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foothill community built on California's rich gold rush history.*



**City Manager's Report**  
**August 8, 2023, City Council Meeting**  
**Prepared by: Terry Zeller, Director of Community Services**  
**Item #: 12.3**

**Subject:** Review and Approve a Policy for Bell Tower Use by the Public.

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**Recommendation:** To Approve the Proposed Policy for Use by the Public for the Bell Tower and Immediate Area in the "Triangle" of Vehicular Right-of-Way, Including the Closure for Use of Stagecoach Alley.

**Purpose:** The purpose of this Council action is to approve the proposed policy to provide staff direction in dealing with requests for use of the Bell Tower for public and private events.

**Strategic Plan Strategy:** Maintain/Improve Quality of Life (1a.)

**Background:** Staff has received numerous requests for renting the Bell Tower and immediate area for the farmers' market, private events, individual use for public address, bands for music, and as a central gathering point for larger events such as the Taste on Main and Girls Night Out, which have been using the Bell Tower area for the past few years. Historically there has been no fee approved for the use of this area. Special events that have used it before have done so through a special event permit. This permit does not translate well to individual or private events.

The PEAC (Placerville Economic Advisory Committee) was tasked with determining if the idea of allowing wedding ceremonies under the Bell Tower would be beneficial to the goodwill and economic prosperity of the community, and if this was the finding, PEAC was additionally asked to draft a proposal that would allow this type of rental. The PEAC discussed this at their June and July meetings, did find that weddings under the Bell Tower would be beneficial, and drafted a proposal that would only allow up to 5 people in the Bell Tower itself, for up to an hour, limited to 4 times per month, with no provisions for closing the street. The proposal states specifically that guests would need to stay on the sidewalks. The fee would be \$500 to rent the Bell Tower for the hour, plus a \$100 refundable deposit, and be rented through the Community Services Department. This proposal, included as an attachment to the staff report, was voted on by PEAC and passed 4-0.

The PEAC suggested making a list of products and services that could be obtained from downtown merchants and providing this to wedding planners. The PEAC also included that they believe these events can be short enough to have a minimum negative impact to the local merchants but bring people, sales tax, and Transit Occupancy Tax revenue to town/Main Street from people that maybe wouldn't be coming to the area otherwise.

**Discussion:** Staff's recommendation is that the Bell Tower should only be used for the two special events approved for it, which are the Taste on Main and Girls Night Out, to allow a provision for use as a location for weddings as recommended by the PEAC committee, and also a provision for other

private rental uses of the space underneath the Bell Tower that would be reviewed and approved ministerially by the Community Services Director. These other private rental uses would need to have a positive community benefit, be short in duration, and not be uses that would promote or naturally encourage people to congregate or dance in the streets. Examples of such suitable uses would be live or recorded music for background ambiance during certain times of the year that are promoted for shopping downtown such as during the holidays, for sidewalk sales or art walks. Private use for public address would not be a compatible use in staff's opinion, as these uses would create an attractive nuisance in gathering crowds as a focal point for assembly, which gets back to the pedestrian/vehicular issue above. Staff further recommends that approved uses other than weddings be charged a fee of \$300 with a \$100 deposit, with a use limit of 4 hours, and a time frame within the hours of 8am to 8pm.

Any future events that may petition for Bell Tower and triangle closure in addition to Taste on Main and Girl's Night Out would need to be reviewed by the City Manager for advancement to the City Council for consideration.

**Options:** The Council can:

1. Approve staff's recommendation to permit the two existing special events that close the triangle for the Bell Tower, the PEAC wedding proposal and fees, and allowance for ministerially approved private uses and fees as outlined in the staff report which do not close the triangle or street.
2. Approve a modified action of uses and fees.
3. Reject the proposal.

**Environmental:** As this action does not pertain to any modification or construction, there is no environmental consideration needed as part of this action.

**Cost:** The cost of installing and removing water barricades for Taste on Main and Girl's Night Out has been estimated at \$660 for maintenance worker staff time based on overtime costs, assuming that the two special events would continue to happen on weekends, with additional costs for the time to purchase, print and post no parking signs, and possible resources from the Police Department for citing and towing vehicles.

**Budget Impact:** The cost for the two Option 1 special events would be absorbed through the Community Services operating budget, with additional revenue being generated from wedding and other uses which would not close the triangle or streets.



M. Cleve Morris, City Manager



Terry Zeller, Dir. of Community Services

Attachments:

- Attachment A: Bell Tower Triangle Road Closure Map
- Attachment B: PEAC proposal for Bell Tower Wedding Use
- Attachment C: Proposed Bell Tower Policy and Fees