



July 17, 2024

Mayor Bhalla's Veto Statement on Ordinance B-684

Members of the Hoboken City Council,

After careful consideration, I am vetoing Ordinance B-684. While I acknowledge and appreciate the good intentions behind this ordinance, it is deeply flawed and ultimately not in the best interest of our community.

Firstly, although the ordinance aims to absolve non-profit organizations of paying fees related to renting space in the City of Hoboken, it merely transfers this financial burden to the Hoboken taxpayer. The costs associated with sanitation, maintenance, and other fees will still need to be covered, and under this ordinance, those costs would fall squarely on the shoulders of our residents instead of the organizations utilizing the space.

Additionally, I am concerned about an adverse consequence of benefiting institutions that have a tax status as a “not-for-profit” organization, when many are, in fact, very well financed and/or or multi-million dollar corporations that may not require discounts that not-for-profit charities, such as our homeless shelter or food pantry, may benefit from. For example, both Stevens Institute of Technology and Hoboken University Medical Center are examples of non-profit, multi-million dollar institutions that are valued members of our community, but I believe should certainly not be subsidized by the Hoboken taxpayers if they hold events within our public spaces. I am concerned about this ordinance, by conflating all non-profits as “charities”, may be interpreted as covering occurrences that are not intended by ordinance.

Moreover, the City Council has yet to adopt a budget for this calendar year. One of the primary discussion points in budget deliberations has been the need to generate new and additional revenue streams. This ordinance is fundamentally opposed to those goals. To be clear, my intention is not for the City to profit from events held by local, deserving non-profits; but I also believe that the city should not incur losses from these events at a time when we are focused on innovative ways to generate revenue.

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I agree with the intentions of the ordinance, and agree that changes should be considered. But the type of entity the Council is attempting to provide relief to must be more narrowly defined in the language of the ordinance. As explained above, the term "not-for-profit" is overly broad and may create unintended consequences. I am very open to further discussion and signing an ordinance which is worded in a manner to address these concerns.

As always, my door and my staff's doors remain open for further discussions. I am committed to finding ways to support our non-profits without unfairly passing the financial burden onto the Hoboken taxpayer. I look forward to collaborating with you all to achieve this balance.