

OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER
DES MOINES, IOWA

CITY COUNCIL COMMUNICATION 97-450
SEPTEMBER 8, 1997 AGENDA

SUBJECT:	TYPE:	SUBMITTED BY:
UNION PARK CAROUSEL	◆ RESOLUTION ORDINANCE RECEIVE/FILE	DONALD TRIPP PARK AND RECREATION DIRECTOR

SYNOPSIS —

Authorize staff to negotiate a concession agreement for operation of a private carousel in Union Park.

FISCAL IMPACT —

The City's costs are limited to providing amenities such as benches, a water fountain, landscaping, etc. to the site. An estimate for this expense is \$2,500 to \$3,000. All other costs will be paid by the carousel's owner. The benefits to the City will be an increased visitation to Union Park with the potential for increased use of nearby facilities like Birdland's Aquatic Center, Picnic Shelter, and Marina.

RECOMMENDATION —

Approve the location of a private carousel at Union Park on a seasonal trial basis.

BACKGROUND —

The Des Moines Carousel Association, a group of interested local citizens headed by local businessman J.C. "Buz" Brenton, desires to install a large carousel in Union Park on a seasonal basis beginning the summer of 1998. The Association believes Union Park offers a central location in the City with excellent access and parking. While the City would have to provide site amenities and some labor, all construction, operation, and maintenance expenses of the carousel would be paid by the Association.

On June 2, 1997, "Buz" Brenton met with Park and Recreation Department staff to inform them of the desire of the Des Moines Carousel Association to place a large carousel on the grounds of Union Park. The area just west of the parking lot serving the rocket slide playground and south of the rental cabin has been selected as a tentative location.

Site development requires the Association to provide a concrete foundation or series of pillars flush with the ground to support the carousel. Electrical utilities will need to be brought to the site. Upgrading existing restrooms and benches will be necessary. The carousel is approximately 32'-34' in diameter. Funds have already been raised by the Association to purchase the carousel. The Association proposes operating it for two trial seasons (summers of 1998 and 1999). The carousel will be housed under a tent designed for it. Tent and carousel will be dismantled after each of the two trial seasons. The seasons will run approximately May 15 - September 15 each year. It is expected to be available for use 6-7 days a week from approximately noon to 7 or 8 PM.

A small barrier fence with an entrance/exit gate will be temporarily constructed by the Association around the carousel for safety purposes. Accessibility by all persons will be made possible by the construction of a ramp or boardwalk approach. The carousel's music is derived from a mechanical

calliope which will confine the sound to the general area in which it is located. Annual operations of the carousel are expected to cost \$20,000 - \$25,000. At least one attendant will be on duty at all times. A small concession wagon is planned by the Association to provide popcorn and soda, perhaps memorabilia. In trying to keep ticket cost down, revenues are not expected to meet all costs. Supplemental funds have been secured by the Association to cover all expenses over revenues.