



Information Item

Date: March 17, 2014

To: Mayor and City Council

From: Karen Ginsberg, Director, Community and Cultural Services

Subject: Update on Unattended Winter Displays in Palisades Park and Other Locations

Introduction

This Information Item provides a summary of attended winter displays and activities that took place in Palisades Park as well as on the Third Street Promenade during the 2013 holiday season. It also provides a summary of unattended winter displays that were erected on private property. This was the second holiday season since unattended winter displays were prohibited in Palisades Park. As was the case in 2012, community members found alternative opportunities to display nativity scenes and Menorahs, and celebrate the holidays through activities such as caroling, tree lighting ceremonies and Menorah lighting events.

Background

On June 26, 2012 Council amended Municipal Code section 4.55.060 to eliminate the exception that allowed for unattended winter displays in Palisades Park. The history leading up to this Council action is set forth in the [June 12, 2012](#) staff report. Council encouraged community members to consider private property for unattended displays. In addition, the public was informed that attended displays could still be erected in Palisades Park and other public spaces.

Discussion

Similar to the 2012 holiday season, community members found alternative avenues for religious and other displays during the 2013 holiday season. Additionally, community

members held events and activities in celebration of the holidays. The following summary provides a description of various activities that took place in Santa Monica between the months of November, 2013 and January, 2014. Certain of these activities are described in greater detail in the attached newspaper articles (Attachments A & B).

Third Street Promenade

Downtown Santa Monica, Inc. and Santa Monica Chabad obtained a City Community Event Permit for two events held in the 1200 block and 1300 block of the Third Street Promenade (Attachment C). Per the Community Events Administrative Instruction, any activity or event involving 75 or more persons on the Santa Monica Third Street Promenade requires a Community Event Permit. As required under these Event Permits, the organizer attended the display throughout the entire event and removed all displays at the conclusion of each event.

- Chanukah Menorah celebration (November 30, 2013)
- City of Santa Monica official tree lighting ceremony (December 12, 2013)



November 30th Chanukah Menorah celebration at Third Street Promenade



December 12th Christmas tree lighting ceremony at Third Street Promenade

Palisades Park

One event took place on December 15, 2013 in Palisades Park and was organized by the Santa Monica Nativity Scenes Committee. The event, located at Ocean Avenue and Arizona Avenue, featured carols from community choirs, recital of the Christmas Story and display of a 24' foot long scriptural banner, "The Christmas Story". Attendance at this event was anticipated to be less than 150 participants and therefore did not require a Community Event Permit. The participants occupied the space on a first-come, first-serve basis. Similar to the events on the Third Street Promenade, this organizer was required to attend their display at all times and remove their display at the end of each event day. No displays were left in Palisades Park unattended.



Santa Monica Nativity Scenes Organization celebration in Palisades Park

Private Property

In 2012, The Nativity Display Organization erected 14 scenes at the Watt Companies property located at 26th and Ocean Park Blvd. In 2013 the organization found a new location and erected 13 scenes at the Mount Olive Lutheran Church located at 14th Street and Maple Street. The unattended displays were erected from December 15, 2013 through January 2, 2014.





Various photos (13) nativity displays located on private property Mount Olive Lutheran Church.

Menorah displays were also erected on private property during December, 2013 at the following locations:

- Mount Olive Lutheran Church property 14th Street and Maple Street
- 11th Street and Pico Blvd. (south side of street)
- 20th Street and Virginia Avenue (east side of street)
- 11th Street and Ocean Park Blvd. (south side of street)
- Olympic Blvd. and Cloverfield Blvd. (north side of street)
- Lincoln Blvd. and Broadway Blvd. (west side of street)
- 20th and Ocean Park Blvd. (south side of street)





Menorahs on private property

Summary

Leading up to and during the 2013 holiday season, fewer members of the public communicated concerns about the lack of nativity scenes which had been a holiday tradition for many years. As reported in the 2013 summary, unattended displays were installed on private property and attended displays and activities occurred on public property, including in Palisades Park and on the Third Street Promenade. As in previous years, when contacted, staff worked very closely with the various organizations to ensure that applicable laws were followed, rules and regulations were explained, and City authorization was provided when required. Since the elimination of this program, familiarity with the law has grown. The administrative burden of overseeing this program has been greatly reduced. CCS staff estimated in 2012 that approximately 80 hours were spent in answering questions and providing information regarding the City's current regulations and in processing community event permits for winter holiday events. In 2013, the number of hours was significantly reduced. Staff estimates that approximately 21 hours were spent on the above listed duties.

