



MEETING DATE: 10/17/05


ITEM NO.

12a

COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

DATE: October 12, 2005

TO: MAYOR AND TOWN COUNCIL

FROM: DEBRA J. FIGONE, TOWN MANAGER 

SUBJECT: PROVIDE DIRECTION ON ISSUES RELATED TO HURRICANE RELIEF

RECOMMENDATION:

Provide direction on issues related to hurricane relief:

1. The joint request from the City of San Jose, County of Santa Clara, and Santa Clara Valley Chapter of the American Red Cross to donate Town funds for hurricane relief.
2. The proposal that the Town participate in the proposed "Town to Town Katrina Consortium."

BACKGROUND:

Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast region of the U.S. on August 29, and Hurricane Rita followed on September 24. The negative effects of these natural disasters on the area have resulted in many initiatives locally to help the people and communities affected.

DISCUSSION:

The Town has been asked to participate in two hurricane relief efforts, described below:

Donation to the American Red Cross

The City of San Jose, the County of Santa Clara, and the Santa Clara Valley Chapter of the American Red Cross have made a joint request to the Mayors of all Santa Clara County municipalities to make a donation to hurricane relief (Attachment 1). The suggested donation is 50 cents per capita. The funds would be used to support relief and recovery assistance locally, and the funding commitment would be connected to the opening of a local evacuee assistance and recovery center, or in meeting the needs of registered FEMA evacuees arriving locally.

PREPARED BY: Regina A.  Falkner, Community Services Director

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Reviewed by: JS Assistant Town Manager _____ Town Attorney _____ Clerk Administrator
SC Finance _____ Community Development

Revised: 10/13/05 8:42 am

Reformatted: 5/30/02

PAGE 2

MAYOR AND TOWN COUNCIL

SUBJECT: PROVIDE DIRECTION ON ISSUES RELATED TO HURRICANE RELIEF

October 12, 2005

The City of San Jose states that the contribution would be held in a designated fund for the local Red Cross to use when its funds for this purpose have been exhausted. It also recommends that the Red Cross track the use of these funds and report regularly to each participating municipality. It is not clear at this time how either one of these points will be addressed administratively, or who would serve as the fiscal agent.

A potential concern with any donation of this type is whether it constitutes a "gift of public funds." A city council generally has the legislative discretion to determine whether any action constitutes a gift of public funds. The question turns on whether the action is consistent with a public purpose of the giving agency. Many cities and counties have found in the past and in response to the current disasters that providing emergency aid, either financial or in-kind, to public agencies responding to disasters benefits all public agencies. Consequently, Council could approve aid in response to hurricane relief without making a gift of public funds. If Council directs staff to proceed with some Town contribution to hurricane relief, the appropriate findings would be brought back to Council in the form of a resolution.

Following is a summary of municipality responses to this request to date:

Campbell

The City Council has committed \$20,000, a donation of approximately 50 cents per capita.

Cupertino

The City Council has committed \$25,000, a donation of approximately 50 cents per capita.

Monte Sereno

The City Council has committed \$2,500 which is in excess of the 50 cents per capita requested.

Morgan Hill

The City Council has not yet considered the issue, but may do so in the future. City employees have personally donated a total of approximately 25 cents per capita.

Mountain View

On September 20, the City Council voted against a \$35,000 donation (approximately 50 cents per capita), and requested staff to return with more options.

Palo Alto

The City Council has not considered the issue yet.

San Jose

The City Council has committed \$500,000, a donation of approximately 50 cents per capita.

PAGE 3

MAYOR AND TOWN COUNCIL

SUBJECT: PROVIDE DIRECTION ON ISSUES RELATED TO HURRICANE RELIEF

October 12, 2005

Santa Clara

The City Council has committed \$55,000, a donation of approximately 50 cents per capita. One-half of the funds will come from General Fund reserves, and the other half from utility revenues.

Saratoga

The City Council has committed \$15,000, a donation of approximately 50 cents per capita.

Town to Town Katrina Consortium

A group of local residents, representing service clubs and other organizations, have developed a proposal for a "Town to Town Katrina Consortium" (Attachment 2), and have asked the Town to join the consortium. The stated mission of the group is:

To focus resources and extend compassion to those living in a particular Gulf Coast town throughout the coming three years of recovery from the impact of Hurricane Katrina.

The strategy outlined by the group is as follows:

1. Form a consortium of interested parties, including service clubs, churches, schools, businesses, and local media.
2. Select a Gulf Coast town of comparable size to Los Gatos to "adopt."
3. Each entity in the consortium would work with its counterpart in the adopted town.
4. The consortium would coordinate larger projects and fund-raising efforts, as well as tracking the smaller projects of the members of the consortium.
5. Consortium representatives would travel to the adopted town to view first-hand the issues faced by that community, and to collaborate with its members to develop solutions.
6. If any relocation were required, the consortium would collaborate with local officials to develop a relocation plan.

The role that the Town has been asked to assume would be as a consortium member. The consortium would be responsible for forming and coordinating meetings, selecting a town/city to adopt, and tracking the progress of projects and other efforts undertaken by the consortium.

CONCLUSION:

Staff requests that Council provide direction on two issues related to hurricane relief:

1. The joint request from the City of San Jose, County of Santa Clara, and Santa Clara Valley Chapter of the American Red Cross to donate Town funds for hurricane relief.
2. The proposal that the Town join the proposed "Town to Town Katrina Consortium."

