



**CITY OF BEVERLY HILLS
STAFF REPORT**

Meeting Date: November 18, 2008
To: Honorable Mayor & City Council
From: James Latta, Human Services Administrator, *J.L.L.*
Julie Kahn, Human Services Outreach Manager
Brad Meyerowitz, Recreation Services Manager
Subject: Human Relations and Recreation and Parks Commission
Update on a Multicultural Week, Spring 2009
Attachments: None

INTRODUCTION

This report provided is an update which outlines the work being accomplished at present with the goal of implementing a new Community Services Multicultural Week, spring 2009.

DISCUSSION

Following the City's second Multicultural Festival, on March 9, 2008, a meeting was held to discuss the future, if any, of additional multicultural events. Although the event achieved the goals set, the event was not perceived as successful. Community Services Director Steve Miller convened a meeting on April 1, 2008 with Human Relations Commission Chair Yar Meshkaty, Recreation and Parks Commission Chair Kathi Rothner, Recreation Services Manager Brad Meyerowitz, and Interim Human Services Administrator Julie Kahn, for a critical review.

Comments, issues and discussion points that emerged from that meeting included: Evaluate the purpose and whether there was sufficient interest in the community and among grass roots cultural groups to warrant another event; consider alternating the event *every other year* with another event (e.g., Winter Wonderland); select a time in the future with the best opportunity to make it what we want; consider co-sponsoring an event produced by a private entity; continue to look at the community and evaluate the need and/or desire over time.

On July 8, 2008, Director Steve Miller convened a meeting to open a dialogue with the Recreation and Parks Commission and the Human Relations

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Commission on options and ideas for future ways to explore and celebrate the City's diversity. In attendance were Recreation and Parks Commission Chair Kathi Rothner and Vice Chair Marc O'Krent, Human Relations Commission Chair Yar Meshkaty and Commissioners Barbara Linder and Ilona Sherman, Recreation Services Managers Brad Meyerowitz and Teri Angel, Interim Human Services Administrator Julie Kahn and summer intern Micaela England. The dialogue among the group raised questions such as: If there were an event, what would be our goal? What do we want to accomplish? Is there a need to fulfill? Do we want to educate? Entertain? Celebrate? Representatives from each commission were charged with returning to their respective commissions to continue the dialogue, and then meet again to discuss a draft plan created by both commissions to include a mission, goal, range and establishment of community support.

Director Miller convened a meeting on September 9, 2008 after discussions by the Human Relations Commission on July 17, and the Recreation and Parks Commission on August 26 that indicated there was support from both commissions for some form of multicultural program. Those present were: Human Relations Chair Meshkaty and commissioners Linder and Sherman; Recreation and Parks Chair Kathi Rothner and Commissioner Jill Tavelman Collins; Assistant Director of Community Services/Recreation and Parks Steve Zoet; Human Services Administrator James Latta, Human Services Outreach Manager Julie Kahn, and Recreation Services Manager Brad Meyerowitz.

After extensive dialogue, Director Miller considered all the comments made and asked that each commission consider the concept of using existing programs and opportunities during a week-long series of options for people to get involved in a variety of multi-culturally themed ways. The timing for such a week would be around mid-April or May. Costs would be minimized and scope expanded by the use of existing programs and resources (e.g., the Farmers' Market, Beverly Hills Forum, Library Read-Around; Beverly Hills Unified School District's individual school events). It would not be planned as an annual program. However, if it hit the mark, those components that were effective could continue in the future.

Once a draft plan for a spring 2009 program is created that builds on existing resources and funding, and includes a mission, goal, range and establishment of community support an update will be given to the City Council.

Steve Miller

Approved By