

Holiday Display Task Force
Wednesday, September 19, 2007
City Hall, 300 LaPorte Avenue
Minutes

Meeting began at 5:05 p.m.

Those observing the meeting declined the opportunity to address the task force during public comment.

The task force reviewed the list of 09/11/07 draft Community Objectives grouped by themes.

Under theme heading "A holiday display should be educative" first bullet point "Reflect historical facts and accuracy." The task force discussed what is historical fact and accuracy. It was agreed that this statement was meant to mean historic origins in the context of the United States, and the bullet point was changed to reflect this.

Decision was made to change the last bullet point under same theme heading to "Make this a cultural celebration, not exclusively a religious celebration" and move under theme heading "Have a display that makes people feel welcomed not alienated."

The task force discussed secular versus religious symbols. It was suggested that the group focus on intent. The group should concentrate on the purpose and effect for any holiday display proposal to Council.

A question was raised: "What is the function of this list of objectives? What purpose will this list serve?" The list was created to help facilitate discussions, to help brainstorm and verbalize what the task force hopes to achieve. The exercise was to identify commonalities.

The edited list of community objectives grouped by themes is attached.

A suggestion was made to amend the Straw Poll to include the result of a poll taken by The Coloradoan last year from December 9th to December 26th. The question used for the poll "Do you think the City and the Downtown Development Authority should allow a menorah to be included in their holiday display on public property?" There were 5,267 respondents - 85.6% YES, 14.4% NO. Members discussed their interpretations of the poll. The poll results will be included in the minutes for future reference.

The question was raised, "Why does the City have a holiday display"? Most felt it is because the holiday season has significance to the community. Part of it is community, part economic and part to celebrate culture.

Tess then asked members to review the Straw Poll and, based on those or other ideas, begin to develop proposals. The following proposal was discussed:

- Educational & cultural display representative of the Fort Collins community
- Not promoting any religions

- Need to draft “Guidelines” for what are secular versus religious symbols
- Can change year to year
- Can include text
- Use a list of accepted iconography (e.g.; from the “Passport to Diversity” booklet or the Veterans Administration)

Issues yet to be discussed

- System if there are too many requests (Lottery?)
- Time Frame
- Cost, Funding Source
- Where would this be located?

Prior to closing the following “follow up” information was briefly discussed:

The City of Fort Collins has never had a living crèche to anyone’s knowledge.

Downtown Business Association sponsors Caroling. They have utilized Choice City Singers who select the song list.

Also, the Museum staff has expressed an interest in creating an educative display and is a possible resource.

Action items for staff in preparation for September 26th meeting:

- 1). Provide the City ordinance pertaining to unattended displays on city property
- 2). Provide a copy of proposal presented to City Council from the Human Relations Commission.

Meeting adjourned at 6:40 p.m.