

To: **Mayor and City Council**
Through: **Nate Burkett, City Manager**
From: **Dave Schletty, Assistant Parks and Recreation Director**
Date: **November 22, 2021**

As Yet To Be Named West St. Paul Summer Celebration

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

For many years the Celebrate West St Paul Days event was held the 3rd week in May. The former event was planned and run by the Celebrate WSP Community Organization and sponsored primarily by the South Robert Street Business Association (SRSBA). The City fully supported the event, but was not directly involved with planning. 2019 was the final year of the event, as the Organization could not find new leadership, and 2020-21 saw most community events canceled due to the pandemic.

At the direction of the Mayor and Council, staff has begun brainstorming and planning a new rebranded West St Paul Summer Celebration. The date of August 11-13, 2022 has been identified as a good potential date for the celebration. It falls between South St Paul's Kaposia Days and Inver Grove Heights Days. It is also in a part of summer that usually has families focused on back to school and winding down from busy summer activities. It appears Mendota Heights is targeting this same weekend for their Parks Celebration, which they formerly celebrated in early June. This could actually be a positive way to draw more outside visitors to the area, collaborate on celebration activities, and offer a more robust schedule of events.

An important part of planning is to successfully rebrand the community event. While elements of the former Celebrate WSP Days festival can be included, it is important to establish a dynamic new event that will keep residents excited and engaged for years to come. It is also important to bring in as many community partners as possible to make a successful event. Many of the partners may already have established events that can be included as part of the larger event schedule.

Staff has identified a number of events to include in the 2022 celebration including (tentative schedule attached): City open house, music/street dances, art and cultural fair, youth and/or adult tournament activity, food truck round-up, movie in the Dome, and environmental fair or alternate ISD 197 opportunity, Dodge Nature/SRSBA family fun fest, and possibly fireworks. These events will be held at various locations around the City, to be identified later.

Rebranding a new and successful event includes developing a unique new name and visual brand for the festival. Moving away from Celebrate WSP Days, will help show residents this is a new celebration, with new exciting events that will be sustainable and trendy for many years to come.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Funding will be key in carrying out a successful event. Besides City funding, SRSBA has tentatively set aside a large donation for the event. Staff will also be promoting sponsorship packages to help fund additional expenses.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Discuss the suggestions for a rebranded West St Paul Summer Celebration and provide staff with comments or concerns.