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Staff Report for City Policy to Govern Use of Multi-Color City Hall Exterior LED Lighting Display System

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends that the Council discuss and adopt a City Hall Lighting Policy that will govern the usage of the display of City Hall lights.

BACKGROUND

Earlier this year, the City’s Department of Public Works installed new LED lights along the exterior façade of City Hall. These lights are capable of displaying 256 colors of light and can be used to highlight or celebrate official City business as well as local, national, or world events.

Currently, there are no existing policies in the San Leandro Administrative Code governing the use of this type of City Hall lighting display. The Public Works Department has therefore requested a policy to govern the use of the new LED light system when requests are received from organizations or individuals seeking usage of the lighting system to recognize or draw public attention regarding a particular cause or campaign.

San Francisco and San Jose both have similar LED light systems at their respective city halls and have instituted policies that govern the usage of the lighting display systems. Both cities may also charge a fee to private organizations seeking to activate the lights in association with special events that are being held at city hall.

The decision for usage of the lighting display in San Francisco is either made at the direction of the Mayor, or alternatively at the discretion of the City Administrator, the Mayor’s Director of Special Events, or the City’s Chief of Protocol.

In San Jose, the Council adopted a City Hall Special Event Lighting Policy in 2017 that established an Event Lighting Program to provide temporary lighting displays at the City Hall Rotunda for private and public events, and the City Hall Tower as related to official City business. A copy of San Jose's City Hall Special Event Lighting Policy is attached. Requests for usage of the lighting display systems in San Jose are submitted to the Department of Public Works for review and approval.

Analysis

Unlike San Francisco and San Jose, San Leandro does not have a rental facility in its City Hall. Therefore, staff does not recommend requiring a fee for usage of the lighting display system.

Staff recommends that the City Council adopt the attached draft City Hall lighting display policy, which largely mirrors the City of San Leandro's adopted flag policy that governs the raising of special designation flags. More specifically, the recommended policy states that the decision to utilize the usage of the lighting display system shall rest with the Mayor, who may also refer such decisions to the entire City Council when necessary or appropriate, if time allows. For example, if a request is made for the use of the lighting display system to call attention to a contentious or polarizing policy issue that could cause community-wide controversy, the Mayor may refer such matters to the entire city council. Additionally, the draft policy states that the Mayor or City Manager may require that applicants or organizations requesting usage of the lighting display provide a detailed assessment of the ancillary needs associated with their request, if needed. For example, if a ceremony were to be held along with the lighting display, the applicant could be required to submit an overview of the anticipated location and duration of the event or activity, or any other associated logistical needs that could impact city resources or staffing capacity.

ATTACHMENT(S)

Attachment(s) to Staff Report

- June 20, 2017 Adopted City of San José City Hall Special Event Lighting Policy
- Draft Resolution Establishing City of San Leandro City Hall Lighting Display Policy

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