

Capitola City Council

Agenda Report



Meeting: September 8, 2022
From: Department of Public Works
Subject: Village Palm Tree Lights Proposal

Recommended Action: Consider a request from the Capitola Village and Wharf Business Improvement Area to replace existing “bright-white” rope lights on the palm trees throughout the Village with “warm-white” rope lights.

Background: Historically the City, in partnership with the BIA, hung “twinkle lights” on the palm trees in Capitola Village during the holidays. Those lights were warm in color and emitted less light, and generally seemed well received, but required annual replacement. In around 2018 the BIA purchased bright white rope lights, which are more durable but emitted a different intensity light. In response to that change, the City Council adopted the Village Streetscape Decoration Policy, which outlines a process by which the BIA and others can propose new/changes to decorations hung in the streetscape.

In 2019 the City installed “warm white” and “off white” rope lights on two trees in the Village to solicit feedback. The input the City received was mixed, with some preferring the “warm white” rope lights and some preferring the “bright white” lights, and some indicating a preference for the historic twinkle lights.

On April 9, 2020, and because of the onset of the pandemic, City Council delayed consideration of a proposal from the Capitola Village and Wharf Business Improvement Area (BIA) to replace the rope lights hung on the Village palm trees with low voltage twinkle LED lights. That 2020 proposal had been based on prior City Council direction for the BIA to form an ad-hoc Village lighting committee to develop a plan to replace the rope lighting. At the time the item was delayed, Council allowed the existing rope lights to remain in place until a hearing could be held that allowed for in-person public access. Council and Staff did not fully anticipate the far-reaching effects of the pandemic, and as a result a public hearing on the Village palm tree lights was never held.

The BIA has now submitted a proposal to replace the existing bright-white rope lights with warm-white rope lights. This proposal would replace the existing lights, some of which do not currently work, and improve the electrical connections for the lights at the tree wells to increase reliability. The BIA would like to complete installation work prior to Thanksgiving and is currently soliciting bids from professional installers. The BIA proposal is included as Attachment 1. The lights in the Village are generally used from around the Thanksgiving Holiday through New Year’s.

Discussion: Replacing existing lights with the proposed warm-white lights would give the Village a new Holiday look and repair existing broken lights. The 2020 proposal to install low voltage LED lights had a cost of \$14,175; the funding included a request of \$6,000 from the City, \$5,000 from the BIA, and two donations totaling \$3,000 each, from the Capitola Safety Foundation and a private donor. The current proposal from the BIA does not indicate whether this funding is still available. A fully copy of the agenda material from April 2020, including the BIA proposal, is included as Attachment 2.

Fiscal Impact: If the Public Works crews are asked to hang new lights, staff time costs will incur. Those potential costs can be covered with existing personnel cost appropriations in the budget.

Attachments:

1. 2022 BIA proposal
2. April 9, 2020- agenda packet material

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