



Peace and Justice Commission

CONSENT CALENDAR

March 20, 2007

To: Honorable Mayor and
Members of the City Council

From: Peace and Justice Commission

Submitted by: Manuel Hector Jr., Secretary, Peace and Justice Commission

Subject: Sixth Annual Peace Lantern Ceremony

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution endorsing the Sixth Annual Peace Lantern Ceremony to be held in Aquatic Park on Sunday, August 5, 2007; and directing the City Manager to post the event on the City's Community Calendar.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

None. All costs of producing the event have been borne by the individuals and community organizations participating in the event, and no funding is requested from the City of Berkeley.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECT

An ad-hoc group of citizens, including several members of the Peace and Justice Commission, is organizing for the sixth year a Japanese-style peace lantern ceremony, to take place at the Aquatic Park lagoon on Sunday, August 5, 2007, the 62nd anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, Japan, near the end of World War II. The ceremony is a beautiful and moving tradition that has been imported from Japan by many cities in the United States and throughout the world, and is an excellent family activity in which children as well as adults can decorate and prepare lanterns for floating on the Aquatic Park lagoon.

This annual event is one element of a lively, ongoing exchange of peace activists between Berkeley and Japan during the past four years, including several delegations visiting Berkeley from Japan and three members of this Commission speaking at peace conferences in Japan.

BACKGROUND

Peace lantern ceremonies are held in the United States and throughout the world each August to commemorate the anniversaries of the only two times nuclear weapons were used against populations, and to remember and honor all victims of war. In a centuries-old Japanese tradition, lanterns are floated on water to honor the souls of departed loved ones. After 1945, the ceremony was adapted in many communities to focus on the desire to build a more peaceful world.

In 2002, Peace and Justice Commission member Steve Freedkin was invited on a speaking tour of Japan to tell about the Berkeley community's aspirations and activism toward a better future, including its Nuclear Free Berkeley Act and other efforts to create a nuclear-free world. In

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Osaka, he was introduced to a woman who survived the firebombing of that city in World War II. She told him she previously attended peace lantern ceremonies every year, but that her health no longer allowed her to do so consistently. He promised he would do so each year on her behalf.

Upon returning to Berkeley, he discovered that there was no nearby peace lantern ceremony, so he and several friends and colleagues created one. In 2002, with a goal of bringing a dozen people together for the event, the group saw more than 100 in attendance. Berkeley's event drew the participation of more than 300 in 2003, more than 400 in 2004, more than 600 in 2005, and an estimated 650 in 2006.

At its meeting of February 5, 2007, the Peace and Justice Commission approved the following motion:

M/S/C (*Freedkin/Litman*) that the Peace and Justice Commission adopt a Resolution (Attachment 3) endorsing the 6th Annual Berkeley Peace Lantern Ceremony; encouraging the City Council to endorse the Ceremony and directing that it appear on the City's Community Calendar on its website; encouraging the BUSD to endorse the Ceremony. **Ayes:** Unanimous; **Absent:** None.

Past Council Action

On July 15, 2003 by Resolution No. 62,178-N.S., the City Council endorsed the 2nd Annual Peace Lantern Ceremony held in Aquatic Park on August 9, 2003.

On July 13, 2004 by Resolution No. 62,593-N.S., the City Council endorsed the 3rd Annual Peace Lantern Ceremony held in Aquatic Park on August 7, 2004.

On May 24, 2005 by Resolution No. 62,921-N.S., the City Council endorsed the 4th Annual Peace Lantern Ceremony held in Aquatic Park on August 6, 2005.

On July 11, 2006 by Resolution No. 63,379-N.S., the City Council endorsed the 5th Annual Peace Lantern Ceremony held in Aquatic Park on August 6, 2006.

CITY MANAGER

The City Manager concurs with the content and recommendations of the Commission's report.

CONTACT PERSON

Steve Freedkin, Chairperson, Peace and Justice Commission, (510) 644-2778
Manuel Hector Jr., Secretary, Peace and Justice Commission, (510) 981-5110

Attachment

1. Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. -N.S.

ENDORISING THE SIXTH ANNUAL BERKELEY PEACE LANTERN CEREMONY

WHEREAS, Berkeley Municipal Code § 3.68.010 states, in part: "The [Peace and Justice] commission shall perform the following functions: (A) Advise the Berkeley City Council and the Berkeley Unified School Board on all matters relating to the City of Berkeley's role in issues of peace and social justice, including, but not limited to the issues of ending the arms race, [and] abolishing nuclear weapons...; (C) Help develop proposals for the City Council and the School Board for actions in furtherance of the goals of peace and justice, and help publicize such actions in the community"; and

WHEREAS, on Sunday evening, August 5, 2007, the day before the 62nd anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, Japan, residents of Berkeley and vicinity will come together at Aquatic Park in Berkeley for the sixth annual Peace Lantern Ceremony in remembrance of the victims of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki (August 9, 1945) during World War II, and of all victims of war; and

WHEREAS, the ceremony is a beautiful and moving tradition that has been imported from Japan by many cities in the United States and throughout the world, and Berkeley's event drew the participation of approximately 100 people in 2002, more than 300 in 2003, more than 400 in 2004, more than 500 in 2005, and an estimated 650 in 2006; and

WHEREAS, the event is an excellent family activity in which children as well as adults can decorate and prepare lanterns for floating on the Aquatic Park lagoon; and

WHEREAS, the Peace and Justice Commission endorsed the previous annual Peace Lantern Ceremonies, as did the City Council and numerous Berkeley-area peace and justice organizations; and

WHEREAS, this annual event, initiated by a member of the Peace and Justice Commission, is one element of a lively, ongoing exchange of peace activists between Berkeley and Japan during the past four years, including several delegations visiting Berkeley from Japan and three members of this Commission speaking at peace conferences in Japan; and

WHEREAS, all costs of producing the event have been borne by the individuals and community organizations participating in the event, and no funding is requested from the Commission, the City, or the School District; and

WHEREAS, on February 5, 2007, the Peace and Justice Commission unanimously approved a motion to endorse the sixth annual Berkeley Peace Lantern Ceremony.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Council of the City of Berkeley endorses the sixth annual Berkeley Peace Lantern Ceremony to be held on Sunday, August 5, 2007 in Aquatic Park.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City Manager is directed to post the event on the City's Community Calendar on its website.

