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Memo

To: Members of Dublin City Council

From: Dana McDaniel, City Manager

Date: July 27, 2017

Initiated By:

Re: Tree Lighting Ceremony

Background

The City's History of lighting a Christmas tree has evolved over the past 30+ years, from the Dublin Women's Club Tree Lighting Ceremony that began years ago in Historic Dublin. This event eventually moved to City Hall in the early 1990's and incorporated local entertainment and photos with Santa. Cookies and hot chocolate were provided by the Dublin Kiwanis Club.

In 1997 the location of the ceremony moved to Coffman Park near the Dublin Community Recreation Center (DCRC.) The tree was named the Catherin Headlee Tree in honor of former mayor Headlee who in 1985, bought the first tree and decorations for City Hall. In the year 2000, the event moved further into Coffman park near the pavilion as a result of the DCRC Phase II expansion.

In 2004, the ceremony moved back to Historic Dublin on an empty lot at the Northwest Corner of Bridge and High Streets. The tree lighting event was scheduled to a week night with a fresh cut tree each year, and the Historic District Business Association established the Holly Days name for weekend holiday activities throughout the Historic District.

In 2008, the event moved to Dublin City School property at 62 West Bridge Street during the construction of the development at the corner of Bridge and High to the east of Indian Run Elementary at 60 West Bridge Street, using an established tree.

In 2012, this tree in front of 62 West Bridge Street was destroyed in the derecho that occurred that year. To replace it, the tree used since 2012 was planted in front of Indian Run Elementary specifically for the tree lighting event.

Today, this tree is declining in health and is no longer suitable for lighting. As a result, staff has considered other options for the tree lighting ceremony. Given the condition of the tree, the intensity of construction on North High Street and subsequent traffic and parking issues in the Historic District, it is necessary to temporarily re-locate the event until a new permanent location can be determined.

Staff proposes to move the Tree Lighting Ceremony temporarily to Coffman Park for the next few years. Staff will reevaluate after the construction is complete in Historic Dublin and will evaluate where the best location is for the future.

Given the history of the event's location in Coffman Park years ago, the ample parking that exists throughout the park and enhanced festival grounds south of the DCRC, staff is currently in the planning stages to hold the ceremony on this site. The specific location of the tree will be highly visible at the confluence of pathways just south of the large bridge spanning Indian Run. Plans are to purchase a 30 foot pre-lit commercial tree that will be visible to motorists on Post Road, Commerce Drive, Emerald Parkway, Coffman Park Drive and Interstate 270, (Please see the attached map.)

In addition to the tree lighting, staff plans to enter into contract with a professional lighting company to light the pathways from the parking lots in Coffman Park to the site of the tree and install decorations throughout the area.

The ceremony is scheduled to be held on Thursday, November 30. It will be similar in scope to the event that has been held in Historic Dublin. With additional space available, staff plans to include a few more seasonally related activities.

Historic Dublin will once again hold their Holly Days celebration the following Saturday on December 2nd with continued support of City staff (Sue to elaborate.)

Funds to finance the cost for the purchase of the tree and the additional lighting needed will be brought forward by finance in a supplemental appropriation (Need Angel's confirmation and or more information on this.)

Recommendation

Staff is not seeking any council action at this time.