

City of Culver City, California
Agenda Item Report

Meeting Date: 05/03/10		Item Number: J-1	
JOINT CITY COUNCIL/REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY BOARD AGENDA ITEM: Consideration of (1) the Purchase of a \$10,000 Marketing Sponsorship Package as Part of The International Festivals of Independent Games 2010 (IndieCade) and (2) the Designation of IndieCade as a City and Agency-Sponsored Event.			
Contact Person/Dept.: Jeremy Green, Management Analyst		Phone Number: (310) 253-5764	
Fiscal Impact: Yes ☒ No ☐		General Fund: Yes ☐ No ☒	
Public Hearing: ☐		Action Item: ☒	Attachments: ☒
Commission Action Required: Yes ☐ No ☒		Date: _____	
Public Notification: (E-Mail) Downtown Business Association (04/13/2010); (E-Mail) Chamber of Commerce (04/13/2010); (E-Mail) Meetings and Agendas – Redevelopment Agency (04/28/10); (E-Mail); Meetings and Agendas – City Council (04/28/10).			
Department Approval: Sol Blumenfeld (04/21/10)		City Attorney Approval: Carol Schwab (by H. Baker) (04/27/10) Agency General Counsel Approval: Murray Kane. (04/21/10)	
Chief Financial Officer Approval: Jeff Muir (by N. Kimball)		City Manager/Executive Director Approval: P. Lamont Ewell (04/28/10)	

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the Redevelopment Agency Board (Board):

Authorize the purchase of a \$10,000 Marketing Sponsorship Package as part of the *Second Annual Culver City IndieCade Festival - The International Festivals of Independent Games* (Festival) to be held in downtown Culver City from October 8-10, 2010; and,

The City Council and Redevelopment Agency Board:

Designate the Festival as a City and/or Agency-sponsored event.

BACKGROUND:

IndieCade was started by Creative Media Collaborative (CMC), an alliance of industry producers and leaders. CMC was founded in 2005 by Ms. Stephanie Barish to support independent game development. IndieCade strives to maintain the artistry in the entertainment software (computer and video games) industry, a \$25 billion industry worldwide. The art which made computer and video games

City of Culver City, California
Agenda Item Report

so compelling has become an artistic genre and is now a new industry on its own.

The Festival showcases the best of independent games, selected from a pool of submissions, throughout the year. These games are on display and compete for juried awards presented during the Festival.

The 2010 Festival will continue to celebrate independent video games and the game-makers and artists who make them and to facilitate the production of new works within the emerging independent game movement.

Last year, with IndieCade being hosted here in Culver City, there were 250 dedicated conference attendees and Festival attendance reached a total of 3,000 over the three day period. This year, the aim of IndieCade is to attract a larger sector of the general public through new and various marketing outlets with an expectation of 250-300 conference attendees and up to 5,000 Festival attendees over three days.

Some successes from last year's Festival include:

- The hundreds of "Google web and blog alerts" before, during, and after the Festival lead to articles describing the positive experiences had in Culver City. Staff still receives an alert almost daily, mentioning the Festival and Culver City, from around the world.
- The number of returning sponsors and the conversations with new and larger corporations who show interest in sponsoring the 2010 Festival in an even bigger way.
- Culver City Unified School District received \$10,000 worth of computers, which were donated by Disney, after they were used to display the games as part of the Festival.

An IndieCade "wrap-up" document from last year's Festival has been provided by Ms. Barish (Attachment 1). Examples of independent video games are available on IndieCade's website at www.IndieCade.org.

Lastly, it is hoped that a positive experience at IndieCade will attract some of the companies in attendance to relocate to Culver City.

DISCUSSION:

The Festival includes multiple components at various Culver City venues, each of which must receive the required special event permit from the Culver City

City of Culver City, California
Agenda Item Report

Committee on Permits and Licenses. The following are major events planned as part of the Festival:

- A grand opening event
- Hands-on exhibitions of the juried, finalist games
- Salons, workshops and artist talks
- A game maker conference for professionals, enthusiasts and aspiring gamemakers
- Previews and performances of new works
- An awards ceremony, reception and recognition event for the selected gamemaker finalists
- Ongoing outdoor game play in Downtown
- Other networking and VIP events across multiple venues

Because of the very positive outcome of last year's Festival, IndieCade is planning to return to Culver City. This year's venues will include restaurants, art galleries, production studios and theatres located in or near downtown Culver City. The Festival organizers will partner with the venue owners to more effectively bring increased revenue to the venues. Breakfast and lunch "talks" will increase business at local restaurants at non-peak business hours. Additionally, outdoor game play will encourage attendees to patronize multiple businesses in Downtown. It is expected that the Festival will continue to have a positive economic impact throughout the City, including the Redevelopment Project Area.

The total cost to produce the Festival is approximately \$85,000 in hard costs. Of the total cost to produce the Festival in 2009, at least \$25,000 was spent in Culver City. This year, up to \$50,000 will be spent in Culver City, as the Festival organizers expect to give more business to those who donated to the Festival last year. In addition to direct expenditures by the producer in the City, the attendees (estimated at up to 5,000) will also utilize Culver City businesses, stay at Culver City hotels, and dine at Culver City restaurants during the three day Festival.

Festival organizers selected Culver City because it exhibits a number of values important to independent game producers and players, including: the City's support of the arts, the City's socially relevant and educational environment, and the City's walkable and vibrant downtown area. All of which are seen as part of the Culver City brand.

Culver City Marketing Opportunities:

The Festival will be marketed through publicists at ONE PR Studio and ad agency Young and Rubicam and will include a media release to all Los Angeles based press contacts that cover entertainment and calendar sections of newspapers. A finalists' "game roll-out" will start 30 days before the Festival,

City of Culver City, California
Agenda Item Report

including introduction of one game per day. Other marketing will include flyers, posters, and postcards in relevant locations, promotional e-mails, media sponsorships (usually blogs), social networking (Twitter and Facebook), and through social change networks and media.

