

**WILLOW GLEN BUSINESS ASSOCIATION  
HOLIDAY PLANNING MEETING**

**Date/Location:** Thursday, May 31, 2012; 8:30 am; WGBA Conference room  
**Attendees:** Mimi Braatz, Sam Garcia, Valerie Merklin, Richard Zappelli  
**Minutes Taken by:** Valerie Merklin

TOPIC	SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION	ACTION/NEXT STEPS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE
General discussion re: Holiday 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would like to consider data from the SJSU marketing study and try to do more to appeal to 30-somethings and areas outside of immediate WG area</li> <li>• Discussed creating a “Taste of Willow Glen” event in <u>October</u> for concierge staff at area hotels to draw more holiday tourism traffic to WG</li> </ul> <p>Other general ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide wreath to each store</li> <li>• Need weekly promotion or event throughout holiday season</li> <li>• Encourage merchants to put lights around their windows and/or have a contest for decorations</li> <li>• If empty storefront is available decorate with gift ideas and where they can be purchased</li> </ul>	<p>Ask Strategic Marketing Committee Chair (Valerie Evans) to add proposed “Taste of Willow Glen” concierge event to their 6/6/12 meeting agenda</p> <hr/> <p>Email everyone on P&amp;E committee for input on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What worked well during holiday last year?</li> <li>2. What could be improved this year?</li> </ol>	<p>Valerie Merklin</p> <hr/> <p>Valerie Merklin</p>
Lighting and Decorations on Avenue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In general everyone felt more lights are needed, more lit trees and find out how trees are selected since it seemed somewhat random last year</li> </ul>	<p>Talk to contractor re: lighting and possible additional decorations to find out if there are electrical infrastructure issues that would prevent increasing; if not, additional cost estimates</p>	<p>Valerie Merklin</p> <p><b>(note – already done, see attachment 1)</b></p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would like to see if we can get the bigger bulbs on the strands above the street</li> <li>• Would like more lights/decorations installed on north end of district (beyond Willow)</li> <li>• Would like some kind of banner or decoration over the street at major entry points (Minnesota and bridge at Coe)</li> <li>• Look into the large lit snowflakes like a neighboring WG street has</li> <li>• Could we put a lit tree in every planter?</li> <li>• Banners – use the blue ones, don't put up the red ones that Pacific Display provided last year since we already had the blue ones</li> </ul>		
Christmas Tree Lighting	<p>Ideas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Join efforts with WG Elementary for their event and just have the one big tree there; could WGBA help fund that tree to make it more spectacular?</li> </ul>	Talk to WGE PTA President to see how WGBA could partner with them	Valerie Merklin
Carriage Rides	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, want them again</li> </ul>	<p>Find out vendor and how logistics were done last year and what improvements should be made.</p> <p>Find out if ticket sales funded cost last year.</p>	Valerie Merklin

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Santa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, preferably the professional one</li> <li>• Set up Santa in tent like Stacy used to have in front of Treehouse, ideally in somewhat central location along the Ave. Look at these properties to see if any are viable:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Bank of America parking lot</li> <li>○ Buffington House</li> <li>○ Landi Court Reporting front lawn</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Ask Stacy about the vendors she used for the tent, professional Santa, etc. for cost and logistics info</p>	<p>Valerie Merklin and Mimi Braatz</p>
Theme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussed possible themes of:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Destination WG</li> <li>○ Authentic WG</li> <li>○ WG Traditions</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Further develop these theme ideas and email to P&amp;E Committee for their input and make decision at next P&amp;E committee meeting</p>	<p>Mimi Braatz</p> <p><b>(note – already done, see attachment 2)</b></p>

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**Attachment 1, Notes from Valerie Merklin's Meeting with Charlie Ferchau from Pacific Display on 5/31/12:**

