



Agenda Report

21-1586

Agenda Date: 11/16/2021

REPORT TO PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

SUBJECT

Recommend Nominee(s) for Consideration as the “Honorary Holiday Tree Lighter 2021” for the Annual Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony on Friday, December 3, 2021

BACKGROUND

The Santa Clara Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony is held annually in Central Park on the first Friday evening in December. This Santa Clara tradition of decorating a tree for the holidays and placing an heirloom Teddy Bear in the top of it's branches is over 110 years old. In recent years, in addition to the heirloom Teddy Bear and colorful lights, the event festivities have included live stage music and entertainment, children's and family activities, a seasonal ice-skating rink, community information and non-profit food booths, and a short fireworks display depending upon budget and community interest.

The tradition also includes an official “Holiday Tree Lighter” which recognizes a Santa Clara individual, family or business that embodies the meaning of the holiday season of giving through their community service, generosity, and heartfelt positive spirit. The Santa Clara Holiday Tree Lighter receives a Mayoral Proclamation in recognition of the community service and generosity; and, as the honorary “Holiday Tree Lighter” lights the tree and opens the holiday season with service to others.

At the October 2021 Commission meeting, after discussion of potential nominees, an individual was nominated, however, the person did not meet the criteria of being a Santa Clara resident, and therefore, did not move forward for Mayoral consideration.

DISCUSSION

As an alternative, staff presents the Parks & Recreation Students of Service (SOS) program participants for Commission consideration for recommendation to the Mayor as the honorary Holiday Tree Lighter 2021. The Students of Service is designed to provide high school students with community service opportunities that enhance Parks & Recreation programs, provide leadership development opportunities, practical life and job skills, and strengthen participants' connection to the City, caring for its facilities, and their peer group. What began as a summer pilot program and now continues throughout the year, SOS involves approximately 40 Santa Clara high school students who have completed over 1000 hours of community service in various projects in the City of Santa Clara. Recent projects have included: beautification of Mission City Memorial Park (City Cemetery) planting pollinator gardens; planting native drought tolerant trees and landscape at Bowers Park; service at the Eddie Sousa Park & Community Garden, constructing beehives, repairing garden cold frames, mixing compost, and repairing rodent fencing; setting up and working carnival games for special events; serving food to seniors; and, are planning their next set of winter and spring projects.

The SOS Teens have not only provided a great service to the community, but they have gained skills

such as teamwork, leadership, cooperation, and added knowledge about their City. The Students of Service program participants meet the Santa Clara residency, community service and exemplary model for others to follow criteria for further Commission consideration as the Santa Clara honorary Holiday Tree Lighter 2021.

Alternatively, the Commission could nominate another qualified member of the community or organization that meets the Honorary Holiday Tree Lighter criteria.

The Commission will discuss a nominee, or nominees, and make a recommendation to the Mayor for consideration as the "Honorary Holiday Tree Lighter 2021."

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The action being considered does not constitute a "project" within the meaning of the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15378(b)(5) in that it is a governmental organizational or administrative activity that will not result in direct or indirect changes in the environment.

PUBLIC CONTACT

Public contact was made by posting the Parks & Recreation Commission's agenda on the City's official-notice bulletin board outside City Hall Council Chambers. A complete agenda packet is available on the City's website and in the City Clerk's Office at least 72 hours prior to a Regular Meeting and 24 hours prior to a Special Meeting. A hard copy of any agenda report may be requested by contacting the City Clerk's Office at (408) 615-2220, email clerk@santaclaraca.gov <<mailto:clerk@santaclaraca.gov>>.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Nominate the Students of Service Program participants to be recommended to the Mayor for consideration as the Honorary Holiday Tree Lighter 2021.
2. Nominate another qualified of the community member or organization to be recommended to the Mayor for consideration as the Honorary Holiday Tree Lighter 2021.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff has no recommendation.

Reviewed by: Kimberly Castro, Recreation Manager

Approved by: James Teixeira, Director of Parks & Recreation

ATTACHMENTS

1. List of Holiday Tree Lighters