

ITEM #: 35
DATE: 7-14-09

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: REQUEST FROM MAIN STREET CULTURAL DISTRICT (MSCD) FOR FREE PARKING FOR DOWNTOWN SUMMIT PARTICIPANTS

BACKGROUND:

The Main Street Cultural District is hosting the Annual Iowa Downtown Summit on August 25 and 26, 2009. Up to 300 attendees are expected, and the MSCD is requesting "hang tags" as a method to allow those guests to park free-of-charge from 8 AM - 6 PM on both days. Staff reviewed existing ordinances and found nothing in the Municipal Code that would allow the City to accommodate this request without an amendment to one or more of the existing ordinances governing parking in public lots.

Under Section 18.24, the City Council may suspend any parking restriction or regulations for a period of time not to exceed 72 hours for the purpose of accommodating the parking needs associated with a special public or private event or occurrence. Central Business District Lots X, Y, and Z contain 400 unreserved parking spaces. Although 300 persons are expected to participate in the Downtown Summit, not all of those will drive separately.

Most of the Summit's sessions will take place in City Hall, which is a less than two blocks away from Parking Lots X, Y, and Z. Lots X, Y, and Z could easily accommodate the parking needs for this Summit. There are no meters in those lots; however, there is a three-hour parking limit. If parking regulations are suspended, that limit would be waived for all persons parking in these lots.

Staff feels that the best solution to this request would be to suspend parking enforcement for Lots X, Y, and Z. That would allow anyone (not just Summit participants) to park, without the three-hour restriction, on August 25 and/or 26. No barricades would need to be manned, and no hang tags would be required.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Approve the suspension of parking regulations for Lots X, Y, and Z on August 25 and 26, 2009, from 8 AM to 6 PM.
2. Deny the request of the Main Street Cultural District to allow participants in the Downtown Summit to park free-of-charge on August 25 and 26, 2009.

MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

It is the Manager's recommendation that the City Council adopt Alternative 1 and approve the suspension of parking regulations for Lots X, Y, and Z on August 25 and 26, 2009, from 8 AM to 6 PM. The Downtown Summit, a statewide event, is estimated to bring 300 persons to the City for two days. The City Council has indicated a desire to support the Main Street Cultural District in the past, and suspending parking enforcement to allow Summit participants to park free-of-charge is a way of continuing that support.

June 16, 2009

Mayor and City Council
City of Ames
515 Clark Ave
Ames, IA 50010

Mayor Campbell and City Council,

The Main Street Cultural District has been selected to host the 23rd Annual Iowa Downtown Summit on August 25 and 26th. This year's theme is Advancing Marketplace Entrepreneurship & Sustainability. Prominent downtown development experts from across the U.S. will help both rural and urban communities become more inspired, make new connections and enhance efforts to keep city centers vibrant and competitive.

A wide variety of learning opportunities will be offered in sessions such as utilizing online social media, walkability, business planning and financing in the new economy, branding, water infiltration, entrepreneurial diversity, board development, tax credits, Salt Lake City's e2 Business Program and embracing change. Most of these sessions will take place in City Hall.

Main Street Cultural District is expecting up to 300 Downtown professionals at this year's summit. We are requesting hang tags for these out of town guests for parking in our downtown lots. This will allow them to park from 8 am -6 pm on Tuesday, August 25 and Wednesday August, 26, free of charge. We will direct them to use the X, Y, Z, M & N lots

Thank you for your consideration of this request and continued support of the Main Street Cultural District. We are working hard to make this a great showcase for Ames.

Sincerely,

Jayne E. McGuire
Jayne E, McGuire
Director
Main Street Cultural District