



City of Culver City

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Staff Report

File #: 23-988, Version: 1

Item #: A-2

CC - ACTION ITEM: (1) Approval of a 2023 Summer Concert Series; (2) Approval of Issuance of a Request for Proposals for a Concert Promoter for a 2024 Summer Concert Series; (3) Consideration of the Culver City Cultural Arts Foundation as a Sponsor for the 2023 Summer Concert Series; (4) Approval of any Necessary Agreement for the Production of the 2023 Summer Concert Series within the Allocated Budget; and (5) Direction to the City Manager as Deemed Appropriate.

Meeting Date: May 22, 2023

Contact Person/Dept.: Edgar Varela /Office of Economic and Cultural Development
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Fiscal Impact: Yes No **General Fund:** Yes No

Attachments: Yes No

Public Notification: (E-Mail) Meetings and Agendas - City Council (05/18/2023) Culver Arts Foundation (05/11/23)

Department Approval: Jesse Mays, Assistant City Manager (05/16/2023)

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the City Council (1) approve a 2023 summer concert series; (2) approve issuance of a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a promoter for a 2024 summer concert series; (3) consider engaging the Culver City Cultural Arts Foundation as a sponsor for the 2023 summer concert series; (4) approve any necessary agreements for the production of the 2023 summer concert series within the allocated budget; and (5) provide additional direction to the City Manager as deemed appropriate.

BACKGROUND

On March 6, 2023, the City Council directed staff to explore the development of a summer concert series in downtown Culver City and provide a report on possible venues, producers, time frame, schedule, budget, and funding.

For more than 20 years, the City held a free, annual summer concert series providing accessible,

quality cultural programming for the enjoyment of its residents as well as to attract visitors to Downtown Culver City. Since its beginnings in the early 2000s, the summer concert series became a much-anticipated annual event occurring from early June through September on Thursday evenings in the City Hall Courtyard. For many years the series was funded by the former Culver City Redevelopment Agency (“CCRA”). With the dissolution of the CCRA by operation of state law on February 1, 2012, there was discussion of discontinuing the series due to lack of funding. However since 2012, the City collaborated with a local business/producer Boulevard Music via a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to fund the series through a combination of City sponsorship, outside sponsorship and in-kind contributions. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the last series held in the summer of 2019.

DISCUSSION

Staff recommends that the City Council consider producing a music series in downtown Culver City to activate the area, promote visitation and encourage economic development.

Venue

The Culver Steps/Town Plaza Expansion was developed for the accommodation of outdoor events and does include infrastructure to support concerts. During the project’s approval several years ago, there was Council discussion about relocating the series to this new location. The Plaza has ample electrical inputs, lighting infrastructure, storage, access to public restrooms and is near public parking and bus stops. It is also immediately adjacent to several businesses that would likely benefit from the concert series. The Steps also provides built in seating opportunities which can be augmented with additional chairs. To this end, staff recommends The Culver Steps for a future summer concert series.

Summer 2023

Ideally, preparations for a concert series this summer would have started several months ago, as bands and venues are booked in advance. However, staff has confirmed that the Culver Steps could accommodate a summer music series on Thursday evenings this summer, in addition to the already scheduled programming taking place at the Steps. If the City Council would like to begin the summer concert series this summer (i.e. July 2023), staff recommends that the City’s Special Events Manager produce the event for the City. The City recently hired a new special events manager that has experience in producing music events and programming and could implement a program on a short timeline featuring new and previously featured artists. The series could possibly begin and end later than usual, depending on artist availability. This would mean that the series would begin no sooner than July 2023 and could extend into early fall 2023.

Summer 2024

Staff recommends the City issue an RFP for a concert promoter for the 2024 summer concert series. Concert promoters have specialized relationships and knowledge of music acts, as well as marketing and production techniques that can help elevate the music series beyond what staff is able to produce. (An RFP would not be completed with enough time to produce a Summer 2023 Festival.)

Staff has already requested budget for a 2024 summer concert series in the Fiscal Year 2023/2024 proposed budget. The City's Special Events Manager would work with the concert promoter to ensure the City's vision for the event was carried out and that all required permits are obtained.

Cultural Affairs Commission

As early as 2013, the City Council has previously suggested that Culver City Cultural Affairs Commission (CAC) be involved in some capacity in a summer concert series. Staff proposes that the CAC be asked to recommend to the Special Events Manager possible artists to participate in the series. It is recommended that staff make the final selection of artists, since the decision will be based on a variety of factors including artist availability, budget, and the goal of providing a variety of types of music.

Given the need to book music acts as quickly as possible, and the next Cultural Affairs Commission meeting being on June 20, 2023, there may not be time for the Special Events Manager to get input from the full Cultural Affairs Commission on identifying possible music acts for the Summer 2023 concert series. As such it is suggested that the current Cultural Affairs Commission Performing Arts Ad Hoc Subcommittee recommend possible artists to participate in the series for Summer 2023.

For the 2024, staff proposes that the CAC select one member to participate with staff in the interview process for a concert promoter for the 2024 summer concert series. The CAC will also be invited to assist with identifying musical acts for the 2024 summer concert series.

Culver City Cultural Arts Foundation (CAF)

The Culver City Cultural Arts Foundation (CAF) has expressed interest in serving as a fiscal sponsor of a 2023 summer concert series. The CAF has indicated it would be willing to seek third-party sponsorships for the event, with a goal of raising \$30,000. The CAF would act as a fiscal receiver for the City for the third-party donations for the event. If the City Council is interested in the CAF sponsorship, the City would enter into a Financial Intermediary Services Agreement with CAF. The CAF and any major third-party sponsors would be identified in promotional materials as a sponsor of the series.

Budget

The summer music series requires funding for artists, sound, set-up, promotion, and rentals. It is estimated that a music series featuring six concerts would cost up to \$60,000. This figure is based 2019 costs associated with the previous summer concert series, factoring in an increase in fees and charges, with no outside funds raised to offset the costs.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

For a 2023 summer concert series, \$60,000 in funding is available in the Economic Development Budget (Account 10150120). Part or all of this cost could be defrayed by a donation of approximately \$30,000 from the CAF.

For a 2024 summer concert series, \$60,000 has already been included in the Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2023/2024.

ATTACHMENTS

None

MOTIONS

That the City Council:

1. Approve a 2023 summer concert series; and
2. Approve issuance of an RFP for a promoter for a 2024 summer concert series; and
3. Provide direction on whether to engage the Culver City Cultural Arts Foundation as a fiscal sponsor for the 2023 summer concert series; and
4. Approve any necessary agreements for the production of the 2023 summer concert series within the allocated budget; and
5. Authorize the City Attorney to review/prepare the necessary documents; and
6. Authorize the City Manager to execute such documents on behalf of the City; and
7. Provide direction to the City Manager as deemed appropriate.