

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

**SUBJECT: REQUEST FROM AMES MAIN STREET TO ACCEPT OUTDOOR LIGHTING
DONATION**

BACKGROUND:

On November 18, 2025, the City Council referred to a future agenda a letter from Ames Main Street requesting that the City accept the donation of outdoor lights (Letter attached). The lighting was obtained by Ames Main Street through a grant. Ames Main Street has requested that the lighting be used on the trees in Tom Evans Plaza during the winter months.

In response to advice from the City Attorney in 2023, the Council adopted a policy that no ongoing displays, other than City-owned displays, will be allowed on City property, with the exception of temporary displays in conjunction with a rally or gathering of people. **If the City was to accept the donation of the lighting and decide whether and how to use it, then the City is not creating a public forum that would require the City to allow any organization to erect a display on City property.**

It should be emphasized that the City's acceptance of the gift of the lights is unconditional. The City will decide whether, where, and how to display the lights, and the City may sell or dispose of the lights at any time if it is determined to be in the City's best interest. In addition, there will be no obligation to repair the lights should they fail.

Staff estimates the lights will require four staff members approximately a half day to install. If the City Council agrees to accept the lighting, then staff proposes that they be displayed in Tom Evans Plaza. Tom Evans Plaza contains sufficient space and available electrical receptacles to adequately display the lights. **In order to minimize the ongoing staff time obligation to display the lights, the lights will not be removed each season, and will instead be left on the trees indefinitely.**

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Accept the unconditional donation of outdoor lighting.
2. Do not accept the donation.
3. Refer this item to staff for further information.

CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

The proposed donation would provide the City with lighting that could be installed for a variety of events, activities, or seasons. The lighting is in good condition. By accepting the donation, the City would have complete discretion as to whether and how the lighting is installed within the community, and whether or not to continue displaying

them. Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council adopt Alternative No. 1, as described above.

ATTACHMENT(S):

[T. Toliver - Gifting of LED Lights Request to City of Ames Letter.pdf](#)