performed due diligence with other venues experienced in hosting Mr. Knodel's shows in Oregon and Washington State and confirmed that he was a legitimate and well-respected event promoter. A license agreement was negotiated and executed by all parties.

Local and regional media reported on the gun show booking, and inquired whether background checks would be required for all purchases at the show. Washington State law does not require background checks for private gun sales. For gun shows promoted in Washington State, Mr. Knodel captures purchaser information from private sellers but does not require private sellers to have background checks performed on their customers, per federal and state law. The majority of vendors in the Tacoma Dome show were federally licensed sellers who were required to and did perform background checks on gun purchasers.

The show had over 6200 in attendance for the two day show. Police officers posted on site for the duration reported no incidents. Net revenue from the show to the Tacoma Dome was \$45,000 which included a discounted inaugural rent. Economic impact of the show to the City was \$1.1 million, as determined by the Tacoma Regional Convention & Visitors Bureau. The show promoter has asked to book shows in November 2014 and February, April, September and December of 2015, for which



anticipated net proceeds to the Tacoma Dome would be \$55,000 per show (incorporating an increased rent) for a total of \$275,000.

ISSUE:

The Tacoma Dome has been asked to hold dates and proceed to contract for additional gun show events promoted by Wes Knodel Gun Shows. Although Washington State law does not require background checks for private gun sales at gun shows, should the City require background checks for all purchases, Mr. Knodel is willing and prepared to do so.

ALTERNATIVES:

The alternatives are:

- 1) to proceed with contracting the gun shows under the existing license agreement terms which do not require background checks for private sellers;
- 2) to proceed with contracting the gun shows but include language in the license agreement requiring that background checks be performed for all gun sales transactions;
- 3) to not proceed with booking gun shows, which would be a loss of revenue for the Tacoma Dome.

RECOMMENDATION:

Mayor Strickland, Deputy Mayor Woodards, and Council Member Mello are requesting that the gun shows be booked, with the requirement that the contract for the gun shows would include language in the license agreement requiring that background checks be performed for all gun sale transactions.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is a potential net revenue to the Tacoma Dome through the end of 2015 for five gun shows estimated at \$275,000.