\*\*\*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE\*\*\*

(July 9, 2021) – The City of Howell has recently been made aware of concerns regarding an event to be held in conjunction with the Howell Melon Festival. We have provided the following press release in response to those questions:

The City of Howell, as a charter mandated nonpartisan entity, consistently embraces diversity in all forms. The City has a robust anti-discrimination policy that values the rights and equality of all people. Specifically included in this policy is our support of the fair and equal treatment for the gay and transgender community.

The decision to program a “Drag Queen Bingo” event at a traditionally family-friendly festival celebrating the harvesting of Howell’s unique melon was a decision made by the Howell Area Parks and Recreation Authority (HAPRA). Typically, event programming details are included in civic event applications to allow city staff to estimate staffing and cost requirements.

In this instance, the civic event application submitted by HAPRA did not include this event when approved by the Howell City Council, nor was it discussed during a single event review meeting with city staff. The event programmed by HAPRA does not violate our civic event policy. Any questions or concerns should be directed to the HAPRA staff and/or governance board.