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SUBJECT MATTER: **Special Events Grant Program**

PURPOSE

To establish guidelines and procedures for the processing of requests for financial support of special events (including a contribution of funds, labor, staff time, materials, a waiver of fees, or any combination thereof).

POLICY

The City of Culver City ("City") shall establish a Special Events Grant Program ("Program") which shall define specific parameters for requests for financial support of special events. The Program shall include an annual, public call for applications, formal application review by an advisory panel, and transmittal of funding recommendations for City Council review, approval, amendment or denial. This process shall be conducted once each fiscal year to align with the annual budget process.

Through implementation of this Program, it is the City Council's intent to achieve the following goals and benefits:

- More coordination in administration of City-supported special events through a formal application, review and funding process;
- Enhanced, objective and clearly defined criteria used to evaluate requests for City support;
- Increased transparency of annual budgeting and monitoring of actual costs for financial support of special events; and
- Improved budget reliability through outlined funding and accounting procedures.

BACKGROUND

The City recognizes the community and economic benefits associated with special events. In turn, the City annually receives regular requests for funding assistance and sponsorship for special events in the form of fee waivers for City permits, in-kind and/or direct staffing services, and cash sponsorships. Rather than evaluating applications at various times throughout the year on a case-by-case basis, and to continue to encourage organizations to produce special events in the City, the City shall implement a more streamlined approach for event support through the Special Events Grant Program.

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DEFINITIONS

- **Cash Funding:** Cash outlays provided to Grant Recipient at not-to-exceed levels to support any/all associated costs to conduct an event.
- **City-Sponsored Event:** Consistent with the criteria set forth in Culver City Municipal Code §17.330.040, an event or activity where the City is both (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 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.
- **Community/Charitable Events:** Small, community-oriented events that serve or benefit locally based organizations and causes and/or provide recreational, cultural and/or social benefits to City residents.
- **Fee Credits:** Credits provided to Grant Recipient at not-to-exceed levels to cover charges correlating to amounts of City fees for permits, equipment use, facility rental, and administrative/staff associated costs to conduct awarded special event.
- **Grant Award:** Amount awarded to the Grant Recipient in accordance with Program requirements and this Policy, whether in the form of Fee Credits or Cash Funding.
- **Grant Agreement:** The document executed by the Grant Recipient and City Manager setting forth the terms and conditions of event support, and defining the type and amount of financial assistance awarded.
- **Grant Recipient:** The applicant organization to which Program support is awarded.
- **Signature Events:** Large, visitor-attracting events that provide a measurable economic benefit to the City, while enhancing the quality of life within Culver City with recreational, cultural, social and/or educational activities of interest to the community.

PROCEDURES & REQUIREMENTS

A. ANNUAL BUDGET PROCESS

Annually, the City Manager shall include in the Proposed Budget a recommendation of funding appropriations in support of the Special Events Grant Program. The Chief Financial Officer shall assign designated accounts for the purpose of expensing Fee Credits and Cash Funding as approved through the Program.

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B. SPECIAL EVENTS GRANT PROGRAM DETAILS

City support of qualified events shall henceforth occur through an annual application, review and funding process. The process shall involve a call for applications, a review by an advisory panel of all completed applications received by the submission deadline, the assignment of recommended funding levels for each event, and the formal review of the recommendations for approval or amendment by the full City Council. The process shall be conducted once each fiscal year to align with the City's annual budget process.

The advisory panel shall consist of _____ [NOTE: Staff is looking for direction from City Council on the make-up of the advisory panel. It could be City staff from various departments, a subcommittee of the Council, or a combination of the two.]

The Special Events Grant Program shall provide financial support to two categories of events:

1. *Community/Charitable Events* – Serve or benefit locally based organizations and causes and/or provide recreational, cultural and/or social benefits to Culver City residents. Culver City-based organizations and events that serve the Culver City community specifically, receive priority in funding.

Grant Awards will be available at set, not-to-exceed levels that correspond to the amount of City fees the applicant is expected to pay. Successful applicants will be awarded grants in the form of credits toward their City fees. If a Grant Recipient incurs costs (fees) higher than the grant award, they shall be responsible to pay the City those costs and fees not covered by the Grant Award. If the Grant Recipient's actual costs are lower than the projected costs set forth in the Grant application, the City shall retain the difference. All Grant Agreements shall include right to audit language.

2. *Signature Events* – Large-scale events, that promote Culver City regionally, attract visitors, and provide measurable, economic benefits to the City of Culver City.

Grant Awards will be available at set, not-to-exceed levels based upon an evaluation of the event budget, the estimate of City fees, and the estimated economic benefits to the City. Preference will be given to events where the City's financial support represents no more than 25% of the overall event budget. The City may enter multi-year agreements with Grant Recipients. All Grant Agreements, whether for one year or multiple years, shall include right to audit language and measurable objectives and performance measures for evaluating the event's marketing and economic impact.

C. APPLYING FOR SPECIAL EVENT GRANTS

1. CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

On or before January 31 of each year, the City shall issue an annual Call for Applications for the Program for special events occurring during the following fiscal year. A mandatory pre-application meeting shall be held prior to the application deadline. Attendance of all applicants at the pre-application meeting is mandatory.