- The best opportunity to market the Festival to the industry will occur at E3 Expo trade show for computer, video games and related products, this June 15-17, 2010 at the LA Convention Center. Culver City information will be disseminated not only to the independent games industry but to the global interactive entertainment industry.
- Business relocation: Currently there are few independent gaming business offices in Culver City, although one of the largest corporate gaming companies, Electronic Arts, is located just outside of Culver City. The Festival will draw participants to Culver City, some of whom may be encouraged to set up business in town. IndieCade has offered Culver City the opportunity to host a conference session for Culver City to speak directly to the community and the public.
- Business attraction marketing: Information on the several programs offered by the City and the Agency to businesses considering relocation or expansion to Culver City will be disseminated to a targeted, desirable demographic.
- General Marketing: Attendees will once again travel from national and international origins (including Asia, Latin America, Europe, and Australia) which provides a unique opportunity for both the City and the Agency to present Culver City to an international clientele.

City and Redevelopment Agency information will be disseminated at all pre-events and at the Festival, including the following documents: the Open for Business Guide, the Chamber Map, the demographics pages for Culver City and other marketing pieces that will be designed specifically for this Festival with a message to encourage business relocation to Culver City. Additional marketing tools include a webpage on the IndieCade.com website that encourages business relocation and an advertisement with that same message in the printed program for the Festival. Further, IndieCade will take all marketing pieces to industry events in Canada and England, making the reach international.

Staff believes that the unique opportunity to market and potentially attract new, desirable and high-wage providing business and patrons to Culver City merits the Agency's purchase of the Marketing Sponsorship Package. It is staff's hope that this effort will result in new game businesses moving or expanding to Culver City. It is a green industry with well paid, design oriented employees, which will be complimentary to other existing business sectors (art, architecture, television and movie production, design, graphics, etc.) in Culver City.

City of Culver City, California
Agenda Item Report

As an additional benefit, staff believes the Festival will generate increased pedestrian activity and increased sales for the area. As an annual event, the expectation is for the Festival to grow each year and become synonymous with Culver City.

Culver City Sponsorship Package

Last year the Redevelopment Agency purchased a \$10,000 Marketing Sponsorship Package for a discounted cost of \$8,500. The Agency received a \$1,500 discount because Culver City became a sponsor after the IndieCade marketing program had already begun. This year the request is for the Agency to become a Presenting Marketing Sponsorship at the \$10,000 level (Attachment 2), with opportunities for enhancements of an additional \$2,500 for a total value of \$12,500. The sponsorship will provide the following benefits, added specifically for Culver City (Attachment 3): 1) an increase in the advance marketing from 4 months to 6 months, including Culver City marketing information in media blasts for the final deadline for submissions of games, which has already received significant media attention; 2) an opportunity for Culver City to provide an Open for Business conference session, also open to the public, about opportunities to bring gaming and other businesses to Culver City.

IndieCade requests that the City and/or the Agency designate the Festival as a City and/or Agency-sponsored event so that IndieCade information may be placed on the City website and at City Hall.

Staff recommends that the Board approve an expenditure of \$10,000 and designate the Festival as an Agency-sponsored event. Staff also recommends the City Council designate the Festival as a City-sponsored event. Staff expects that at least \$1,000 of staff time will be utilized in the planning and promotion for this event.

Compliance with City Council Policy 2008-01

To be "Sponsored" by the City or Redevelopment Agency, an event must comply with Culver City Municipal Code (CCMC) Section 17.330.040.B.7.b.ii. confirming that the following criteria have been met: The City and/or Redevelopment Agency is (a) participating in an official capacity in the planning, preparation or promotion of the event or activity; and (b) contributing 25% of the total estimated costs of the civic event or activity, or at least \$1,000, whichever is less. This contribution may take the form of funds, labor, staff time, materials, a waiver of fees, or any combination of the foregoing.

The CCMC clearly requires both (a) AND (b) to be met. In addition, the use of City staff resources, equipment, etc., for an event does not in and of itself constitute participation in the event by the City in an "official capacity" in the planning, preparation or promotion of the event. Further, in accordance with

City of Culver City, California
Agenda Item Report

the City Council Policy 2008-01 regarding Community Organizations, in addition to meeting the above-referenced criteria, in order for an event to be considered City-sponsored and/or Redevelopment Agency-sponsored, the City Council and/or Redevelopment Agency, must determine, by specific action, that the above criteria have been met.

In summary, in order to be eligible to promote their Festival on the City website, the City Council and/or the Redevelopment Agency would need to take both of the following actions:

(1) determine that IndieCade is a City and/or Agency-sponsored event AND (2) determine to support the event in an amount no less than \$1,000, which may take the form of a fee waiver.

FISCAL ANALYSIS:

If the Agency were to participate in the form of a \$10,000 cash sponsorship, the funds would come out of the Agency's Economic Development Program marketing services (55090200) from Fiscal Year 2009-2010. Sufficient funds are available to fund this request.

Staff expects that this is the last request for event assistance/sponsorship for Fiscal Year 2009-2010. Staff plans to bring a policy discussion to the Council and Agency regarding future event sponsorships prior to Fiscal Year 2010-2011.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Wrap-up presentation from IndieCade 2009.
2. IndieCade Sponsorship package.
3. Culver City Value Added IndieCade Sponsorship package.

MOTION:

That the City Council:

1. Designate the Festival a City-Sponsored event.

AND

That the Redevelopment Agency Board:

1. Approve the purchase of a \$10,000 Marketing Sponsorship Package; and,
2. Designate the Festival an Agency-sponsored event.