

# MEMORANDUM

Recreation and Community Services Department



**DATE:** March 23, 2022

**TO:** Mayor and Councilmembers

**THROUGH:** Steve McHarris, City Manager *Steve McHarris*

**FROM:** Renee Lorentzen, Director of Recreation and Community Services

**SUBJECT:** **Flag Raising Ceremony Program – Rules and Responsibilities**

## **Background and Overview**

Milpitas celebrates its diversity with flag raisings to honor different communities represented by residents within Milpitas. In September 2021 City Council adopted a resolution directing staff to annually fly the City Event Celebration Flags and/or other Commemorative Flags for various Recreation and Community Services events in connection with and during periods of up to 30 days of recognition. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, ceremonies were organized and led by Recreation and Community Services Department staff who sometimes worked in partnership with interested cultural communities. Ceremonies were mildly attended by the general public.

As part of the approval of the FY 2021-22 Adopted Budget, the City Council approved a reduction in funding for community events including a reorganization of flag raising ceremonies. With the new model, operationalized in the Program Rules and Responsibilities, local cultural groups take the lead role in organizing flag raising ceremony events with City staff providing a supportive role. If for any event, staff cannot find a local cultural group serving as the host, staff will organize a no-host flag raising, as outlined below.

As stated in the budget document, with local cultural groups taking the lead, staff is able to maintain the same number of cultural flag raising events.

## **Program Rules and Responsibilities**

The City Council approved 12 annual flag raising ceremony events are:

- Black History Month
- Cesar Chavez Day
- Vietnamese Heritage Month
- Asian Pacific American Month
- Public Safety Day
- Eritrea Independence Day
- LGBTQ+ Pride Month
- Philippines Independence Day
- Juneteenth
- Hispanic Heritage Month
- Filipino American History Month
- Native American Heritage and Culture Month

## **Application for Hosting a Flag Raising Ceremony Event:**

Groups interested in organizing and hosting a Flag Raising Ceremony can visit the City's website for a complete list of [Flag Raisings](#) and to submit the Flag Raising Ceremony [Host Application](#). Applications

will only be accepted for ceremonies related to the flags approved by City Council through the [Commemorative Flag Resolution](#).

**Flag Raising Ceremony Event Parameters – Hosted Events**

Flag Raising Ceremonies are outdoor events held in the Cesar Chavez Plaza (457 E. Calaveras Blvd.). Ceremonies are limited to one hour maximum. Events can be scheduled for non-City holiday weekday or Saturday mornings, 9-10 a.m. or weekday evenings, 5-6 p.m. or 6-7 p.m. Events can include a ceremony (up to 35 minutes) and reception to follow.

Ceremonies are prescribed to include elements such as:

- Anthem singer
- Raise the Commemorative Flag
- Invocation
- Up to three additional performances
- Up to three speakers
- Ambient music following the ceremony
- Hosted pre-wrapped snacks or non-alcoholic beverages
- Information Tables (up to 4)

Host organizations can apply to provide any or all of the above, plus outdoor decor (subject to City staff approval) and must ensure the ceremony rules are followed, including but not limited to all performers signing a Hold Harmless agreement and invitation to all City Councilmembers. Host organizations are also key to successful marketing of an event by working with City staff on materials, logos, and language, as well as doing their own outreach within the community. Ceremony food or beverage is the responsibility of the host organization.

With this new program the Recreation and Community Services staff continue to support the ceremonies by:

- Obtain, provide, and maintain all ceremony flags;
- Provide furniture: Podium, all seating for Speaker and Dignitaries and audience seating for up to 150, (4) information tables, (4) food service tables, basic sound system (speaker's handheld microphone and speakers);
- Provide marketing staff support through marketing collateral creation and distribution through City publications and media messaging channels, and ceremony programs; and
- Provide staff to help during the ceremony.

**Flag Raising Ceremony Event Parameters – No Host Flag Raising**

Should no host organizations apply for any one of the approved flag ceremonies, staff will raise the commemorative flag and post, via social media, video of the flag being raised with supportive messaging. No ceremony will be held.

**Flag Raising Ceremony Program Outreach to Community Groups and Transition**

Staff started its new program informational outreach to local non-profits, churches, service clubs, and cultural community groups in late summer of 2021, and the general community through Social Media. Around the same time, in-person event mandate restrictions were lifted allowing small in-person gatherings. To help bridge the return of in-person events safely in the community, staff co-coordinated and supported three Flag Raising Ceremonies celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month (September), Filipino American History Month (October), and Native American Heritage and Culture Month

(November). Due to the COVID-19 Omicron Variant outbreak in late December 2021/January 2022, staff did not receive any host organization applications for Black History Month or Cesar Chavez Day.

Staff recently renewed efforts of outreach to the local cultural community to encourage interest and participation for flag ceremonies in late spring and early summer of 2022.

**Referring the Community**

When Members of the City Council receive inquiries from the community regarding a Flag Raising Ceremony, staff recommends that they share the [Flag Raising Ceremony Program Page](#). For inquiries to add or remove a flag to the City Council approved Commemorative Flag list, please refer community members to Renee Lorentzen, Director of Recreation and Community Services, at [rlorentzen@ci.milpitas.ca.gov](mailto:rlorentzen@ci.milpitas.ca.gov).