



Staff Report

File #: 23-758, Version: 1

Item #: A-3.

CC - ACTION ITEM: (1) Discussion of the History of the Volunteer Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration Committee; (2) Direction on Department Involvement in the Planning and Implementation of the Event; (3) Direction on Community Involvement in the Planning and Implementation of the event; and (4) Other Direction to City Manager as Desired.

Meeting Date: July 10, 2023

Contact Person/Dept: Francisca Castillo/PRCS
Phone Number: (310) 253-6471

Fiscal Impact: Yes No

General Fund: Yes No

Attachments: Yes No

Commission Action Required: Yes No

Public Notification: (E-Mail) Meetings and Agendas - City Council (07/06/2023)

Department Approval: Armando Abrego, PRCS Director (06/29/2023)

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the City Council (1) discuss the history of the volunteer Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration Committee; (2) provide direction on which staff should lead planning and implementation of the event; (3) provide direction on how the community will be involved in the planning and implementation of the event; and (4) provide other direction to the City Manager as desired.

BACKGROUND

The Martin Luther King, Jr. (MLK Jr.) Celebration Committee initially began as a small group of people who rented the picnic shelter at Veterans Memorial Park the weekend before the MLK Jr. holiday. They used Veterans Memorial Park as a place to remember his words and honor his legacy. With time, this celebration grew and a committee was created to help plan the celebration. Since the celebration began at a park site, PRCS was assigned to oversee the committee and the event. The committee was structured similarly to other committees that at that time were not Council appointed bodies, such as the Fiesta La Ballona Committee and the Sister City Committee.

The MLK Jr. Committee began with 13 members. However, the committee suffered from having a

high turnover of members. Because it was a volunteer committee, people were able to leave the committee at any time instead of being appointed for a specific term. In order to control the influx and exodus of members, PRCS staff was asked by City Council to implement many of the same structures used by the Council-appointed committees, such as Rosenberg's Rules of Order, the Brown Act, and an annual application process. Based on the pattern of community involvement, the committee opted to lower the required number of sitting members to nine members, then seven members. In 2019, the last active period for the committee, it consisted of five members and two alternates. Bylaws, mirroring the Bylaws of the Fiesta La Ballona Committee, were created for the committee; however, the Bylaws were never ratified because City Council recommended that the committee remain a volunteer committee, rather than an official City committee.

Initially, the MLK Jr. committee met monthly throughout the year; however, the time commitment of the committee was one issue brought forward as a reason why members were leaving the committee. Adjusting to this complaint, the committee met monthly from July- February through February 2020. Their involvement in the event mirrored the Fiesta La Ballona Committee's structure because they were an advisory committee to staff focusing on a specific event. At the July meeting, staff would explain the \$5,000 budget that PRCS had for the event. The MLK Jr. Committee would vote if they wished to have a one-day event, or a multiple-day event. Throughout their meetings, MLK Jr. Committee members would recommend entertainers and speakers and staff would see if the recommendation would fit within the budget. All contracts, program designs, purchases, and invoices were handled by staff.

During the COVID-19 Pandemic, the event was transitioned to be a virtual event. A large population who attended the event each year were seniors aged 60 years and older. This demographic unfortunately did not attend the event virtually. The MLK Jr. Committee also stopped meeting during this time. When PRCS staff reached out in preparation for the 2022 MLK Jr. Celebration Event, there was not enough interest to meet the five sitting members needed for the committee.

What separates the MLK Jr. Committee from the other volunteer committees is that past City Councils have evaluated the committee and decided to leave it as a volunteer committee instead of a Council-appointed committee. In contrast, Fiesta La Ballona Committee has become a Council-appointed committee and the Sister City Committee transitioned to become a non-profit that partners with the City.

DISCUSSION

Staff seeks direction from the City Council on which staff will lead planning and implementation of future MLK Jr. Celebration events. Potential options include, but are not limited to, the following:

- PRCS Staff: In the past, staff coordination of the volunteer MLK Jr. Committee resided with PRCS, who oversaw the event. PRCS oversees roughly nine community events a year from small events such as the Mother's Day Tea to large scale events such as Fiesta La Ballona. To date, the MLK Celebration has been one of those events.
- Special Events Manager: The City's Special Events Manager could lead planning and implementation of the event.

If desired, there are a number of ways that the City Council could choose to involve the community in the planning of the event. The staff leading the planning and implementation could obtain community input through one or more of the following methods:

- **Community outreach:** Staff can send out to the public online surveys before and after the event asking the community what they liked about it and what they hoped to see next year. Staff would then utilize these surveys in the planning of the next event.
- **Volunteer committee:** This type of committee is an unofficial City committee that is not subject to the Brown Act; however, following those rules is strongly recommended by staff. Community members serve on the committee on a voluntary basis and serve as advisors. Bylaws may be written for this type of committee, but they are not necessarily required. This is the type of community input the City has used in the past for the MLK Jr. Celebration.
- **Official City Council-Appointed Committee:** This type of committee is an advisory committee to City staff and/or City Council. Appointed by City Council, members must follow the Brown Act and Rosenberg's Rules of Order. A resolution is required to create the bylaws for the committee and specific terms would be created within the bylaws. Currently, the City Council has seven Council-appointed advisory committees that follow this structure. The City could create a new committee specific to the MLK Jr. Celebration, or it could request that staff involve one of the City's existing committees, such as the Equity and Human Relations Advisory Committee.
- **City Council Subcommittee:** The City Council could create a 2024 MLK Jr. Celebration Ad Hoc Subcommittee and appoint two City Council Members to work with staff on the planning of the event for 2024. The ad hoc subcommittee would be dissolved each year and a new subcommittee would be created for the following years' event.

This is a sample of how community involvement can be utilized to plan a community event. Staff is open to other ideas from City Council and City Council should not feel limited to the above options.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

The Adopted Budget for Fiscal Year 2023/2024 has \$5,000 appropriated for the MLK Celebration; however, this does not include staff time dedicated to this event.

ATTACHMENT

None.

MOTIONS

That the City Council:

1. Discuss the history of the volunteer Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration Committee;
2. Provide direction on which staff should lead planning and implementation of the event;

3. Provide direction on how the community will be involved in the planning and implementation of the event; and
4. Provide other direction to the City Manager as desired.