

RESOLUTION NO. 2025-

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING A HOLIDAY DECORATIONS POLICY

WHEREAS, the City Council finds that public celebrations and decorations contribute to community engagement, civic pride, and local identity, and that celebrating the holiday season in this manner fosters unity and appreciation for the deep cultural traditions that form the community's shared heritage; and

WHEREAS, the holiday season in the United States has historically reflected a blend of civic customs, cultural expressions, and religiously influenced symbols including lights, menorahs, trees, snowflakes, snowmen, angels, Santa, nutcrackers, and nativity scenes that together form part of the Nation's shared heritage and spirit of goodwill; and

WHEREAS, the Supreme Court has long acknowledged that holiday symbols reflecting the nation's cultural and historical traditions may be displayed by government when presented in a context that celebrates community and heritage rather than promoting or favoring any religion; and

WHEREAS, the City desires to ensure that all holiday decorations, displays, and related expressions are designed and implemented in a manner that fully complies with the United States Constitution, including the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment, which prohibits government from endorsing or promoting religion; and

WHEREAS, the Texas Municipal League (TML) in 2024 issued guidance confirming that Texas cities may include traditional symbols with cultural, religious or historical significance within holiday displays when the overall message and intent are community celebration and inclusion rather than promotion of any particular belief; and

WHEREAS, the United States Department of Justice, Office of Legal Counsel, issued guidance in 2021 addressing holiday décor in federal buildings, affirming that the inclusion of decorations or symbols with cultural and religious associations is consistent with constitutional principles when presented as part of a broader cultural and seasonal celebration; and

WHEREAS, the City Council finds that establishing a clear and neutral policy governing holiday decorations is the most effective means to ensure compliance with constitutional requirements while fostering civic goodwill, aligning with national practices, and reinforcing League City's values of community and mutual respect.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LEAGUE CITY, TEXAS, as follows:

Section 1. Incorporation of Recitals. The foregoing recitals are hereby adopted as findings of fact and as a statement of the City Council's intent and understanding in support of this resolution.

Section 2. Purpose. The purpose of this resolution is to affirm the City's intent to celebrate the holiday season through community-centered decorations and displays that reflect the cultural and historical backgrounds of the community while remaining consistent with the First Amendment to the United States Constitution and applicable Supreme Court precedent interpreting the

Establishment Clause.

Section 3. Policy. Holiday decorations and symbols shall be City-owned and displayed to reflect the community's cultural, historical, and traditional character. Any items with religious associations are included only for their cultural or historical significance and not to promote or endorse any particular belief. Displays that include religious symbols must be balanced with secular imagery to ensure a neutral overall presentation.

Section 4. Implementation. The City Manager and designated staff shall oversee the design, placement, and maintenance of all holiday decorations and displays to ensure they remain balanced, neutral, and consistent with this resolution and applicable legal standards. The City Manager is authorized to make expenditures consistent with this policy and within approved budgetary limits.

Section 5. Space Limitations. The City Council recognizes that not every symbol or tradition can be physically represented within the limited public spaces available for holiday displays. The City Manager and staff are therefore authorized to determine the scale, composition, and arrangement of decorations based on aesthetic, design, and safety considerations, ensuring the display communicates inclusivity and community celebration.

Section 6. Constitutional Compliance. Nothing in this resolution shall be construed to endorse or promote any religious exercise, observance, or preference. All actions taken under this resolution shall be implemented primarily for the civic, historic and cultural purpose of celebrating the community's shared traditions and heritage consistent with constitutional requirements. Participation in or expression of support for any display shall be entirely voluntary.

Section 7. Severability. If any provision of this resolution is found invalid or unconstitutional, such invalidity shall not affect the remaining provisions, which shall remain in full force and effect.

Section 8. Repealer. All resolutions and agreements and parts of resolutions and agreements in conflict herewith are hereby repealed to the extent of the conflict only.

Section 9. Open Meetings. It is hereby found and determined that the meeting at which this resolution was passed was open to the public and that advance public notice of the time, place and purpose of said meeting was given as required by law.

PASSED AND APPROVED the ____ day of _____, 2025.

NICK LONG
Mayor

ATTEST:

DIANA STAPP
City Secretary

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

MICHELLE L. VILLARREAL
City Attorney