



City of Alameda

Staff Report

File Number:2022-1530

City Council

Agenda Date: 6/7/2022

File Type: Council Referral

Agenda Number: 10-B

Consider Having the City Council Review Recreation and Parks Department Community Events. (Councilmember Herrera Spencer) [Not heard on December 7, 21, 2021, January 4, 18, February 1, 15, March 1, 15, or April 5, 19, May 3 or 17, 2022]

COUNCIL REFERRAL FORM

The Council can take any of the following actions:

- 1) Take no action.
- 2) Refer the matter to staff to schedule as a future City Council agenda item. Concurrence that staff time will be devoted to the item does not signify approval.
- 3) Take dispositive action only on time sensitive legislative matters if sufficiently noticed such that the public and Council have been provided sufficient information by the published agenda, and no formal published notice of a public hearing is required.

Name of Councilmember(s) requesting referral: Councilmember Herrera Spencer

Date of submission to City Clerk (must be submitted before 5:00 p.m. on the Monday two weeks before the Council meeting requested): November 22, 2021

Council Meeting date: December 7, 2021

Brief description of the subject to be printed on the agenda, sufficient to inform the City Council and public of the nature of the referral:

At the July 20, 2021 City Council meeting, Consent Calendar Agenda Item 5-E, no members of Council pulled the item, there were no public speakers, and it was unanimously approved by Council. The item, entitled "Recommendation to Approve an Updated Slate of Recreation and Parks Department Community Events," including an attachment "A" entitled, "Reimagined ARPD Community Events," and provided in pertinent part:

"The following is a description of the Primary Events being proposed....

New/Reimagined Primary Events

The new Spring Earth Festival event is a combination of the Earth Day Festival and Spring Egg Scramble events. The Egg Scramble, while well-attended, is logistically problematic and is focused

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on a Christian holiday; therefore, it is not inclusive of our residents of many faiths and religions. The Spring Earth Festival is envisioned to include community organizations, educational, and interactive activities about Earth Day and climate change, music and possibly a skate or bike fest plus family friendly competitions such as 3-legged races.

The Water Festival Regatta is a completely new event that celebrates Alameda as a community next to and surrounded by water. This would be an opportunity for people to get out on the water and try new sports and activities at the newly improved Encinal Boat Launch Facility. ARPD will collaborate with local paddling and boating organizations to create opportunities for residents to get in a sailboat, outrigger canoe, dragon boat, or paddle board and to try fishing for the first time or possibly participate in a fishing derby. This event could also include demonstrations by the U.S. Coast Guard as well as landside activities with Alameda's maritime companies.

The Storytelling and Drumming Festival is an incredible opportunity to host storytellers, drummers and puppeteers from many diverse cultures and communities. Examples could include Indigenous, Black, Hispanic/Latinx, Asian American Pacific Islander, LGBT and Jewish storytellers as well as African and Japanese drumming. It is envisioned to be an indoor event at Mastick Senior Center with headliner storytellers in the main hall and workshops in smaller rooms where people can learn how to tell their own stories, create puppets, hear local storytellers, learn how to drum and more.

The Mayor's Tree Lighting Ceremony is the most expensive community event, costing over \$10,000 and utilizing a significant amount of staff resources while only attracting 300 - 500 attendees. This event also focuses primarily on one religion and does not represent or include everyone in our community. ARPD has attempted to be more inclusive in this event by adding a lighted menorah and peace sign, posting banners representing many winter holidays (Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, Winter Solstice and Christmas), and including a local Jewish choir in the music line up. However, none of this is enough to be truly equitable and feel inclusive of all cultures and faiths. The recommendation is to instead decorate City Hall with white lights to celebrate the season and ARPD will coordinate for the Mayor to light a tree at business districts such as South Shore and to light a menorah at a Hanukkah celebration.

Staff is also currently in discussion with the Downtown Alameda Business Association and local residents to help coordinate a new Pride in the Park event at Chochenyo Park. This event is tentatively planned for October 2022 and could include live music such as the East Bay Gay Men's Chorus performance, a children's area, food and drinks, drag show, and an evening Pride Pub Strut on Park Street."

This agenda item had previously been presented by Recreation and Parks Director, Amy Wooldridge, to the Recreation and Parks Commission, on June 10, 2021, Agenda Item 6-B, and the Minutes provide that, again, there were no public comments and the list of activities was approved unanimously by the Commission.

Recently, community members have inquired as to when and if the Mayor's Tree Lighting is occurring this year, as last year it was virtual because of Covid, and are surprised and disappointed to learn that it is not occurring and has been canceled permanently, as it is not on the new list of Recreation and Parks events. Public inquiries and comments have included that many community groups

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including bands, choirs, and performers from many backgrounds and cultures participated in the annual event for decades, that it was not a religious event, that a tree lighting at South Shore or other shopping centers is not the same as in front of City Hall, City Hall is a special venue because it's City Hall and shopping centers are not large enough to include as many members of the public as in front of City Hall and the part of Santa Clara Avenue that has been closed to vehicles for use for the event, that the City should reconsider this decision and, if necessary, include the public to see if there's a way to have the event with less cost to the City.

Thank you for your consideration.

The City Council, at its July 25, 2020 Priority Setting Workshop, established the following 5 priorities for 2021:

1. Preparing Alameda for the future
2. Encouraging economic development across the Island
3. Supporting enhanced livability and quality of life, including addressing the housing crisis and homelessness
4. Protecting core services
5. Ensuring effective and efficient operations

Briefly describe which Council priority the subject falls under and how it relates:

These priorities were for the former Council, not the current Council. Priority 3.