Prepared by: Wendy Pietrzak, Senior Administrative Analyst

Attachments: A. Santa Monica Mirror Article

- B. Santa Monica Nativity Organization Article
- C. Community Event Permits for events on 3rd Street Promenade

SANTA MONICA MIRROR



COURTESY PHOTO

The 60th anniversary display of the Santa Monica Nativity Scenes will start Sunday, Dec. 15.

[News, Holiday, Santa Monica](#)

Santa Monica Nativity Scenes To Return December 15 With New Location

Posted Dec. 7, 2013, 9:43 am

BRENTON GAREN / EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



Life-size scenes depicting events surrounding the birth of Jesus Christ will go on display Sunday, Dec. 15 as the Santa Monica Nativity Scenes marks its 60th anniversary year with a new location and a large new scriptural banner telling the Christmas story.

The new location is Mount Olive Lutheran Church along Maple Street, one block north of Ocean Park Boulevard, west of 14th Street and also along 14th Street.

The scenes will remain on display through Jan. 2.

Nativity Scenes Committee Chairman Hunter Jameson noted that the church parking lot off 14th Street offers ample space for motorists wanting to park and walk past the scenes.

"We are deeply grateful to the people of Mount Olive Lutheran Church and their interim pastor, the Rev. Stephen Fiechter, for providing this site to allow Santa Monica's distinctive Christmas Story to continue to spread the message of love, joy, hope, and peace found in the Christ child's birth to residents and visitors," Jameson said.

Although the scenes will be displayed at Mount Olive Lutheran Church, the opening ceremony for this year's event will be at Palisades Park, longtime home of the scenes through 2011.

The opening gathering will be at 3 pm Sunday, Dec. 15, along Ocean Avenue in the vicinity of Arizona Avenue.

The ceremony will feature Christmas carols from community choirs, recital of the Christmas Story, and unfurling of a new 24-foot-long scriptural banner, "The Christmas Story."

The specially commissioned banner, nearly five feet tall, displays scriptures narrating events surrounding Christ's birth with photos of many of the Nativity Scenes.

After its introduction Sunday, it will be displayed periodically at Palisades Park throughout the Christmas season as an attended display.

The original Nativity Scenes and any overnight displays were banned from the park by the city of Santa Monica in 2012, an action under legal challenge in the Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

On a lighter note, Jameson said the Committee is welcoming a new member this Christmas.

"Resplendent Light Community Church, a young Westside congregation, and its pastor, the Rev. Clifford Asai, will mount the first scene in the Nativity series, 'The Annunciation,' formerly overseen by the Santa Monica Police Officers' Association," Jameson said. "The Police Officers' Association, which retired from the committee this year, has been a faithful and devoted member of the committee, and we thank the officers for their many years of playing a vital role in continuing this community tradition."

"No Room at the Inn," usually mounted by the Church of the Nazarene, will be overseen this year by continuing member Metro Church Calvary Chapel, which will combine it with its usual scene, "Rest Along the Road."

"We appreciate Metro's stepping up in this way as Church of the Nazarene takes a sabbatical this year," Jameson said. "As a result there will be 13 scenes this year instead of 14."

Individuals, churches and businesses help sponsor the Scenes through the nonprofit Santa Monica Nativity Scenes Committee.

Donations defray the \$18,000 annual cost, which includes assembly, removal and storage of the booths; mailing; advertising; and insurance.

Donations may be sent to the Nativity Scenes Committee at P.O. Box 0648, Santa Monica 90406, or made through the Committee's website, www.SantaMonicaNativityScenes.org.

Santa Monica Nativity Scenes.Org

NATIVITY SCENES CHRISTMAS 2013 START DECEMBER 15th AT NEW SITE

The 60th anniversary display of the Santa Monica Nativity Scenes will start Sunday, December 15, 2013, at a new site.

Display at Mount Olive Lutheran Church

The 13 life-size scenes depicting events surrounding the birth of Jesus Christ will be located at Mount Olive Lutheran Church and will remain through Thursday, January 2.

