



BAN ON GANGS AT FESTIVAL SOUGHT - CITY WANTS COURT ORDERS BARRING 18 FROM RONDO DAYS

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Author: Maricella Miranda ; mmiranda@pioneerpress.com

The city of St. Paul has moved in court to keep alleged gang members from hanging out in the Rondo neighborhood during its annual Rondo Days Festival and Parade later this month.

The city sought temporary injunctions in Ramsey County District Court against nine reputed members of the East Side Boys and nine reputed members of the Selby Siders. Officials want a judge to restrict the 18 from using gang signs, wearing gang clothing and threatening or intimidating other gang members.

The injunctions would run from 9 a.m. July 18 to 6 a.m. July 19 for a specified "safety zone" bounded by University, Hamline and Summit avenues and Rice Street.

District Judge Michael Monahan will hear the cases July 15.

Nathaniel Khaliq, in charge of security at Rondo Days the past few years, said the event hasn't seen any recent gang violence or police complaints about gang altercations.

"We as a community have been able to police ourselves," Khaliq said.

St. Paul City Attorney John Choi agreed that gang violence has not occurred at Rondo Days in recent years.

But he said escalating violence the past six months -- including a gang-related homicide and shootings -- allegedly between East Side Boys and Selby Siders led the city to pursue the injunctions.

"We're just trying to be very proactive and get in front of any potential problems," Choi said. "Given what has been happening recently between these two gangs, there is certainly cause for concern."

The lawsuits filed late Tuesday are the city's second bid to use a 2007 state law that lets cities ask a judge to declare a gang a public nuisance in order to restrict members' movements and activities.

The city obtained a temporary injunction this spring to keep reputed Sureno 13 gang members from the Cinco de Mayo festival.

St. Paul police later said there were no apparent violations of the injunction at the festival. Also, none of the seven adults and three juveniles subject to the injunction was arrested, Sgt. Kevin Moore said after the event.

Khaliq, president of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People's St. Paul branch, said people in the Rondo community are uncomfortable with the city using court orders against alleged gang members.

"It's only been used for events of color," Khaliq said.

The Rondo Days Festival and Parade, to be held July 18, draws thousands who gather to remember the old Rondo Avenue neighborhood, once the center of St. Paul's African-American community, which was

demolished in the 1960s to make way for Interstate 94.

Choi said the city plans to consider using similar injunctions at high school sporting events where there has been gang violence. Whether the city will do so depends on its budget and evidence presented by police.

City Council Member Melvin Carter III, who represents the Rondo neighborhood, said the community does not oppose preventing gang violence. But it is concerned how police will enforce any injunction.

"It's an important tool to ensure the safety of this year's event," Carter said. "It's incumbent on our officers to enforce any ruling that we get in a way that is honorable and responsible. I'm confident they can do that."

In the petition seeking an injunction against the East Side Boys, at least two of the alleged gang members named were present during gang-related incidents in the past year, according to criminal complaints in Ramsey County District Court.

Charles E. Perry, 19, was shot at during an October 2008 gang-related shooting in which a 14-year-old bystander was wounded in the leg, a complaint stated. Perry told police he is a member of the East Side Boys.

In June, Diandre Martez Jenkins, 18, whom police identified as a member of the East Side Boys, was a passenger in a car during a fatal gang-related shooting, a complaint stated. The victim was Dionte R. Montantes, 18.

The alleged shooter, Marquez "Queezy" Storey, 18, of Vadnais Heights, faces a second-degree murder charge. As of Wednesday, police were searching for Storey, who has a warrant for his arrest.

"These civil injunctions have proven to be worthwhile tools, as they specifically focus on those gangs who have repeatedly demonstrated purpose and action that tears at the safety and fabric of the community events like Rondo," Police Chief John Harrington said in a statement Wednesday. "In addition to the benefits of enforceability, these injunctions speak to St. Paul's historical standards of community safety."

Staff writer Mara H. Gottfried contributed to this report.

Maricella Miranda can be reached at 651-228-5421.

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