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2. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

A. *Eligibility:* To be eligible to receive City support, applicants must demonstrate that:

- a. The Community/Charitable event takes place entirely within or immediately adjacent to Culver City.
- b. The event is scheduled to take place within City's annual fiscal year (July 1 and June 30) and the exact date(s), time(s) and location(s) within Culver City have been determined.
- c. The applicant has no outstanding debt owed to the City of Culver City.
- d. The event does not need to be free of charge, but must be accessible to the community/public.

**The City of Culver City will give preference to Culver City-based organizations and events that serve the Culver City community specifically.*

B. *Ineligibility:* The City will not provide financial support to:

- a. Events that serve a political purpose or are sponsored by political organizations.
- b. Event organizers and organizations that have not fulfilled previous City sponsorship or special event obligations (including post-event financial or performance measurement information), have been in breach of the terms of a prior Grant Agreement, or have an outstanding debt to the City of Culver City.
- c. Individuals.
- d. Invitation-only events; those events not open to the general public.

3. MINIMUM APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to receive City special event support, all applications must comply with the following:

- A. Must be submitted online and on time, and must have complete information. Late or incomplete applications, or applications that do not fully comply with the instructions may not be considered.
- B. Must include a copy of the complete event budget.

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- C. Must describe measures that will be taken to ensure strong financial management and control over the event, including cost effectiveness.
- D. Must indicate willingness and ability of the organization to enter into a Grant Agreement with the City, a draft version of which will be provided with the application material.

4. EVALUATION CRITERIA

- A. *Community/Charitable Events* applications will be reviewed and evaluated based on the following criteria:
 - 1. The event serves, involves, and/or promotes Culver City, its residents, schools, and/or businesses.
 - 2. The event directly or indirectly benefits the Culver City community; offering educational, cultural and/or arts experiences; and/or providing secular, recreational or social activities.
- B. *Signature Events* applications will be reviewed and evaluated based on the following criteria:
 - 1. The event delivers substantive and measurable economic benefits to the City.
 - 2. The event organizers utilize strategic marketing practices in planning and implementing the event.
 - 3. The event enhances the quality of life within Culver City with recreational, cultural, social and/or educational activities of interest to the community.
 - 4. The event attracts visitors to Culver City.
 - 5. The event promotes Culver City as a highly desirable place to live, visit, work and recreate.
 - 6. The event directly or indirectly benefits or promotes Culver City businesses or entities.

5. OTHER REQUIREMENTS

- A. Successful applicants: Under both Community/Charitable and Signature events - will be expected to follow the City's separate, Special Event Permit Process and submit all necessary forms, business licensing, insurance and fees as required. Applications

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that do not meet the applicable Special Event Permit requirements and are not submitted within the specified deadlines risk forfeiting their City Special Event support.

B. Signature Event Recipients Only:

- The Grant Agreement will include mutually agreed upon performance measures for the event. Event organizers will be required to demonstrate how the event met, or did not meet, the agreed upon performance measures in a required, post-event report.
- Signature event grant recipients must agree to provide post-event financial statements and allow the City to conduct its own review or audit of them, if requested.

C. Banners: For the purpose of allowing banners to be posted in the public right away, events must be specifically designated as a “sponsored” City Event (CCMC §17.330.040). While being awarded a Community & Charitable Event Grant does not automatically provide status as a City-Sponsored Event, a portion of the application will allow designation if seeking City Sponsorship Status to alert staff for further consideration. The application will in turn be routed to evaluate if the necessary conditions apply for City Council approval of City-sponsorship.

D. SPECIAL EVENT GRANTS FUNDING

The purpose of the Program is to provide funding support for qualified events and to assist with the City fees associated with executing an event in Culver City. The purpose is not to fund the entirety of an event and Grant Awards shall not be awarded for the purpose of covering all of an event’s associated City fees.

Community & Charitable Grant Awards will be offered in the form of fee credits to cover fees associated with executing an event in Culver City, including, but not limited to permits, equipment use, facility rental and/or administrative and staff associated costs.

Signature Event Grant Awards will be offered in the form of either cash support or fee waivers. Preference will be given to events where the City’s financial support represents no more than 25% of the overall event budget. All Signature Event Grant Recipients will be required to enter into a Grant Agreement, which should include right to audit language and measurable objectives and performance measures for evaluating the event’s marketing and economic impact.

In order to track the types of events supported and the level of support provided over time, Event Support is categorized into the following three-tiered system:

A. *Community & Charitable Event Grants**

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Tier 1 - \$100 - \$2,500
Tier 2 - \$2,501- \$7,500
Tier 3 - \$7,501- \$15,000 +

**Based upon City Special Event Permit Fee and estimated or average related City fees.*

B. Signature Event Grants*

Tier 1 - \$1,000 - \$10,000
Tier 2 - \$10,001 - \$25,000
Tier 3 - \$25,001 +

**Grant Awards provided based on analysis of related City event fees and economic benefits City will derive from the event.*