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CITY COUNCIL APPROVES ORDINANCE DOUBLING FINES AND ADDING JAIL TIME FOR FAILING TO APPEAR AT HEARINGS

Gambling, Drinking and Public Urination/Defecation Fines Double and Violators Face Six Months in Jail for Failure to Appear

City Council today approved an ordinance that doubles the maximum fines for drinking, gambling, and urinating or defecating on the public way and violators who fail to appear the Department of Administrative Hearings would face up to six months in jail.

“These are not victimless crimes, as they have a negative impact on communities and the quality of life for our children, families and all residents,” said Mayor Emanuel. “Increasing the fines and adding the threat of jail time is an indication of the seriousness of these crimes.”

Previously, the maximum fine for drinking, urinating, or defecating on the public way was \$500 and the maximum fine for gambling was \$200. Under the new ordinance, maximum fines doubled and violators could face incarceration for a length of time up to 6 months if they fail to appear to answer the charges against them.

“When individuals engage in behavior without any regard for the community or the laws they are breaking, there is potential that they will become involved in other, more serious crimes,” said Superintendent Garry F. McCarthy. “This amendment sends a message that crime – no matter how big or how small – will not be tolerated in our communities.”

Last year, an ordinance was passed permitting an individual issued an Administrative Notice of Violation (ANOV) for possession of cannabis to face up to twice the maximum fine

of the original offense or incarceration for a period of up to 6 months if there was a failure to appear or pay the fine. These proposed changes mimic that approach, but also increase the penalties for the offenses.

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