

**CITY OF ALBANY
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA
STAFF REPORT**

Agenda Date: 07/07/08

Reviewed by: BP

SUBJECT: Appropriation of funds for Support of the Albany Chamber of Commerce and the Solano Avenue Association

REPORT BY: Judy Lieberman, Assistant City Administrator

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

- 1) Approve \$12,500 in funds for FY08/09 to support the Albany Chamber of Commerce and implement the programs noted below; and
- 2) Approve \$12,500 in funds for FY08/09 to support the Solano Avenue Association, including \$5,000 for the Solano Stroll, the remainder to support the Lunar New Year celebration and other Solano Avenue events.

BACKGROUND

In FY2007/08 the City of Albany provided a total of \$27,000 in financial support for the Albany Chamber of Commerce and the Solano Avenue Association, as follows:

Albany Chamber of Commerce	\$16,000
Solano Avenue Association	\$11,000 (includes \$5000 for Solano Stroll) + waiver of fees for permits, paramedics and maintenance crew time

This year, both organizations have requested financial support from the City, and considering the two requests together will allow discussion of how to allocate these funds. The requests from the two organizations are as follows:

- 1) Chamber of Commerce: The Chamber of Commerce has requested a total of \$12,500 to fund specific event and program related activities. Each item is described in the Chamber's proposal, which is included as Attachment 1.
 - a. Holiday Season Activities and Promotions = \$2,800
 - b. Tour and Taste of Albany = \$6,000
 - c. Welcome to Albany Program = \$3,700
 - d. In addition, the Chamber is planning to work with the City's Arts Committee in 2008/2009 to create new banners to replace the Centennial banners that are scheduled to come down in May 2009. If sponsor names are allowed on the banners, the program can be self-funded. If not, the program would require City funding of \$10,000 for purchase of banners and mounting expenses. However, the Chamber is not requesting banner related funding at this time.

- 2) Solano Avenue Association: The SAA has requested a total of \$25,000 in overall support for their activities. (See Attachment #2.) While the Association did not break out this amount by events or programs, traditionally the City has provided \$5,000 in funding for the Solano Stroll. (In addition to the waivers granted for permit fees and paramedics.) Additional Albany events to be supported by these funds includes a Pumpkin Party festival, a “Santa on Solano” event run jointly with the Chamber, and a Lunar New Year celebration and parade.

DISCUSSION

In past years, the City has provided general operating support to the Albany Chamber of Commerce and has provided support to the SAA for the Solano Stroll. Last July, concerns were raised about the City subsidy to the Chamber, and the amount was reduced by 25% from the prior year, to \$16,000. At the same time, the SAA made its first request to obtain a general City subsidy for its operations, and received an additional \$6,000. Since funding for these two organizations comes from the same funding source, these requests are being presented together. Among the issues that may be considered as part of this discussion:

- a. Does the city wish to provide funds to support these two organizations?
- b. If so, should financial support be tied to specific programs or events or should it be a general subsidy?
- c. Does the larger geographical area covered by the Chamber have an impact on the amount that should be provided for each organizations? (the fact that SAA only covers Solano Avenue and extends into Berkeley)
- d. Are there specific programs or events that Council specifically wants to fund?
- e. Are there other ways in which these funds should be used?
- f. While not a specific monetary contribution, the time and expertise of the City’s new economic development consultants will assist both organizations with regard to program/event planning and implementation.

The staff recommendation for this year is to provide an equal amount to each organization and to tie funding to specific programs. A total of \$28,000 was approved in the FY 2008/2009 budget for community promotional support, that the same amount as in the past fiscal year. A total of \$25,000 would reserve \$3,000 for other needs or for small projects that may come up over the course of the year, including suggestions from the City’s new economic development consultants.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Authorize the allocation of \$12,500 to the Solano Avenue Association and \$12,500 to the Albany Chamber of Commerce from the non-departmental budget

Attachments

1. Albany Chamber of Commerce funding request for 2007/08
2. Letter from Solano Avenue Association to Council Members, June 12, 2008.
3. Minutes from meetings of 6/18/07 (Chamber request) and 7/2/07 (SAA request)