



Legislation Text

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

INTER-DEPARTMENTAL MEMORANDUM

DATE: FEBRUARY 19, 2014

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: RASHAD M. YOUNG, CITY MANAGER

DOCKET TITLE:

Consideration of the Allocation of \$6,750 in City Matching Funds to Extend the King Street Tree Lighting Program to June 30, 2014.

ISSUE: Extending the King Street tree lighting program.

RECOMMENDATION: Allocate \$6,750 from Council's FY 2014 Contingent Reserve account as a one-to-one match to \$6,750 in privately raised funds in order to keep the King Street tree lights on until June 30, 2014.

BACKGROUND: Over the past few years the issue of how long to keep the Old Town King Street tree lights on has been debated. The tree lighting program starts each year in late November and is planned to continue until March 30th. This covers the holiday shopping season and three months of the year when darkness falls the earliest. For a few years, as an assist to the economy of the City's main King Street retail area (including the 100 block of North and South Washington Street), funds were included in the City budget to extend the tree lighting program until June 30. However, due to tight budget conditions, the \$13,500 in funds to extend the King Street tree light program were not included in the FY 2014 proposed budget. Council debated adding the light extension funds back into the FY2014 budget, and as part of the FY 2014 add-delete process added \$6,750 to Council's Contingent Reserve account. This is 50% of the funds needed to continue electric service. Council adopted the FY 2014 budget with the condition that the City funds were matched on a one-to-one basis by the private sector. Retailer David Martin has led a private sector initiative and has raised the \$6,750 private match through individual donations, so that the tree lights can stay lit until June 30, 2014. This allocation does not commit the City to providing a similar match for FY 2015.

It should be noted that the \$13,000 in additional funds will cover the cost of the electricity for the 3-month extension. No additional funds are available for the repair or replacement of lights during this extension period.

FISCAL IMPACT: The direct fiscal impact of the City providing the match is \$6,750, indirectly (partially/or fully) offset by an unknown degree by increased Old Town area retail, restaurant and hotel sales activity.

STAFF:

Mark Jinks, Deputy City Manager

James Spengler, Director, Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities

Patricia Washington, President and CEO, Alexandria Convention and Visitors Association

Nelsie Smith, Director, Office of Management and Budget

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