



**CITY COUNCIL
COMMUNICATION:**

ITEM _____

**OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER
CITY OF DES MOINES, IOWA**

98-478

AGENDA:

OCTOBER 19, 1998

SUBJECT:

**ACQUISITION OF 25.3
ACRES OF SURPLUS
FORT DES MOINES
PROPERTY FOR
FUTURE ZOO
EXPANSION**

TYPE:

**RESOLUTION
ORDINANCE
RECEIVE/FILE**

SUBMITTED BY:

**DONALD TRIPP
PARK AND
RECREATION
DEPARTMENT**

SYNOPSIS —

To approve the License Agreement with the Department of the Army for the acquisition of the Fort Des Moines property, and authorize the Mayor to sign the Quit Claim Deed for the property after the form of the deed is approved by the City Legal Department.

Under the Base Realignment Closure Act, the U.S. Army is disposing of 52 acres of land at Fort Des Moines. The 25.3 acres proposed for acquisition by the City is contiguous with the north boundary of the Zoo. The acquisition of this property is needed in order to provide the option for future Zoo expansion. The Zoo is bounded by SW 9th Street on the West and Blank Golf Course on the south and east. The current Zoo site is fully developed and additional land is needed for future exhibits, maintenance, and support facilities.

FISCAL IMPACT —

The Blank Park Zoo Foundation has approved paying the purchase price of \$30,000. Other capital costs directly associated with the acquisition are perimeter security fencing of \$55,000 and asbestos abatement of \$86,100, which will be performed over the next three years. The source of funding for fencing and asbestos removal is Zoo CIP appropriations. Initial annual operating costs consist primarily of mowing, snow removal, and maintaining the exteriors of eight buildings, which were stabilized by the Corps of Engineers. Annual costs for property maintenance are estimated to be approximately \$12,000. Funding is available through State of Iowa Cultural Enrichment and Historic Preservation grant programs to assist with these costs over the short-term. Anticipated funding sources for long-term maintenance

are Zoo fee revenues and additional Zoo Foundation operating support. The Zoo Foundation has established an Endowment Fund of approximately \$3 million, through the generous gift from the John Stoddard Trust.

RECOMMENDATION —

Approval.

BACKGROUND —

In April 1994, City Council, by Roll Call No. 94-1418, approved the endorsement, with City participation, of a "reuse" committee to develop future land use plans for the surplus Fort Des Moines property. Representation from the community consists of government, private, public and historic interests, which included the Zoo Foundation's interests for future Zoo expansion.

A conceptual site-development plan to demonstrate the general type of adaptive reuse for a zoological park was prepared for the U.S. Army. The Fort Des Moines site has National Landmark status. Preservation of the property must be in accordance with guidelines in the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings when the site is altered for future zoological park use. Future development will integrate Zoo exhibits and support facilities with historic preservation and interpretation.

In May 1995, by Roll Call No. 95-2533 the Council approved an Offer To Purchase Agreement for 25.3 acres of Fort Des Moines property, with an earnest deposit of \$6,000, paid by the Zoo Foundation.

Over the past four years, the Army Corps of Engineers has performed work to remediate hazardous substances, excluding asbestos and lead-based paint. Repairs were performed on eight buildings to provide stabilization for an estimated 10 years. The Corps of Engineers is responsible for all required future hazardous substance remediation, except as noted.

The long-range expansion of the Zoo will be based on a

new master-plan, economic and marketing feasibility studies. The anticipated sources of funding are Zoo Foundation capital fundraising activities and historic preservation grants.

The estimated time frame for development of a Zoo site expansion plan for Council approval is three years.

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