

Council Recap - February 6, 2024

City Council members unanimously approved a one-time contribution of \$150,000 to the Palm Springs Air Museum (PSAM) to keep its educational programs going while the museum undergoes an extensive remodel. The museum's educational programs host about 5,000 K-12 students from throughout the Coachella Valley annually. The educational programs are at capacity with the museum having to turn students away that want to participate.

PSAM is about to undergo an extensive \$3.5 million remodel that will include a new and expanded entrance area and classroom facility that will double its seating capacity to allow for more students.

PSAM's focus is on getting students inspired about possible careers in aviation through the First Flight and STEM programs different from what is taught at local schools.

While the museum cannot say how many La Quinta youth participate in the programs, PSAM Vice President Fred Bell told council members in January that 70% of students are from east valley schools – 41% from Desert Sands and 29% from Coachella Valley school districts.

Every year, PSAM awards \$80,000 in scholarships to students furthering their education for careers in aviation. Two La Quinta High School students received scholarships for \$10,000 per year for four years in 2023.

To keep the educational programs going while PSAM covers the costs for the museum's remodel and expansion, each of the Coachella Valley cities is being asked for a one-time contribution of up to \$150,000.

It costs PSAM more than \$850,000 annually to run the programs with costs largely covered through donations and fundraisers including the museum's annual gala. Scholarships are funded by an endowment, Bell said.

The museum has raised the funds necessary for the expansion and remodel but seeks some assistance in keeping the education programs going during that time, Bell said.

The programs are taught by some of the museum's 300-plus volunteer docents, many of whom are veterans that flew with the military, others had aeronautical careers in the public sector including Lockheed.

Council members said they supported a \$150,000 contribution because it is a one-time ask by the museum and an opportunity for the City to invest in the education of the region's youth. Many who go through the museum's unique programs discover a passion for aviation and the different career possibilities they can pursue with more training and education.

That education and training can lead to an expanded aeronautical industry in the Coachella Valley as well, Council members said.

Additional highlights from Tuesday's City Council meeting:

- The Council approved amendments to an ordinance relating to the Community Services Commission that includes a name change. Now called the Arts and Community Services Commission, the amended ordinance also gives the City Council the authority to expand the panel from five to seven members if desired, and more clearly spells out the commission's objectives as an advisory board to the City Council, identifying community needs in social services, programs, public art and recreation. Commissioners told the Council they don't feel their current schedule of quarterly meetings are enough and would like to meet more often, possibly every other month. Staff will discuss the schedule with the commissioners and add additional meetings to the calendar if there are items to discuss.

The La Quinta City Council meets the first and third Tuesday every month at 4 p.m. at City Hall. The next scheduled meeting is February 20, 2024. We invite the public to attend to stay in the know of all things LQ.

If you can't make it to a meeting or missed a meeting, you can livestream or watch the video online at <https://laquinta.12milesout.com>.

Agenda packets with staff reports can be viewed on the City's website, www.laquintaca.gov, or received via email or text by signing up for Quail Mail.