



Human Relations Commission Memorandum

City of Arts & Innovation

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TO: HONORABLE COMMISSIONERS **DATE:** SEPTEMBER 26, 2024

FROM: HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION **WARDS:** ALL
CHAIR

**SUBJECT: MEMO TO THE CITY COUNCIL REGARDING RESOLUTION NO. 23947 –
DISPLAY OF COMMEMORATIVE FLAGS AT CITY FACILITIES**

ISSUE:

Memo to the City Council regarding the September 17, 2024, City Council agenda item #5, regarding Resolution No. 23947 – display of commemorative flags at City facilities.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Human Relations Commission:

1. Discuss the draft memo to the City Council regarding the September 17, 2024, City Council agenda item #5 regarding repealing Resolution 23947; and
2. Approve that the memo be submitted as a written public comment on behalf of the Human Relations Commission to the City Council for the October 8, 2024, City Council meeting.

BACKGROUND:

On January 17, 2023, the city Council adopted Resolution No. 23947 establishing the City of Riverside Flag Policy which provides a set of guidelines to ensure the uniform handling and display of flags at City facilities. In addition, the adopted Flag Policy set forth guidelines for the display of commemorative flags. A commemorative flag under this policy referred to a flag that identified a specific date, historical event, cause, or group of people, whereby the City honors or commemorates the date, event, cause, or group of people by flying the flag. At this same meeting, the City Council requested that staff solicit input from the Human Relations Commission (HRC) regarding developing a schedule for display of commemorative flags at City facilities.

On February 23, 2023, staff solicited input from the HRC on a commemorative flag display schedule for City facilities. Some of the groups of people or causes supported by the HRC did not have an established or recognized commemorative flag available to use. These groups included Dr. Martin Luther King Day, Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, Latino/a Heritage Month, and Indigenous Peoples or Native American Heritage Month.

On May 2, 2023, by a majority vote, the City Council approved the display of established or commonly recognized commemorative flags incorporating input from the HRC but did not give direction for suggested groups of people or causes for which there is currently no established or commonly recognized commemorative flag.

On June 6, 2023, by a majority vote the City Council adopted Resolution No. 23996 authorizing the display of commemorative flags at City Hall and where possible at other City facilities for the following:

1. Holocaust Remembrance Day (January 27)
2. Black History Month (February)
3. Women's Suffrage Victory Flag (March)
4. LGBTQ Pride Month (Entire month of June except for June 19)
5. Juneteenth (June 19)

The groups previously supported by the HRC to be recognized that did not have commemorative flags were not included in Resolution No. 23996.

On January 16, 2024, by a majority vote the City Council approved the commemorative flag schedule for the upcoming year consisting of Holocaust Remembrance Day, Black History Month, Women's Suffrage Victory Flag, LGBTQ Pride Month and Juneteenth. At this same meeting, staff were directed to return to the City Council with a resolution supporting the City's display of the flags chosen.

On January 31, 2024, the HRC provided input for recognizing groups and causes that do not have an established commemorative flag. The HRC recommended supporting these groups and causes with a Proclamation presented during the corresponding recognition month, along with a photo opportunity with the Mayor and the City Council. When a specific color is associated with the cause, the HRC suggested that City Hall and the Grier Pavilion be lit up in the associated color, if possible. Additionally, it was suggested that the City's Marketing and Communication team add these groups, causes, and dates to the City's Cultural Holidays and Celebratory Months calendar for social media awareness. The HRC also offered several suggestions for consideration, such as student art contests to design posters, and use of RiversideTV to raise awareness of the recognized groups and causes.

In addition to the causes previously listed, the HRC recommended that the City Council expand the groups and causes for recognition which do not have an established commemorative flag to include Human Trafficking Awareness Day, Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month, Deaf Awareness Week, Lunar New Year, Mental Health Awareness Month, Black Balloon Day, and National Poverty in America Awareness Month.

On February 27, 2024, the City Council approved the addition of Disability Pride Month flag to the commemorative flag schedule for the upcoming year and directed staff to return to Council with a resolution authorizing the display of the Disability Pride Month Flag during the month of July.

On April 3, 2024, the Governmental Processes Committee considered the HRC's input on how to recognize groups and causes which do not have established commemorative flags. The Committee unanimously approved of moving the item forward for City Council consideration.

On April 9, 2024, the City Council approved a resolution authorizing the display of the Disability Pride Month Flag during the month of July.

At the City Council meeting on August 6, 2024, the City Council received the input from the HRC for recognizing groups and causes which do not have commemorative flags and consider an expanded list of groups and causes without commemorative flags for recognition. Following discussion, it was moved by Councilmember Cervantes and seconded by Councilmember Hemenway to approve the HRC's suggestions. Following further discussion, a substitute motion was made by Councilmember Conder and seconded by Councilmember Mill to reverse the previous decision by council to display commemorative flags and return to displaying only the flags for the United States of America, State flag of California, and City of Riverside flag. The main motion failed with a vote of two yes and five no votes. The substitute motion was dismissed.

DISCUSSION:

On September 5, 2024, the City Council published an agenda that included the following agenda item #5 on the Discussion Calendar for the September 17 Council meeting:

“Councilmember Conder recommends repealing Resolution No. 23947, dated January 17, 2023, and return to displaying only the United States of America flag, the State flag of California, and the flag of the City of Riverside on all city owned buildings and flag poles.”

The outcome of the City Council discussion item is not known at the time of this report publishing, however at the recommendation of Chair Cavett and Vice Chair German of the HRC, a draft memo (Attachment 1) has been created to express the HRC's collective disappointment in the City Council's decision to agendize the item to consider repealing the City's Flag Raising Policy which allowed for recognition of marginalized groups through the raising of flags on City property with City Council approval. Should the Commission choose to collectively endorse and approve of the memo drafted by Chair Cavett and Vice Chair German, all members of the Commission will sign the memo, and it will be submitted to the City Council for consideration as a written public comment on behalf of the HRC at the next scheduled City Council meeting on October 8, 2024.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this action.

Prepared by: Krystelle Schneider, Senior Management Analyst

Attachment: Draft Memo to the City Council