



Office of the Mayor

CONSENT CALENDAR

October 12, 2021

To: Members of the City Council

From: Mayor Jesse Arreguín (Author), Councilmember Susan Wengraf (Author), Councilmember Taplin (Co-Sponsor), Councilmember Hahn (Co-Sponsor)

Subject: City Policy Regarding Scheduling City Meetings on Significant Religious Holidays

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution establishing an official City of Berkeley policy to avoid scheduling of meetings of the City Legislative Bodies (City Council, Commissions and Boards, Council Policy Committees, Task Forces) on any religious holiday that incorporates significant work restrictions and direct the City Manager to identify those holidays in consultation with community religious leaders.

BACKGROUND

The City of Berkeley traditionally does not schedule any City related meetings on Christian religious holidays such as Christmas, Easter, and Good Friday where such meetings would conflict with religious services and celebration. Currently there is not a policy to refrain from scheduling meetings on other religious holidays such as Rosh Hashana, Yom Kippur, Passover (1st night), Diwali, Chinese New Year, Birth of Baja'u'llah, Kwanzaa, Gantan-sai, Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha.

While consideration has been taken to avoid scheduling meetings on such dates, it is not a consistent practice and, as such, conflicts have occurred. Ensuring that a formal policy is in place to avoid scheduling on all religious holidays that incorporate significant work restrictions will ensure that people of all religions and faiths are treated equally.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Staff time to consult with community religious leaders

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

There are no identifiable environmental effects or opportunities associated with adopting this recommendation.

CONTACT PERSON

Mayor Jesse Arreguín 510-981-7100

Attachments:

1: Resolution

RESOLUTION NO.

ESTABLISHING A PRACTICE TO AVOID SCHEDULING CITY MEETINGS ON ALL SIGNIFICANT RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS

WHEREAS, The City of Berkeley traditionally does not schedule any City related meetings on Christian religious holidays such as Christmas, Easter, and Good Friday where such meetings would conflict with religious services and celebration; and

WHEREAS, there is no formal policy that addresses the scheduling of meetings on other religious holidays that incorporate significant work restrictions such as Rosh Hashana, Yom Kippur, Passover (1st night), Diwali, Chinese New Year, Birth of Baja'u'llah, Kwanzaa, Gantan-sai, Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha; and

WHEREAS, while consideration has been taken to avoid scheduling meetings on such dates, it is not a consistent practice and, as such, conflicts have occurred; and

WHEREAS, ensuring that a policy is in place to avoid scheduling on religious holidays that incorporate significant work restrictions will ensure that all beliefs and people are treated equally

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Berkeley that it will be the policy of the City to avoid scheduling meetings of City Legislative Bodies (City Council, Commissions and Boards, Council Policy Committees, Task Forces) on any religious holiday that incorporates significant work restrictions and such days shall be identified through consultation with community religious leaders.