

WMEG
Wilton Manors Entertainment Group Inc.
2435 North Dixie Highway, Wilton Manors, FL 33305

**Community Leaders and Residents Meet to Discuss
2016 Wilton Manors Stonewall Parade and Street Festival**

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Contact: Cliff Dunn, Vice President for Development
 Wilton Manors Entertainment Group, Inc. (WMEG)

WILTON MANORS, FL — A lively gathering of residents, business owners, officials, and other stakeholders met on Tuesday, February 16, 2016 at Hagen Park Community Center, to express their opinions, concerns, and support for the 2016 Wilton Manors Stonewall Parade & Street Festival, which will take place on Saturday, June 18, 2016, on and around Wilton Drive.

It was the third meeting for public comment and community input for the city's heritage event, which enters its 18th year commemorating LGBT pride, and particularly the historic 1969 New York City Stonewall Protest, which historians mark as the beginning of the modern Gay Rights Movement.

Attendees were invited by Wilton Manors Entertainment Group, Inc. ("WMEG"), which oversaw the 2015 festival, in partnership with the City of Wilton Manors. City Manager Leigh Ann Henderson and WMEG executive director Jeffrey Sterling conducted the public meeting and moderated the discussion.

The agenda items included start times for the festival proper and its highlight event, the Wilton Manors Stonewall Parade, opportunities for sponsoring entertainment and the festival's five stages, and Official Stonewall Celebration activities, which will take place across the region during the weeks preceding the festival; these will include the Matthew Shepard musical drama "Not in My Town," on June 17, at Sunshine Cathedral, and educational and cultural programs to be hosted at the Stonewall National Museum and Archives.

A new addition to the 2016 Wilton Manors Stonewall Festival is the Stonewall Village, an interactive area at Hagen Park, which will highlight LGBT cultural and historic achievements, offer a family area with activities and refreshments, and enhance the daytime schedule for festivalgoers.

"The level of enthusiasm and the passion of these individuals and community leaders is exciting," offered WMEG executive director Jeffrey Sterling.

"It means that the public cares about making this a successful and meaningful event, from top to bottom."

Sterling said that they planning for the 2016 festival was proceeding at a smooth and organized pace. He also noted that IDK Event Productions, which produces several major LGBT events across the country,

including San Francisco Pride and Oakland (California) Pride, has been secured to assist with festival operations and vendor coordination.

Patrick Volkert and Mark Hunter, the owners of Hunters Nightclub in the Shoppes of Wilton Manors, were among several bar owners and restaurateurs who attended to listen, and to offer their opinions and perspective.

“It’s very important for this community,” said Volkert. “The business owners and the public need to work together to help make this a success for everyone.”