



# INDIAN WELLS CITY COUNCIL

## September 7, 2023

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**To:** City Council  
**From:** City Manager Department  
**Prepared by:** Micaela Wilkey, Senior Management Analyst  
**Subject:** **Winterfest 2023 at the Indian Wells Golf Resort**

### RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

Council **PROVIDES** staff direction on hosting Winterfest 2023 at the Indian Wells Golf Resort.

### BACKGROUND:

At the February 3, 2021, City Council Strategic Planning Session, Council directed staff to identify opportunities for an Indian Wells Holiday Experience in collaboration with the Indian Wells Collection of hotels to help drive business during the slower shoulder season of December. Goal was to increase hotel stays and visitors to the Indian Wells Golf Resort (IWGR) during the holiday season, generating additional transient occupancy tax (TOT) and IWGR revenues.

In the summer of 2021, an Indian Wells Event Committee (IW Event Committee) including the city, Visit Greater Palm Springs, Indian Wells Golf Resort, Hyatt Regency, Miramonte Resort & Spa, and Renaissance Esmeralda was formed to develop a unique holiday experience for the Golf Resort campus. Winterfest 2022 included enhanced lighting, ice skating all taking place at the Indian Wells Golf Resort with anchor attractions Top Tracer and Shots in the Night and a tree lighting ceremony.

Overall, the IW Event Committee agreed that the 2022 Winterfest was a success. A high-level inclusive event that was planned and executed in record time. Despite being a first-year event, it was well attended, participants' reviews indicated that they enjoyed themselves and the marketing elevated the City of Indian Wells. Winterfest is a communitywide experience that incorporates multiple properties within walking distance from one another and is a unique concept.

At the March 1, 2023, Marketing Committee Meeting, the committee discussed the after-event report on Winterfest and recommended that the City, Golf Resort, and hotel partners work together to develop an event plan, budget, and secure financial sponsorships for a 2023 Winterfest. Over the last couple of months, the various partners have been discussing several ideas to secure funding and how to improve the Winterfest

experience. Staff recognized that for the event to be successful, an event coordinator and fundraising consultant was needed. The city brought on Cooper Consulting and Creating (CCC), which has experience putting events and fundraising together, to develop the event plan, budget, sponsorship opportunities, and seek cost savings for a 2023 Winterfest.

On May 11, 2023, members of the Marketing Committee met with CCC to continue exploring a 2023 Winterfest experience. The committee agreed to have CCC work with the various partners on the event plan and budget. In addition, the goal is to raise at least \$200,000 in sponsorships or cost savings to help offset the cost of the event. CCC has been gathering sponsorship commitments and cost savings with vendors.

On June 5, 2023, staff was informed that CCC had secured a cost savings of \$95,160 to switch from an ice-skating rink to a roller rink with the same company (Ice America) and needed direction to secure the roller rink.

On July 6, 2023, the City Council voted 3-2 to replace the ice rink with a roller rink to save on costs; however, the council did not authorize staff to secure the rink until \$100,000 of sponsorships had been reached. If a \$100,000 in sponsorships were secured, the City Manager was authorized to move forward with Winterfest, and if not, bring the matter back for consideration at the September 7, 2023, City Council meeting. The overall Winterfest concept was approved, including the attached budget. Council also asked CCC to meet with the resort hotels to inquire about their assisting with financial or in-kind sponsorships.

Winterfest 2023 is tentatively scheduled for December 2023. A copy of the Winterfest 2023 business plan is attached.

## **DISCUSSION:**

Over the past few months CCC has been securing sponsorships for Winterfest 2023. At the time that this report was prepared, CCC had not fully secured the requested \$100,000 in sponsorships. However, CCC has made progress to meet this milestone. To date, CCC has the following secured or pending sponsorships. A verbal update on all sponsorships will be provided at the City Council meeting.

- Secured Sponsorships of \$41,185. These include executed pledge forms or email commitments from sponsors.
- In-Kind Sponsorships of \$25,000. These include use of equipment, personnel, and supplies for Winterfest to offset budgeted expenses.
- Pending Sponsorship of \$20,000. This is for ongoing discussions with Eisenhower that is awaiting further discussions with pertinent staff members currently out of the office.

- At the time of this report, CCC has several more businesses reviewing paperwork to determine their level of interest in sponsorship. In addition, CCC is working with our local hotels on additional in-kind sponsorships to further reduce budgeted expenses. Hotels have agreed to increase their individual decorations/lighting expenses for 2023.

CCC is committed to continue seeking potential sponsors if the City Council approves Winterfest 2023. CCC's goal remains \$200,000 in sponsorships but anticipates the amount to be secured may be closer to \$120,000 to \$150,000 in cash or in-kind sponsorships.

### **OPTIONS:**

In order to secure the roller rink, sponsorships, and schedule holiday parties, staff is requesting the City Council make a final determination on Winterfest 2023. As such, Council has the following options available:

1. Approve Winterfest 2023 as outlined in this staff report and approve a supplemental appropriation of \$324,058; or
2. Determine not to move forward with Winterfest 2023.

### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

The proposed budget (attached) for Winterfest 2023 is \$424,058.

At the time this report was written estimated revenues are as follows:

- Visit Greater Palm Springs Grant: \$100,000
  - Secured Sponsorships (Cash and In-Kind): \$66,185
  - Estimated Event Revenues:
    - IWGR F&B Revenues (Net) \$65,000
    - Roller Rink Ticket Sales (Net) \$50,000
- Total: \$281,185

At this time, Winterfest is estimated to have a net cost to the City of \$142,873. This amount does not include any additional sponsorship revenues, including any pending amounts, which CCC believes to be an additional \$40,000 or more.

It is also important to note that the approved budget does not include any estimated increases in sales tax and TOT revenue that will be generated from Winterfest.

If Council determines they wish to move forward with Winterfest 2023, staff is seeking a supplemental appropriation of \$324,058 for Fiscal Year 2023-2024.

**City Council Strategic Goal:**

Events such as Winterfest support the City Council 2023 Strategic Goal to Evaluate where tourism funds are invested in promoting Indian Wells as a tourism destination and incorporating opportunities to highlight the Indian Wells Golf Resort. In addition, it supports the 2023 Goal of identifying new community events and activities for residents and seek partnerships with Desert Recreation District and other organizations that may be able to assist in providing enhanced benefits to residents.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Winterfest 2023 Budget and Sponsorships Summary
2. CCC Business Plan for Winterfest 2023