

MEMORANDUM



TO: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
FROM: VICTOR CARDENAS, CITY MANAGER
SUBJECT: PROCLAMATIONS
DATE: DECEMBER 13, 2023

The purpose of this correspondence is to provide a summary and reminder regarding City Council's current stay on issuing proclamations. Back in September, the Council's Rules Committee added the following language concerning presentations and proclamations:

This is reserved for and limited to presentations by or on behalf of the City itself to the City Council that do not require or anticipate Council action (e.g., presentation of the results of the national survey the City has conducted). It is not intended to be used by third parties. It is not intended to be used to issue proclamations of any kind, or statements in support of any individual or entity, or to recognize events taking place in the City. Under unusual circumstances, the Mayor may authorize use of this part of the agenda for a non-City presentation, but such use is intended to be rare.

The change, ultimately approved by the Rules Committee, resulted from feedback and concern over a proclamation presented in recognition of Surya Namaskar (SUN Salutation) Awareness Period, essentially promoting yoga during this time. The City has recognized this event for several years. Unbeknownst to us, the non-profit organizing the event, Hindu Swayarnsevak Sangh (HSS) has ties to a nationalist paramilitary ultra-fascist organization called Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). The RSS is particularly hostile to Muslims in India and is known to have set mosques ablaze. After this was brought to our attention, I met with a group of Novi Muslim residents who shared their concerns regarding the relationship between HSS and RSS. They recommend the City revise the proclamation to strike any reference to HSS. In response, City staff removed all proclamations from the City's site. We believed that doing so would be less "controversial" of all available options.

Since the change in policy, either staff or the sitting Mayor have received requests from

- Church of Scientology (L.Ron Hubbard's birthday)
- Condemnation of the Armenian Genocide
- Recommit to the United States and Israeli Relationship
- Ceasefire Resolution for the conflict in GAZA

There is no question that many of these are extremely significant matters face our nation/world; however, it is staff's recommendation that the City remain out of matters that we do not have purview over.