The display will start along Maple Street one block north of Ocean Park Boulevard west of 14th Street; it will end along 14th Street.

- **To drive past** – From Ocean Park Boulevard, turn north on Euclid (13th), then right on Maple and continue along Maple to the Scenes; then at the stop sign, turn right cautiously onto 14th Street.
- **To park and walk past** – Free parking is available in the church parking lot; enter off 14th Street.

We appreciate your driving carefully through the neighborhood.

The Nativity Scenes Committee is deeply grateful to the people of Mount Olive Lutheran church and Interim Pastor Stephen Fiechter for providing a home for the Nativity Scenes for this milestone display.

We are pleased to welcome Resplendent Light Community Church and Pastor Clifford Asai to the organizing committee this year. The young Westside congregation will display the first scene, the Annunciation, formerly shown by the Santa Monica Police Officers' Association, which retired this year from mounting the scene. We are profoundly thankful to the SMPOA for its generous support and longtime participation.

Opening Ceremony at Palisades Park

Although the Scenes will be displayed at Mount Olive Lutheran Church, our opening ceremony will take place in Palisades Park, longtime home of the Scenes. It will start at

3 p.m. Sunday, December 15, along Ocean Avenue at a location between Wilshire and Santa Monica Boulevards.

Along with Christmas music from area choral groups, the ceremony will feature the unfurling of a large new scriptural banner telling the story of Christmas. The banner will be displayed periodically during the Christmas season at Palisades Park.

Donations

Thank you if you would be able to make a financial contribution to meet expenses of putting up and taking down the scenes and for storage, insurance, and advertising. Donations may be made by clicking the button on this page. Donations are not tax deductible.

EVENT PERMIT

Event Name: City of Santa Monica Official Tree Lighting Ceremony	PERMIT # 13-1212
Event Date/Time: Thursday, December 12, 2013; 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM	
Set up: December 12, 12:00 noon	Strike: by December 12, 9:00 pm
Event Location: Third Street Promenade 1200 block	
Applicant: [REDACTED]	Phone: [REDACTED]
Organization: Downtown Santa Monica, Inc.	
Address: 1351 3rd Street Promenade #201 Santa Monica, CA 90401	
RESPONSIBLE PERSON ON EVENT DAY: [REDACTED]	

EVENT REQUIREMENT/CONDITIONS:

- Permittee shall comply with the Community Events Ordinance and all of the conditions of this permit.
- Only the activities approved by the Community Events Committee are permitted.
- Activities must not violate the conditions of this permit or conflict with the provisions of any state or city code.
- Failure to obtain or violations of a Community Event Permit may be subject to administrative citation or administrative penalty.
- Permittee shall be responsible for ALL City departmental service charges incurred in connection with or due to the permittee's activities under this permit including but not limited to: police services, tent/canopy permits, cooking/open flame permits, fire safety officers, building permits, transportation management plan review, bus-rerouting, metered parking spaces, business licenses, resource recovery/recycling services, clean-up/damage fees, insurance, beach lot rental fees and other City services and permits as detailed below.
- Permittee is responsible for having a copy of this Event Permit at the event and available for display upon the demand of any City official.
- If City property is destroyed or damaged by reason of permittee's use, event, or activity and the damage or destruction is directly attributable to the permittee, the permittee will reimburse the City for the actual replacement or repair cost of the destroyed or damaged property.
- Should you encounter any problems during your event, please contact the Santa Monica Police Department at (310) 458-8491.
- Site plan approved and arrangements made to pay site fees with Downtown Santa Monica, Inc.
- Fee for electrical services paid to PUBLIC WORKS.
- All fixtures and temporary structures must be set up to allow pedestrian and a 12-foot emergency clearance at all times.

