



TO: City Council
FROM: Community Development
SUBJECT: Brighten 2020 and Light-up Princeton
DATE: October 20, 2020

MEMORANDUM

Background:

The Princeton Area Chamber of Commerce and downtown businesses have previously held a light parade through downtown on Small Business Saturday as a way to increase activity downtown and as a way to boost local economic development for the holiday shopping season. 2020 has been an interesting year for everyone and the original goal was to revive the light parade in downtown Princeton, but due to social distancing procedures this event was not feasible. Thinking of ways to promote community, positivity and put Princeton on the map for regional visitors, and hopefully increase holiday shoppers, the Light-up Princeton event was devised. The plan is for this event to become an annual tradition for the City of Princeton and the community.

In conjunction with the Riverside Park light display (including lighting the trees along Rum River Drive) and event, local businesses will be encouraged to participate by lighting up their windows and buildings while participating in a lighting contest to run. The theme for this year's event will be focused on the Grinch. A map will be created with all of the participating businesses identified for visitors to view. This map will also include the locations of the PUC lighting contest entrants. As part of the Small Business Saturday the Chamber is also hosting a Shop Local QR Code Scavenger Hunt, as another incentive and push to encourage people to shop in Princeton this holiday season.

The lighting ceremony will take place around 6pm on Saturday November 28th with special visitors: Santa and the Grinch. The display will Light-up Princeton every night through Jan 1, 2021.

Analysis:

The total budget for the event is estimated to be approximately \$14,000. We have just started requesting donations and volunteers from area organizations as a way to help cover costs and some of the manpower necessary. We have received a generous donation of \$1,000 from Princeton Insurance for the event. The plan is to make more community requests from other local organizations and businesses who have a will to make this event a success. Though this may seem like a steep cost, it is an initial investment that will create a new tradition for years to come, in a year where the community is in need of some positivity. The costs

in years forward will be less substantial and can be budgeted for as an addition to the Beautification Committee (flowers and holiday street light) expenditures.

Additionally, the City of Princeton residents and visitors have shown their love for the Riverside-Riebe Park project improvements and the park has truly become a community asset and source of pride. This event would provide the city another opportunity to capitalize on the unique sense of place Princeton has created.

From a Community Development standpoint, events like this are essential to helping create a community worth visiting and even moving to. A recent study from the UofMn Extension has found that in rural Minnesota it is not only jobs that are attracting new residents and families, but due to the nature of transportation opportunities, families are choosing to live where they see the pace of life and community they desire. Though these kinds of events may seem frivolous or unnecessary they truly help communities grow and increase commercial sales and visits.

City staff recognize this event was not previously budgeted for, but in addition to the funds donated by Princeton Insurance, have left over funding in the Community Development - Community Promotion line item to cover \$4,000 of the costs to put on the event. The Chamber of Commerce has also received funds from Explore MN to promote an event like this to include newspaper ads and outreach to the local and neighboring communities, maps of the contest entrants, as well as signage (not included in the total budget).

In discussions with the PUC, they have provided us with a rebate program to help cover the cost of the led lights we purchase for the project, which can cover up to 50% off (depending on the number of bulbs, costs, etc).

Conversations regarding plowing of the park road, potential vandalism and other issues have occurred at a previous supervisor meeting.

Please see the attached estimated budget, as well as rebate form.

Recommendation:

City staff recommend moving forward with this project in some fashion (as the council sees fit) as a way to bolster the local economy and encourage community togetherness.

Scene #	Lights	Location	Cost	Quantity	Total
	Carport (for light tunnels)	Perimeter	\$ 129.99	2	\$ 259.98
	Solar Light Strands for Boulevard Trees (2 strads 72 ft each)	Rum River Drive	\$ 29.99	13	\$ 389.87
	Park Light Strands ((c6)- For shelter, tunnels, bathroom)	Park	\$ 6.88	120	\$ 825.60
	Park Light Strands for trees (c6 led)	Park	\$ 6.88	100	\$ 688.00
	Green house (walking tunnel towards fishing pier)	Park	\$ 173.99	1	\$ 173.99
	Extension cords:	Park	\$ 27.99	20	\$ 559.80
	Light Controller System	Park	\$1,000.00	1	\$ 1,000.00
	Tomato Cages for Trees	Perimeter	\$ 2.00	20	\$ 40.00
	c6 light strands for tomato cage trees	perimeter	\$ 6.88	40	\$ 275.20
1	Northpole Railroad Crossing	Center	\$ 225.00	1	\$ 225.00
1	North pole Express Train	Center	\$1,995.00	1	\$ 1,995.00
2	Northpole fire engine	center	\$1,175.00	1	\$ 1,175.00
3	Toasty Snowman with marshmallow elf	Center	\$ 600.00	1	\$ 600.00
3	Happy Campers	center	\$1,800.00	1	\$ 1,800.00
3	Santa Fishing on Dock	Center	\$ 610.00	1	\$ 610.00
4	Girl Catching Snow flakes	hill side	\$ 545.00	1	\$ 545.00
4	Boy frozen to pole	hill side	\$ 375.00	1	\$ 375.00
4	Kid on sled	hill side	\$ 650.00	1	\$ 650.00
5	Santa Airplane with Banner	center on tree in "air"	\$ 525.00	1	\$ 525.00
6	Santa Sleigh with 3 Deer	top of park shelter	\$ 695.00	1	\$ 695.00
	Estimated PUC Light Rebate: \$756.80				\$ (756.80)
Total:					\$ 12,650.64