

**Council Meeting: December 9, 2008****SUBJECT: Community Event Grant Funding Recommendations****REPORT IN BRIEF**

Community events such as parades, fairs, carnivals, block parties, festivals, public dances, shows and concerts are an important part of a healthy and vibrant community. City Council recently restored funding to a community event grant program approved in FY 2001/02 (RTC 01-329, *Consideration of Ways to Promote Non-City Sponsored Cultural Events*) and staff utilized several low-cost promotional tools to raise awareness and re-introduce this program to the Sunnyvale community.

Staff received and reviewed a total of seven community event grant funding applications for FY 2008-09. There are a total of \$25,635 (\$30,000 budget supplement less staff time) in grant funds available and the sum request of all grant applications was in excess of the available funds. Staff's recommended fund distribution is summarized below:

Applicant/Organizer	Event	Grant Req.	Grant Amt.
Sunnyvale Downtown Assoc.	Howl'oween Pet Parade & Faire *	\$ 8,500.00	\$ 3,495.00
Sunnyvale Downtown Assoc.	Christmas Tree Lighting	8,000.00	3,495.00
Sunnyvale Downtown Assoc.	St. Patty's Day on Murphy	8,000.00	2,500.00
Chamber of Commerce	Sunnyvale Art & Wine Festival	Unspecified	9,490.00
Columbia Middle School	Fall/Spring Music Festivals	2,768.78	2,765.00
Full Circle Farm	Earth Day Festival	1,020.00	1,020.00
St. Cyprian School	Child Safety Event	2,870.00	2,870.00

Total Grants**\$25,635.00**

* Howl'oween Pet Parade & Faire received \$6,158.72 of in-kind services provided by City of Sunnyvale as an event co-sponsor in 2008.

BACKGROUND

Special events provide opportunities to celebrate the City's diversity, heritage and uniqueness, allowing community members the occasion to interact and strengthen a sense of community and neighborhood identity, and foster an additional channel for economic prosperity.

In September 2000, staff presented a Study Issue Report to Council No. 00-315, *Consideration of Ways to Promote Non-City Sponsored Cultural Events*. The focus of the study was primarily one-time events planned and carried out by individual groups. While staff's intent was to consider low- or no-cost alternatives for promoting special events, one avenue of event promotion included City funding support for special events. Staff was directed to establish a policy for funding special events, and establish an annual funding process for considering requests for event assistance.

In June 2001, Council approved a recommended annual budget of \$25,000 for community event grant support. On September 25, 2001, (RTC 01-329, *Consideration of Ways to Promote Non-City Sponsored Community Events*), Council established a funding process and guidelines, including: eligibility criteria, evaluation process, evaluation criteria, and criteria for administration of funds.

In addition to administration of the Community Event Grant Program, staff was directed to establish a point of central coordination for all community event permits and work with an interdepartmental team to prepare materials to consolidate and refine the City's existing community event permit procedures.

The Community Event Grant Program was launched in FY 2001/02. To assure that all applications for City funding received due consideration and to ensure Council was provided with the information needed to make its funding decisions, the evaluation process stipulated the recommendations of the review team would be forwarded to the city manager. The city manager reviewed the recommendations of the review team and then recommended to Council which events should be funded and at what level.

On March 26, 2002, staff presented their recommendations to Council, RTC #02-098. A total of 13 applications were submitted with funding requests totaling \$101,605. At that time, Council directed staff to approve funding for six organizations for a total of \$14,960. Council directed that the remaining funding be carried over to the 2003 Community Event Grant Program budget.

On April 29, 2003 (RTC #03-152), staff presented a list to Council of recommendations for the 2003 Community Event Grant funding applications. A total of seven applications were submitted with funding requests totaling \$40,973. Council approved funding for four community events for a total of \$21,850.

An issue arose in determining whether athletic competitions and leagues might be considered community events. Staff determined that they did not, citing a lack of wide community appeal, especially among community members not

already involved in the leagues. As a consequence, Council supported staff's recommendation to not approve those applications that sought funding for leagues and tournaments.

During the 2003 budget reductions, the Community Event Grant Program was eliminated.

In December 2004, Council identified *Explore Community Support for Community Events*, as the Office of the City Manager's (OCM) highest ranking 2005 study issue. The issue was initiated by the city manager in response to Council's continued interest in developing Sunnyvale's sense of community.

On March 28, 2006, RTC #06-090 *Explore Community Support for Community Events (Study Issue)* was presented. Council approved policy on special events (numbered below), but the issue of funding support for community events was not addressed in this RTC.

1. Consolidates and clarifies the City's special event policies;
2. Encourages private sponsorship of events in alignment with Council policy from organizations inside and outside the community;
3. Identifies the manner in which the City supports events conducted by other organizations;
4. Enables private sector support for City-owned events through the increased use of sponsorships;
5. Encourages the City to explore participating in the formation of community associations, or other nonprofit entities, to support or manage community events.

Recently, at the January 25, 2008, Study Issues Workshop, Council reviewed OCM Item 10, *Consider Providing Financial Support to Sunnyvale Downtown Association for "SunFest" Special Event*. The Executive Director of the Sunnyvale Downtown Association requested the City "consider an economic development budget issue allocation of \$196,000 for 2008" to be used for downtown projects and events. The proposed *SunFest* study issue prompted this budget supplement request to provide funds, through the dormant Community Event Grant Program, to support citywide community-initiated special events.

Budget Supplement No: 3, dated May 23, 2008, was approved by City Council. Following approval, staff moved forward with the promotion of the grant program for FY 2008/09 and set an application due date of October 17, 2008.

EXISTING POLICY

Many policies, goals and action strategies in the Arts, Heritage Preservation, Recreation and Open Space, Community Design and Community Engagement Sub-elements lend policy support to the City in fostering community events.