PAGE 4

MAYOR AND TOWN COUNCIL

SUBJECT: PROVIDE DIRECTION ON ISSUES RELATED TO HURRICANE RELIEF

October 12, 2005

Regarding the donation to hurricane relief, as the funds would not be tapped until other resources had been exhausted, a final decision could be held until such time as the Red Cross demonstrated to the Town that its other funds had been used and that a local need for the funds remained. In the interim it is anticipated that the lead agencies will structure a fiscal system to account for the funds; such a system has not yet been communicated.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT:

The recommended action is not a project defined under CEQA, and no further action is required.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Donation to the American Red Cross

The suggested donation is 50 cents per capita; at this rate, the suggested donation for Los Gatos is approximately \$15,000. There are no funds currently budgeted for this purpose, however a potential funding source is from unallocated reserves.

Town to Town Katrina Consortium

The potential fiscal impact to the Town is unclear at this time, as specific projects have not yet been developed. The major initial impact would be in the area of staff time to participate in the effort.

Attachments:

1. Letter of September 12, 2005 from the City of San Jose, County of Santa Clara, and Santa Clara Valley Chapter of the American Red Cross
2. Town to Town Katrina Consortium proposal

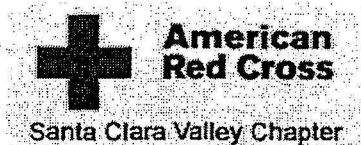
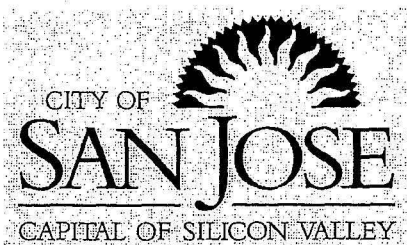
Distribution:

Bill Cilker

Ray Cobb

Lee Nisch

Joe Varozza



September 12, 2005

Dear Santa Clara County Mayor,

On behalf of the City of San José, the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors, and the Santa Clara Valley American Red Cross, we thank you for attending Wednesday night's meeting to discuss our region's response to the Hurricane Katrina disaster relief efforts. We appreciate your time and willingness to meet so quickly to discuss this important issue affecting the lives of so many of our fellow Americans.

As we explained at the meeting, San José and the County are working together to respond to requests from the state and federal governments to prepare for receiving evacuees if that becomes necessary. Our partnership with the City of San José, County of Santa Clara, Santa Clara Valley American Red Cross, and San Jose State University has committed to take 100 people initially. These agencies are organizing housing and support services for individuals and families who are already arriving here on their own to live with relatives or friends or through FEMA transferring evacuees directly from the Gulf Coast region. The Red Cross is opening the Recovery Center this week, and we will be ready if FEMA sends evacuees to California. At this time we still do not know when or if FEMA will be sending evacuees to California, but when they do, we will be ready.

We are appealing to all cities in Santa Clara County to join us in assisting this relief effort, and we are asking that each city donate financially to the Santa Clara Valley American Red Cross. This funding commitment should be contingent on the opening of a local evacuee assistance and recovery center, or in meeting the needs of FEMA registered evacuees who are arriving in San José on their own.

On Tuesday, September 13, the San José City Council will consider the Mayor's recommendation to donate \$500,000 (approximately \$0.50 per resident) for this relief effort. The Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors also will be discussing the feasibility of donating funds at its next meeting on Tuesday, September 13, 2005.

As a region, we can make a difference for families that have faced unthinkable personal and community loss. Please contact our offices at the numbers listed below if you have any questions about this effort and to share with us your community's plan to respond to our request. Thank you again for taking the time to come together as a region in the wake of this national disaster.

Sincerely,

Ron Gonzales
Mayor

(408) 535-4824

Lorraine Zippiroli
CEO Santa Clara Valley
American Red Cross
(408) 577-1000

Liz Kniss
Chair, Santa Clara County
Board of Supervisors
(408) 299-5050

cc: San José City Council
Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors
Del Borgsdorf, City Manager, City of San José
Pete Kutas, Jr., County Executive, Santa Clara County

Town to Town Katrina Consortium

Remember the Earthquake

Mission: *To focus resources and extend compassion to those living in a particular Gulf Coast Town throughout the coming three years of recovery from the impact of Hurricane Katrina.*

Vision: *With the leadership of the Town of Los Gatos, we'll form a consortium of public and private interests who will come alongside their counterparts in our "sister city" along the Gulf to provide continuing encouragement and assistance for long term recovery.*

Strategy:

1. The Town of Los Gatos will assist in the formation of a consortium of interested parties from various sectors of the community to include but not be limited to:
 - service clubs
 - churches
 - schools
 - chamber of commerce
 - newspaper
2. The Town will assist the Consortium in selecting a Gulf Coast town or city (somewhat comparable in size to Los Gatos) and will take the lead in forging a relationship as a "sister city."
3. Each entity (service club, church, etc.) will "adopt" and work with their sister city counterpart (service club, church, etc.) in the town selected and report to the Los Gatos Consortium.
4. The Los Gatos Consortium will coordinate larger projects and fundraising efforts in addition to coordinating the smaller projects mounted by the various members of the Consortium in collaboration with their counterparts from the sister city.
5. A trip to the sister city will be undertaken by a number of Consortium leaders who represent participants to understand the problems faced by the town and collaborate on an approach to address the human needs and, eventually, reconstruction.
6. If relocation is required, then the Consortium will collaborate with local officials to develop a relocation plan for the sister city.

Desired Outcome: *We will unite our community under the banner of service and continue to forge an identity for Los Gatos based upon the resulting stories of compassion.*