

TO: City Council

FROM: Community Funding Review Committee

DATE: December 12, 2017

SUBJECT: FY 2017-18 Community Enhancement Grant Award Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Approve Community Enhancement Grants (CEG) totaling \$39,426, and authorize the City Manager to execute agreements with grantees.
2. Approve budget appropriation in the amount of \$25,000 from A/C #632-0000-341-9900 (Community Enhancement Grant Fund/Net Position) to A/C #632-8420-682-5920 (NC0104, Community Enhancement Fund/Grants), and expenditure in the amount of \$39,426 from A/C #632-8420-682-5920 (NC0104, Community Enhancement Fund/Grants).

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

\$25,000 Increase to FY 2017-18 Community Enhancement/Solid Waste Fund Budget. Budget appropriation in the amount of \$25,000 is requested from the Community Enhancement Grant Fund Net Position. \$14,500 is included in the Adopted FY 2017-18 Community Enhancement/Solid Waste Fund Budget.

BACKGROUND:

The CEG Program was established in June 1998 with a \$1.6 million endowment to help fund community projects, such as freeway ramp litter removal, neighborhood clean-up, and community enhancement projects. City Council approved an additional \$0.4 million endowment in September 1999, for a total endowment of \$2.0 million. The program has awarded approximately \$798,600 since its inception. Grants are funded by interest earnings from the Community Enhancement Fund and up to \$45,000 is awarded annually.

The CEG Program is available to local nonprofit community and school groups and provides grant awards between \$2,000 and \$5,000 per organization per year. A Community Funding Review Committee, appointed by City Council, evaluates

grant proposals and makes award recommendations. Evaluation criteria include: (i) prior funding (higher priority for those groups without prior funding); (ii) innovation; (iii) environmental benefit; and (iv) projects that reduce use of single use disposables, or conserve water or energy.

Last year, City Council awarded 11 Community Enhancement Grants totaling \$45,000. Attachment #1 provides a listing of grant awardees over the past five years.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS:

When the Community Enhancement Fund was established, interest rates were sufficient to fund three programs from earnings – Adopt-A-Hwy, Neighborhood Cleanup, and Community Enhancement Grants. However, in recent years as interest rates have fallen, interest earnings are no longer sufficient to cover all three programs. Adopt-A-Hwy and Neighborhood Cleanup were shifted to the Solid Waste Fund a few years ago, leaving the CEG Program as the only one still funded by interest earnings in the Community Enhancement Fund. However, with interest rates still low, the Fund is only generating approximately \$20,000 per year, insufficient to fund grants at their existing level. This fiscal year is potentially the last in which there are sufficient interest earnings remaining to fund the CEG program at its current level. In future years, it is proposed that CEG Program funding be limited to interest earnings alone which will likely cap awards at approximately half their current \$45,000 level.

Public outreach for the grant program took place in September and October 2017 and included a news posting on the City website, a *Go Green* e-newsletter article (10,000 active subscribers), social media posts, email sent to the 2016-17 CEG grant recipients, and a press release published in *the Acorn* on September 21, 2017. An email was also sent to the Conejo Valley Unified School District administrative offices for forwarding to district schools and email announcements were sent to other nonprofit and school contacts. Complete program information can be found on the dedicated CEG page on the City website and on the online Sustainability Calendar of Events page.

This year, 11 applications for funding were received. Two were rejected for non-compliance with program requirements. The Community Funding Review Committee met in October to review the nine remaining applications with a total request of \$39,426. The Committee unanimously approved and recommended all nine to receive full funding (Attachment #2).

Upon approval by City Council, grantees will enter into agreements with the City and will have until October 15, 2018 to complete their projects. Grantees receive \$2,000 of the grant award immediately after execution of the contract, and the balance upon receipt of the final project report.

COUNCIL GOAL COMPLIANCE:

Meets City Council Goals B, E and G:

- B. Operate City government in a fiscally and managerially responsible and prudent manner to ensure that the City of Thousand Oaks remains one of California's most desirable places to live, work, visit, recreate, and raise a family.
- E. Provide and enhance essential infrastructure to ensure that the goals and policies of the Thousand Oaks General Plan are carried out and the City retains its role and reputation as a leader in protecting the environment and preserving limited natural resources.
- G. Participate in public-private and multi-jurisdictional opportunities to ensure residents have access to high levels of parks, recreation, education and leisure programs and services.

PREPARED BY: Britta Halfen, Community Funding Review Committee Chair
Vanessa Pellegrino, Assistant Analyst

Attachments:

- Attachment #1 – 5-year Grant Award Summary
- Attachment #2 – Grant Award Recommendations