TO: HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL
FROM: CITY MANAGER DEPARTMENT: CITY MANAGER’S OFFICE
DATE: JULY 10, 2006 CMR: 298:06
SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR WAIVER OF PERMIT FEES FOR FILMING

BACKGROUND

On June 26, 2006, Daniel Engelhardt, representing Anchange Productions, requested that the Council waive all normal fees associated with his organization's planned movie production in Palo Alto. Mr. Engelhardt indicated that the production, while being made by a for-profit organization, was better characterized as a student film. In Mr. Engelhardt’s words:

“The film is being directed by a Paly grad, and it was written by one as well. I graduated from Menlo-Atherton. In regards to the "special" nature of this project - it is a film about growing up in Palo Alto, being made by students from Palo Alto who are calling the film PALO ALTO. It is also more than a student film - it has been surrounded with an educational model that is allowing filmmakers of varying backgrounds and skill levels to collaborate. We are working with college filmmakers from UCLA, USC, LMU, AFI, Columbia College, SF State, UC Santa Cruz and more. Also on the crew is a group of high school students from The Riekes Center and Culver City High School. Thanks to Mole-Richardson, one of the oldest lighting companies in Hollywood, for the last few days we have been holding training sessions through which all involved with the project are being coached on fully professional equipment in an environment where they are being mentored, and educated by their peers.

The City Council directed staff to discuss the proposal further with Mr. Engelhardt. On June 29, the Assistant City Manager, Police Chief and Administrative Services Director met with Mr. Engelhardt to review the proposal. Palo Alto receives, on average, 8 to 10 such filming fee waiver requests each year and has not granted any in the past to for-profit organizations. However, staff believes that Mr. Engelhardt and associates are sincere in their representations of their effort as a student production and an opportunity to provide recognition for Palo Alto.
DISCUSSION

Staff is proposing an agreement where normal filming permit fees will be waived with the understanding that if Mr. Engelhardt's film recovers all its costs of production, that the fees waived will be repaid at that time. The normal permit fees for filming are shown in Attachment 1: Palo Alto Police Department Film Production Guidelines. This waiver would not include any payment for use of police time, since all officer time required would be on an overtime basis.

RESOURCE IMPACT

Staff estimates that the amount of the fee waiver will not exceed $2000. Engelhardt will be responsible for actual police overtime charges should they be incurred.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

By approving the fee waiver, the Council may provide an opportunity for other for-profit filming companies to request such waivers.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Palo Alto Police Department Film Production Guidelines
Attachment B: Letter Agreement with Engelhardt and Anchange

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