

**City of Culver City, California
Agenda Item Report**

Meeting Date: 05/23/11		Item Number: J-2	
JOINT CITY COUNCIL / REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY BOARD AGENDA ITEM: Consideration of a Sponsorship Request from The Method Fest Film Festival.			
Contact Person/Dept.: Todd Tipton / Community Development Susan Obrow / Community Development		Phone Number: (310)253-5783 (310)253-5762	
Fiscal Impact: Yes ☒ No ☐		General Fund: Yes ☐ No ☒	
Public Hearing: ☐		Action Item: ☒ Attachments: ☒	
Commission Action Required: Yes ☐ No ☒		Date: _____	
Public Notification: (E-Mail) Meetings and Agendas – City Council (05/19/11); (E-Mail) Meetings and Agendas – Redevelopment Agency (05/19/11), Method Fest Film Festival (04/19/11), Culver City Chamber of Commerce (05/09/11), Downtown Business Association (05/09/11), Cultural Affairs Commission (05/09/11)			
Department Approval: Sol Blumenfeld (05/11/11)		Carol Schwab (by H. Baker) (05/18/11) Agency General Counsel Approval: Murray Kane (05/11/11)	
Chief Financial Officer Approval: Jeff Muir: (by K. Marsden) (05/18/11)		City Manager/Executive Director Approval: John M. Nachbar (05/19/11)	
<u>RECOMMENDATION:</u> Staff recommends the City Council and Culver City Redevelopment Agency Board (Agency Board) consider the sponsorship request from The Method Fest Film Festival (The Method Fest) for a film festival proposed to be presented during Fiscal Year 2011/2012 and provide staff with direction. <u>BACKGROUND:</u> On March 22, 2010, the Agency Board directed staff to prepare a policy related to event sponsorship. Staff returned to the Agency Board on September 13, 2010 and December 6, 2010 for further review. On March 4, 2011, representatives from The Method Fest¹ submitted a proposal to the Agency for the City of Culver City to become a Presenting Sponsor of the festival, which is proposed for March 22-29, 2012 and spring or summer 2013. Previously, The Method Fest was presented in the City of Calabasas as well as the City of Burbank. On April 11, 2011, the Agency Board and the City Council approved policies related to the financial support of City-and Culver City Redevelopment Agency (Agency)-sponsored special events. Additionally, Members expressed interest in reviewing proposals separate from the application process.			

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The Method Fest was established in 1999 and has been presented in Calabasas since 2005. Over the years, the City of Calabasas has reduced the funding for The Method Fest, and in 2010 it provided approximately \$35,000 in the form of a cash sponsorship.

DISCUSSION:

The Method Fest is requesting an annual \$75,000 cash contribution and \$15,000 in-kind support from the City/Agency. In-kind support could include staff time² and the use or access to City and Agency-controlled facilities. The Method Fest organizers have expressed interest in securing at least three screening rooms including ones that would accommodate approximately 100, 200 and 300 patrons. The proposal and sample budget are attached (Attachments 1 and 2). As a Presenting Sponsor of The Method Fest, the following rights and benefits would be provided:

- Naming Rights - The Method Fest independent film festival presented by the Culver City Redevelopment Agency or City of Culver City
- Presenting Sponsorship Status (second line billing)
- Right of first refusal to renew for the 2014 festival
- Use of The Method Fest logo and trademarks for branding and marketing
- Preferred position in all collateral materials for the festival
- Agency-produced 30-second commercial, shown at festival screenings
- Logo inclusion (preferred position) in all Method Fest advertising
- Logo in festival film trailer shown in theatre before each festival screening
- Reserved table at sponsored event and other special events
- Name/logo on daily events board on display at all major venues
- On-site permanent signage (banners) at all festival venues
- Agency-produced banners prominently displayed at The Method Fest
- Opportunity to provide inflatable at the Opening Night Party
- Acknowledgment as presenting sponsor in all festival press releases
- Verbal acknowledgment as presenting sponsor before all festival screenings
- Exhibit space area in the filmmaker/VIP lounge
- Full-page color program ad (premium position)
- Opportunity to include promotional materials in VIP/Filmmaker goodie bags
- Logo and hotlink on The Method Fest website (home page)
- Access to festival databases
- 10 V.I.P. festival passes - 25 individual screening passes
- 50% discount on festival tickets and passes for City employees
- Naming of festival award with City representative presenting the award
- Other benefits as mutually agreed upon

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Please note that when redevelopment funds are used to sponsor an event, the resulting positive economic benefit must be clearly identified. In the case of The Method Fest, some economic benefits that might be realized are: increased exposure for the City via the marketing campaign and additional visitors who would patronize downtown restaurants and businesses. If the City Council and Agency Board are interested in sponsoring The Method Fest, staff will work with The Method Fest to clearly identify and quantify the resulting positive economic benefits..

FISCAL ANALYSIS:

Staff is proposing to include approximately \$40,000 in the City Manager's Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2011/2012 (Program 90200, Economic Development - Special Events and Meetings) for the following special events: *Culver City Car Show*, with funding assistance of up to \$12,000; *Taste of the Nation*, with funding assistance total of up to \$15,000; and *IndieCade* with funding assistance of \$10,000, with the remaining \$3,000 of funds available to cover additional requests by those organizations to meet any cost increases or to cover additional requests from separate entities.

Staff is currently preparing Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) for each of the above mentioned special event producers, which will be presented to the City Council and Agency Board for consideration on June 13, 2011. Should the City Council and Agency Board enter into a sponsorship agreement with The Method Fest, \$75,000 would need to be identified in the City and/or Agency budget, which will result in the reduction or elimination of other programs.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. The Method Fest Film Festival Proposal
2. The Method Fest Film Festival Sample Budget
3. The Method Fest Film Festival 2010 Program

MOTIONS:

That the City Council and Agency Board:

Provide direction to staff regarding sponsorship for The Method Fest Film Festival.

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Notes:

¹ The Method Fest features the work of more established independent directors, producers, writers and actors. The Method Fest presents over 100 films each year and celebrates story-driven films with outstanding performances. Organizers have estimated that there were over 16,000 attendees at the last festival. Awards are presented at the festival including jury prizes and an audience award. Also, there are several youth programs targeted towards student filmmakers, writers and actors. There are many events presented during The Method Fest including opening and closing nights, the awards ceremony, Indie Music night, and special tribute receptions to distinguished actors and directors.

² If a sponsorship package is approved by the Agency Board, staff anticipates this effort will require approximately 40 hours in staff assistance due to it being a new event to Culver City in multiple locations.