Council Policy 7.2.18 Special Events

Community Engagement Sub-element

Policy C.2 – Encourage celebrations which help to create a strong, positive community identity and recognize cultural diversity.

Social Economic Sub-element

Policy 5.1B3 – Monitor the effect of City policies on business development and consider the effects of the overall health of business within the City.

DISCUSSION

When re-introducing a community grant program such as this, it is important to provide the public with multiple, well-targeted promotion efforts. To maximize the number of applications, the Community Resources Division included the following efforts: a news release (details were printed in both The Sunnyvale Sun and The San Jose Mercury News), an article in the City of Sunnyvale Quarterly Report, inclusion in the Community Resources E-News and a printed letter mailed to each of the community event applicants from the previous two years (a reminder email was also sent). The promotional efforts directed community organizations to the City's Web site, where the grant guidelines and an application (combined as Attachment A) were posted. The posted guidelines and application were identical those previously approved by Council on September 25, 2001, (RTC 01-329, *Consideration of Ways to Promote Non-City Sponsored Community Events*) and utilized in the most recent administration of this grant program.

As a result of promoting the Community Event Grant Program to the Sunnyvale community, the City received seven applications, from five different organizations. The events ranged in expected attendance from the minimum of 500 to 120,000. And similar to the large range in expected attendance, the events seek to serve different segments of the community. A review of grant applications makes it clear that no single event benefits the "entire" community. Even the largest event, The Art & Wine Festival (which estimates a combined weekend attendance of 120,000 people) attracts community members who enjoy art, wine and large crowds. A smaller event, the Columbia Middle School Music Festival will likely attract school music program supporters from northern Sunnyvale. It's not to say that each of these events

excludes other community members (since they are all open to the public), rather it just demonstrates the wide variety of interests in this community. Grant applications received by the established deadline are included (unaltered and in their entirety) as Attachment B.

A staff review committee was formed specifically to evaluate community event grant applications and make recommendations. The committee had four members, each possessing direct experience with the community event application process. Received applications were reviewed independently by each committee member and then discussed together as a group. During the individual review process and the team review, committee members used the following evaluation criteria previously approved by Council on September 25, 2001, (RTC 01-329):

- The event encourages celebrations of community which focus on the character, diversity and quality of Sunnyvale and provide vitality and identity to the community.
- The event is of a citywide nature and demonstrates an ability to draw a crowd of at least 500.
- The sponsoring organization must demonstrate the ability to produce a well-planned, safe event.
- The sponsoring organization demonstrates strong financial management and effective management controls, including cost-effectiveness.
- The review team will consider the financial and budgetary capabilities of the sponsoring organization, the extent to which City funds will be leveraged with other funding sources, and the need for City funding. Community event grant funding from the City will represent no more than 40 percent of the total event budget, including the value of in-kind goods and services but excluding the value of volunteer time.
- Higher priority will be given to encouraging new events as well as supporting existing events that have been highly successful in the past, subject to other grant criteria.

The reasoning and considerations for each recommendation are included as Attachment C. Also included is Attachment D, showing calculations used to determine maximum grant available based upon event expenses. Upon completion of evaluation by the review committee, grant recommendations were submitted to the city manager for review and approval.

Each community event organizer must complete a community event application and secure a Special Event Permit, regardless of the approval or denial of their grant application. In other words, grant funding approval does not equate to community event approval. The latter requires a permit application process, which is entirely separate from the grant funding process. Any community event granted funding by City Council will be required to adhere to any and all conditions of their Special Event Permit. Failure to comply with all Special Event Permit conditions may be cause to deny grant reimbursement.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no net fiscal impact to the General Fund. Funds for the purpose are currently budgeted in Program 725: Community Building, Civic Engagement and Volunteering.

PUBLIC CONTACT

Public contact was made by posting the Council agenda on the City's official-notice bulletin board outside City Hall, in the Council Chambers lobby, in the Office of the City Clerk, at the Library, Senior Center, Community Center and Department of Public Safety; posting the agenda and report on the City's Web site; and making the report available at the Library and the Office of the City Clerk.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve community event grant funding recommendations as proposed by staff.
2. Approve community event grant funding in amounts other than those proposed by staff.
3. Other direction as provided by Council.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends alternative number one; approve community event grant funding recommendations as proposed by staff. The staff review committee evaluated each event grant application based upon its individual merits and its potential benefit to the Sunnyvale community. Since it was determined that each of the applicants met the guidelines, the committee unanimously agreed to fully fund the requests for smaller community events (Fall/Spring Music Festivals, Earth Day Festival and Child Safety Event) and divide the remaining funds among the larger events (Art & Wine Festival, Howl'oween Pet Parade & Faire, Holiday Tree Lighting, St. Patty's Day on Murphy). The committee saw value in supporting smaller, less established events as well as some of the larger events, well-known within the City borders and beyond. For the larger events, staff is recommending an equal split of \$9,490 for Sunnyvale Downtown Association (SDA) events and \$9,490 for the Chamber of Commerce

event. Both organizations promote a sense of community and economic vitality in Sunnyvale. Splitting the remaining grant funds evenly among the two organizations was determined as the best way to support their efforts. SDA submitted a separate application for each of their events (three in total). During the review process, committee members used the evaluation criteria previously approved by Council.

Reviewed by:

Robert Walker, Assistant City Manager

Prepared by: Nathan Truitt, Community Outreach Coordinator

Approved by:

Gary Luebbers

City Manager

Attachments

- A. Community Event Grant Funding Guidelines and Application.
- B. Community Event Grant Program applications received (in their entirety).
- C. Explanation of Review Committee Recommendations for Community Event Grant Program, FY 2008/09.
- D. Community Event Grant Program Review Committee Recommendations (Spreadsheet).