



COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Commission Meeting Date: April 26, 2006

Staff Report #: 06-

Agenda Item #: F-9

REGULAR BUSINESS: Request from Staff for Direction on Possible Future Special Events

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that any addition of future special events begin with the inclusion of a "Heritage Celebration" type of event and that future events added to the City-sponsored Community Services event schedule avoid any religious connections.

BACKGROUND

On December 7, 2005, City Council received a letter from a resident criticizing the use of public resources to support religious events such as Breakfast with Santa in December or the Egg Hunt in April.

In response to that letter, at the meeting on February 28, 2006, City Council directed the Parks & Recreation Commission to provide input to staff on the list of Special Events and the possible inclusion of additional activities to the Community Services Special Events calendar.

The current Community Services Special Events calendar includes:

- Citywide Black History Program in February at Onetta Harris Community Center
- Belle Haven Community Fun Fair in April at Onetta Harris Community Center
- Citywide Egg Hunt in April at Burgess Park
- Citywide Kite Day in May at Bayfront Park
- Belle Haven Community Talent Show in June at Onetta Harris Community Center
- Citywide 4th of July Celebration at Burgess Park

- Citywide Summer (eight week) Concert Series in July and August at Fremont Park
- Community Halloween Haunted House in October at Onetta Harris Community Center
- Citywide Halloween Carnival and Parade in October at Burgess Park
- Community Christmas Party in December at Onetta Harris Community Center
- Citywide Holiday Pancake Breakfast in December at Burgess Recreation Center

In light of the current budget situation, it is doubtful that any special events will be added to the City schedule in the near future. It would, however, be helpful to develop a policy and have a list of possible events and activities to add if resources allow the creation of more offerings.

ANALYSIS

There is currently no budget or staffing allocated solely to add additional Special Events to the Community Services schedule. Staff considers the allocation of additional resources to Special Events Programs unlikely for the near future. No further events would be added unless Council provides direction to increase Special Event programming.

Staff requests the Commission provide direction on possible events in the event additional resources are made available. Suggested topics for consideration include:

- “Heritage Festival” to bring attention and appreciation to the diverse cultural heritage in Menlo Park.
- “Fitness Fair” to bring attention to and address the current obesity epidemic and provide health and wellness opportunities to the community.
- “Music Festival” or “Battle of the Bands” to provide local musicians and artists a forum to perform their art.
- “Talent Program” to showcase local talent and offer a venue to demonstrate entertainment skills.

IMPACT ON CITY RESOURCES

The recommendation does not represent any impact on City resources.

POLICY ISSUES

The recommendation does not represent any change to existing City policy.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The recommendation is not subject to environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

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Community Services Department

PUBLIC NOTICE: Public Notification was achieved by posting the agenda, with this agenda item being listed, at least 72 hours prior to the meeting.