

Holiday Display Task Force Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, October 24, 2007
City Hall, 300 LaPorte Avenue

Meeting began at 5:03 p.m.

Guests: 7 guests attended

Tess reviewed the meeting agenda with the task force.

Observers were invited to comment but declined. James summarized a telephone caller's opinion to the task force, though the caller had already spoken to the majority of members. The caller felt strongly that the recommendation should be a display that is purely secular in nature. The recommendation must separate government from religion. If trees are used, the decoration must not include stars or symbols traditionally viewed as religious in nature.

Tess introduced Chip Steiner, Executive Director of the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) and David Short, Executive Director of Downtown Business Association (DBA) to the task force. Seth provided a summary of the task force's ideas to date: white lights and secular symbols for the exterior of City buildings, an educational display at the Museum and a display at Oak Street Plaza in conjunction with MOCA.

Chip Steiner informed the task force that the 2007 Holiday Display for Old Town Square is in place and will proceed as the recommendation from the task force will be late for this winter season. Chip cannot speak for the Downtown Development Authority Board, but historically the Board has followed City policy. The task force asked if it would be possible to attend a Board meeting and Chip felt that it would be welcomed. He will place holiday display discussion on the December agenda and will let Tess know at what time those interested should arrive. Chip also relayed that buildings privately owned in Old Town Square can decorate to their preference and cannot be controlled by the DDA.

David Short addressed the group stating that the downtown business would love as much diversity as possible, which contributes to a healthier business atmosphere. CarolFest is sponsored by the DBA; the City is not involved other than it will tie into other events occurring, such as the lighting ceremony, also the caroling ends at the Museum. The DBA is very open to being inclusive of all cultures and would welcome a large community event Downtown.

The task force reviewed the "Draft Agenda Item Summary – Holiday Display Task Force Recommendations" and then discussed what interim recommendations could be made to Council this year as the City transitions to new displays. Members agreed on the following:

- 1) Ask the Museum to display at least three items representing multi-cultural symbols with attached educational information.
- 2) On the exterior of City buildings implement as much of the task force recommendation as possible. If purchasing materials this year, do so in a way that can be used in future years. Additionally, discontinue the use of red and green wreaths. Most individuals associate wreaths with Christmas.

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The majority of the task force members stated that they would like the City make a visible change during this transitional year. The community should see that the City has heard the need for change and has embraced the change in the spirit of the task force recommendation if it is at all possible given the constraints of time and money.

Seth will draft language to be presented to Council for the interim proposal at the Museum and the exterior of City owned buildings.

The task force was asked to review the draft "Guidelines for City Building and Common Areas" and send any feedback via email to Tess. At the next meeting (October 31st) be prepared to discuss whether edits need to be made.

October 31st agenda will include:

- Finalize recommendations, including
 - Guidelines for building interiors
 - Interim recommendations
- November 20th meeting details

Tess asked the task force if they would be willing to meet on November 7th if an additional meeting was needed and all agreed.

Meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.