- ❑ Site plan approved by DTSM, INC., PUBLIC LANDSCAPE AND FIRE.
- ❑ Site plan, cooking permit and tent/canopy permit approved by FIRE.
- ❑ Fire Safety Officer not required.
- ❑ Security/crowd control plan approved by POLICE.
- ❑ Santa Monica Police Officers not required.
- ❑ Community Service Officers not required.
- ❑ Clean-up recycle plan approved by RESOURCE RECOVERY & RECYCLING.
- ❑ The use of non-recyclable plastic food and polystyrene/Styrofoam containers is prohibited. This includes no. 6 in the recycling logo.
- ❑ Event area must be completely cleaned and all litter removed immediately following the close of the event.
- ❑ Provide adequate restroom facilities as required by the Los Angeles County Health Department (one for every 250 men; two for every 175 women). At least 10% of restrooms must be accessible to disabled persons.
- ❑ Santa Monica Business License for all service/supply providers.
- ❑ Alcohol is not permitted at this event.
- ❑ Amplified sound is permitted from 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm. Continuation of amplified sound beyond this time may result in the event being closed down.
- ❑ General liability insurance in the amount of \$1M naming the City of Santa Monica as additional insured.
- ❑ Executed Defense, Indemnity and Hold Harmless Agreement.

Wendy Pietrzak

Date December 10, 2013

Community Events Committee

EVENT PERMIT

Event Name: Chanuka Menorah Celebration	PERMIT # 13-1130
Event Date/Time: Saturday, November 30, 2013; 8:00 PM - 10:00 PM	
Set up: 7:00 PM	Strike: by 11:00 PM
Event Location: Thirds Street Promenade 1300 block	
Applicant: [REDACTED]	Phone: [REDACTED]
Organization: Chabad on 17th	
Address: 1428 17th St. Santa Monica, CA 90404	
RESPONSIBLE PERSON ON EVENT DAY: [REDACTED]	

EVENT REQUIREMENT/CONDITIONS:

- Permittee shall comply with the Community Events Ordinance and all of the conditions of this permit.
- Only the activities approved by the Community Events Committee are permitted.
- Activities must not violate the conditions of this permit or conflict with the provisions of any state or city code.
- Failure to obtain or violations of a Community Event Permit may be subject to administrative citation or administrative penalty.
- Permittee shall be responsible for ALL City departmental service charges incurred in connection with or due to the permittee's activities under this permit including but not limited to: police services, tent/canopy permits, cooking/open flame permits, fire safety officers, building permits, transportation management plan review, bus-rerouting, metered parking spaces, business licenses, resource recovery/recycling services, clean-up/damage fees, insurance, beach lot rental fees and other City services and permits as detailed below.
- Permittee is responsible for having a copy of this Event Permit at the event and available for display upon the demand of any City official.
- If City property is destroyed or damaged by reason of permittee's use, event, or activity and the damage or destruction is directly attributable to the permittee, the permittee will reimburse the City for the actual replacement or repair cost of the destroyed or damaged property.
- Should you encounter any problems during your event, please contact the Santa Monica Police Department at (310) 458-8491.
 - Site plan approved and arrangements made to pay site fees with Downtown Santa Monica, Inc.
 - Fee for electrical services paid to PUBLIC WORKS.
 - All fixtures and temporary structures must be set up to allow pedestrian and a 12-foot emergency clearance at all times.
 - Due to Farmers Market operations, load-in and load-out are prohibited on Arizona Avenue.
- Site plan approved by DTSM, INC., PUBLIC LANDSCAPE AND FIRE.

- ❑ Site plan, propane permit approved by FIRE.
- ❑ Fire Safety Officer not required.
- ❑ Fire extinguishers are required near any open flame.
- ❑ Security/crowd control plan approved by POLICE.
- ❑ Santa Monica Police Officers not required.
- ❑ Community Service Officers not required.
- ❑ Metered parking reserved through PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT.
- ❑ Clean-up recycle plan approved by RESOURCE RECOVERY & RECYCLING.
- ❑ Event area must be completely cleaned and all litter removed immediately following the close of the event.
- ❑ Provide adequate restroom facilities as required by the Los Angeles County Health Department (one for every 250 men; two for every 175 women). At least 10% of restrooms must be accessible to disabled persons.
- ❑ Santa Monica Business License for all service/supply providers.
- ❑ Alcohol is not permitted at this event.
- ❑ Amplified sound is permitted from 8:00 pm to 10:00 pm. Continuation of amplified sound beyond this time may result in the event being closed down.
- ❑ Executed Defense, Indemnity and Hold Harmless Agreement.

Wendy Pietrzak

Date: 11/21/2013