

16. Urgent Business Approved by the Presiding Member or by Decision

16.1 Christmas Lights – Rose Gardens

Committee	N/A
Council	28 October 2014
Applicant	City of Nedlands
Officer	Marion Granich – Manager Community Development
Director	Mike Cole – Director Corporate Services
Director Signature	
File Reference	CD-001259
Previous Item	Nil

Executive Summary

Administration has been requested to cost the installation of Christmas lights in a prominent location. This is an unbudgeted item and therefore is being put to Council for consideration.

Recommendation to Committee

Council approves expenditure of up to \$10,000 on Christmas lights.

Strategic Plan

KFA: Community Development

Christmas lighting would help generate community spirit by adding to the festive atmosphere of the holiday season.

Background

To date, the City has not installed any form of Christmas decoration in a public location. Larger local government authorities typically do install Christmas lighting, at varying costs. No figures were collected on the level of funds spent on Christmas decorations by other local governments, but informal estimates provided range from \$50,000 - in excess of \$100,000.

Key Relevant Previous Council Decisions:

Nil.

Consultation

Required by legislation:

Yes

No

Required by City of Nedlands policy: Yes No

Legislation / Policy

N/A

Budget/Financial Implications

Within current approved budget: Yes No
Requires further budget consideration: Yes No

This is an unbudgeted item and therefore requires Council approval. If expenditure on this item is approved by Council, Administration will incorporate the additional expenditure into the midyear budget review.

Risk Management

There is a risk of providing Christmas decorations that are aesthetically in poor taste, particularly given the limited budget. This risk has been mitigated by giving the potential installers clear design guidelines. There is no risk of budget blow-out, since potential installers have been provided with a maximum project cost of \$10,000.

Discussion

Administration has been requested to investigate the possibility of installing Christmas lights in a prominent location within the City. As there is currently no approved budget for this item, it is now presented to Council for consideration.

Location

Administration considered various locations within the City, for the installation of Christmas lighting. The key considerations were that the location should be:

- prominent;
- allow for the possibility of accommodating a Christmas event in future years;
- and should be practical.

In the longer term, the most cost-effective way to install Christmas lighting is to repeat the same design at the same location each year. In future years, Council may wish to provide an annual Christmas event at the site of the Christmas lighting. Therefore it is important to choose a location this year that could, if necessary, accommodate a community event at that location in future years.

The site also needs to be practical in terms of power access and access to whatever structure is to be decorated.

Initially, trees throughout the City were considered for lighting as a Christmas tree. The large gum tree in front of the Nedlands Library met the prominence criteria, being located on Stirling Highway. However, the Library site did not allow for the possibility of people gathering under it for a Christmas event in future years. It was also impractical in terms of cherry-picker access. Therefore the Library site was excluded.

Having considered other sites, the Peace Memorial Rose Gardens is now recommended as the preferred location, as it meets all three of the site criteria. It is a prominent location and Christmas lights installed along the arbor that runs parallel to Stirling Highway would be highly visible to passing motorists. The Rose Gardens could also, in future years, accommodate a gathering of community members, should Council wish to incorporate a community event into the turning on of the Christmas lights. For example, the City of Subiaco provides a relatively simple Christmas event, where local families gather to see the Christmas lights being turned on by the Mayor in early December each year. Children are given a small gift of sweets and the event is short, simple and relatively low cost. The Rose Garden location could, if required, accommodate a simple community event, if required in future.

Aesthetics

There is a risk of Christmas lighting appearing cheap and in poor taste. The Christmas season sees numerous examples of garish lighting displays depicting giant Father Christmases, sleighs, reindeers and various Christmas scene, all in flashing technicolour. While these displays might be appropriate for, and beloved of, individual households and businesses, Christmas lighting by the City should be simple, beautiful and appropriate to the high aesthetic standards of the area.

It is therefore proposed that the Christmas decorations at the Rose Gardens should be a single colour (white light only) and abstract in design (string lighting in 'fairy light' strands, suspended from the arbor that runs parallel to Stirling Highway.) This will provide a design that has maximum impact, with dignity and beauty. This simple and classic design also has the added advantage of being relatively cost-effective to design and install; while more complex and "realistic" designs that include figures, scenes and multiple colours are more labour intensive (and therefore more expensive) to design and to maintain.

Cost

Costs have been sought from three providers for an installation to the value of a maximum of \$10,000.

Timing

There has been some difficulty obtaining quotes for this project, due to the relatively modest budget and high demand on providers at this time of the year. However, one quote of \$9,800 has now been received and two more are due to be received this week. The difficulty in obtaining quotes until now is the reason this item has not been present to Council earlier. Should Council wish to go ahead with this project, then Administration will need to notify the selected installer this week. Therefore a decision cannot be delayed until the November round of Council meetings.

Conclusion

A Christmas lighting display at the Rose Gardens will add to community spirit by reflecting the spirit of the festive season. The proposed design is simple and appropriate to the high aesthetic standards of the area. It will also reflect an image of

the City that is appropriately dignified, avoiding the pitfalls of poor taste that sometimes characterize Christmas decorations.

The Peace Memorial Rose Gardens is an appropriate site, not only because it is prominent, can accommodate a community event in future if required, and practical; but also because peace is the central message of Christmas. Monochromatic, white 'fairy lights' lights, hung simply on the Rose Garden arbor, will create impact with a design that is peaceful and beautiful, as is appropriate to the site of the Peace Memorial Rose Gardens.

Attachments

Nil.

17. Confidential Items

Any confidential items to be considered.

Declaration of Closure

There being no further business, the Presiding Member will declare the meeting closed.