



To: City of Culver City

From: Darrel Menthe, Executive Director

Date: March 25, 2024

Re: Independence Celebration and Light Show

Dear City Council and Economic Development Team:

Introduction

For many years, the Exchange Club sponsored a fireworks show for Culver City, and in recent years the City of Culver City contributed no less than \$35,000 annually to the effort. The Culver City Downtown Business Association (CCDBA) learned earlier this month that this traditional fireworks event for the Fourth of July would not be taking place in the summer of 2024. Since learning of that, the CCDBA has been looking to see how we could step in to replace this event for the City. The CCDBA believes it is important that Culver City have an Independence Day celebration.

We are proposing to have a live band perform on Town Plaza followed by an aerial drone light show after dark which will be synced to recorded music. For budgetary and other reasons, we are proposing to do this on Friday, July 5, 2024. This will reduce costs for the drone show, bring people downtown on a weekend that is often less busy, and will not compete with other fireworks events directly. Aerial drone light shows do not have pyrotechnical explosions and noise. They are almost quiet. Typically, the show has 15-20 different drone configurations synced to music.

Drone shows are becoming very popular as fireworks show alternatives. Dodger Stadium used to have fireworks shows every Friday (when there is a home game) during the summertime after the games, but as of 2023 they have a drone "light show" for half of the Friday light shows. We are looking at using the same aerial drone show vendor for our light show.

Date: Friday, June 5, 2024

Time: 6pm-9:30pm.

Location: Town Plaza

Admission: Free to the Public.

The CCDBA is applying for City funds at this time, out of cycle, because we were not able to do so earlier. The need for an event to replace the fireworks show was not known until early March 2024. If this event succeeds and we choose to do downtown light shows in future years, we will apply through the regular cycle if we cannot support the event entirely by private sponsorship. The event will be free to the public.

Detailed Summary

The Independence Celebration will have a live band on Town Plaza followed by an aerial drone light show. We will have at least 200 drones flown for a standard-length show which will be artistically customized for Culver City. The drones will be up to 400 feet in the air – higher than the Statue of Liberty – and visible for more than two miles. Best visibility, however, will be designed for Town Plaza downtown. The event will be free to the public. As a city sponsored event, we can promise that at least one of the drone configurations will feature Culver City, likely the famous *Culver City* script. We will be working to set drone configurations on a patriotic and Culver-City-movie-history theme.

We will also have a small number of booths for sponsors or non-profit organizations (probably fewer than 6) on Town Plaza. No vendors will be permitted. The event will be used not generate any revenue for the CCDBA (other than through sponsorships to defray cost).

Drone show companies generally price their events by charging a fixed amount per drone that covers all costs, including transporting the drones and accommodations for the teams that fly them. There is a significant increase in design and excitement by going from 100 to 200 drones. Most agree that 200 drones is a high-quality show. Because drone show companies are trying to arrange their time especially around the fourth of July, they are willing to offer benefits to those who commit early. Our proposed vendor will take us from 200 to 250 drones without additional cost if we can commit to the date by the second week of April 2024. We believe this will provide for a lavish visual experience.

Budget

While we are working on obtaining sponsorships, we are asking for City approval for funding now because we need to secure the drone show and other items in advance.

<u>Income:</u>	<u>Expenditures:</u>
CCDBA: \$15,000 Culver City: \$30,000 Sponsorships: in process.	Drone Show: \$40,000 Band/Sound: \$5,000 Permits, etc: \$5,000 \$45-50,000 (estimated)

Request for Support

The CCDBA is asking the City to support this event in 2024 (**FY 2024/25**) with a contribution of \$30,000 and making it a city-sponsored event for several reasons. First, the event has to be “city sponsored” to take place on Town Plaza. Second, the timeline to produce the event is short, and we need to sign contracts with the drone show company about ninety (90) days in advance. While we are working on procuring sponsorships, the financial backstop here will help significantly given the early commitment date. Third, the City has also set aside funds to contribute to an Independence Day event, and those funds that would have been spent in 2024/2025 can be redirected to get this event off the ground in keeping with the original budgetary thinking. Fourth, the CCDBA is looking at this event a proof-of-concept for the Fourth of July going forward. If it succeeds, we will have twelve months to plan next year’s event, including sponsorships, which will reduce or eliminate any request for City funds in future years.

Investing in this event now can help us create a city tradition to last for years to come.

Very truly yours,

/s/

Darrel Menthe

Executive Director

Culver City Downtown Business Association