- Tree Lights:
  - There are 42 trees lit on the avenue, located at the 21 light poles for power source
  - The trees may have looked random last year because some trees were occasionally not lit because of power issues. There are three different power sources on the avenue for all of the decoration and if there are any power outages it resets the timers, so that was the problem last year. Charlie will find an electrician who can help us resolve that issue well ahead of the holidays.
- The larger size bulbs for the strands hanging over the street are an option but significantly more expensive – about \$6 per foot vs. \$2.50 per foot
- Options to beef up lighting:
  - Double the number of lights on the 42 trees already lit (20 strings instead of 10 strings in place currently)
  - Increase number of trees lit (would require running large cords through the tops of trees and there are some areas where there are large gaps between trees so it might look unsightly during the day)
  - Outline top of a few buildings with lights
  - Add lighted tree(s) on top of building(s)
  - Big wreath somewhere with lit initials WG
- The garland that goes over the street with the white lanterns and red bows (in between the lit strands already up) is still in good condition except for the bows, which have faded to almost pink. Need to replace the bows this year – approx. \$65 per bow and need 44 bows (they last 3-5 years)
- Easiest way for Charlie to price any new decorations is to know what we might be interested in. He can do anything on the website [www.sierradisplay.com](http://www.sierradisplay.com). Please take a look and email anything you would like us to get a quote on to Valerie.

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**Attachment 2, Possible Theme Ideas Developed by Mimi Braatz**

**Option 1: Destination Willow Glen**

Make your list, check it twice and head off to downtown Willow Glen for the holidays! The primary focus of this idea is to sell WG as a destination by emphasizing what our targeted customers can find here.

One possible expression of this idea is a list of gifts that have to be purchased and that can be found on the Ave. A dog coat for Rover? Check! A great bottle of wine? Check! The perfect hostess gift? Check! A special dinner out with friends? Check! The perfect outfit for the holiday party? Check! A relaxing mani/pedi? Check! The possible categories are endless.

A nice extension of this idea is the ability to also list holiday activities that people can find here in Willow Glen such as visit Santa, take a carriage ride at night to look at the lights, go to a tree lighting, enjoy Ladies Night Out etc.

Another way to express this concept and to keep people shopping and visiting member businesses up and down the Avenue, is to create a Holiday Passport. Participating stores can stamp the pages and once the person has 12 stamps, they turn the passport in as an entry for a free drawing.

**Option 2: Authentic Willow Glen**

Companies strive to speak to target consumers in an authentic voice and to portray themselves as "real folks". Additionally, there is the desire of many people to both simplify their lives and make them meaningful, a feeling especially strong around the holidays. Here in WG, a person can enjoy the best of the season in a place that offers connection, authenticity and real value.

Taking this approach will allow downtown WG to capitalize on some of our greatest assets -- a small town feel within a big city; a shopping district with businesses owned by local people, not faceless conglomerates; the chance for personal interaction and connection. That the district also offers wonderful gift items, pampering services, delightful restaurants and terrific holiday events is just icing on the cake!

An meaningful extension of this concept is to conduct outreach events that benefit non-profits such as Salvation Army (bell ringers on the Ave.), Second Harvest (food drive), Toys/ Food Drives (Toys for Tots/Book Drive/Wish Book/Giving Tree) etc. We could also

honor a WG resident for volunteer activity that best represents the "Spirit of Willow Glen". This person could be the Grand Marshall at the Tree Lighting with Santa.

### **Option 3: Willow Glen Traditions**

This idea keys into the nostalgia of past traditions and the desire to add new ones. This concept allows us to highlight the activities, foods etc. that have been part of the WG tradition for many families and to couple those with new events or opportunities.

We could start by asking people to send us copies of their holidays in WG snap shots - maybe we could find a photo of the line-up for LaVilla Ravs! Have people share their memories of the holidays in WG and ask them what they do now to make the holidays special. (via social media)

Some brainstorming for "new" holiday traditions/events:

- A tour of holiday lights in the neighborhood via touring cars with hot chocolate and cookies at the end.
- A holiday decorating contest with the Mayor, District 6 council person, etc. as the esteemed judges
- An essay contest for nearby school children on what the holidays mean to them -
- Create a unique to WG tree ornament, with a new one available each year, sold by any business on the Ave that is interested
- Put out a call for WG folks to decorate the Ave. People could come together to make the downtown sparkle and shine with holiday decorations. An idea for a "unique to WG" item is to create evergreen kissing ball decorations to hang on the Ave., made by the people who live here.
- A community sing - in with Christmas and Hanukkah songs
- Display past holiday posters and photos in store windows or in the cases on the Ave that highlight WG history.