

**CITY COUNCIL  
COMMUNICATION:**

**ITEM \_\_\_\_\_**

**02-128**

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

**AGENDA:**

**SYNOPSIS -**

MARCH 18, 2002

On the March 18, 2002 agenda are two resolutions relating to the Science Center of Iowa's proposal (4500 Grand Avenue, Mary Sellers, Director) to purchase Disposition Parcel No. 01-02/Metro Center Urban Renewal Area, which is the City-owned property located at 400 Martin Luther King, Jr. (MLK) Parkway, for the development of the new Science Center:

**SUBJECT:**

HEARING ON  
PROPOSAL BY  
SCIENCE CENTER  
OF IOWA TO  
PURCHASE  
DISPOSITION  
PARCEL NO. 01-02  
(400 MLK  
PARKWAY)

- Open/close public hearing on the proposed sale of the property; and execute the urban renewal contract with the Science Center which sets out the terms and conditions each party must meet for the sale of the property.
- First reading of the ordinance to waive building permit fees for VISION Iowa-funded projects that include the Science Center.

**TYPE:**

**FISCAL IMPACT -**

**RESOLUTION**  
ORDINANCE  
RECEIVE/FILE

Science Center: The Science Center of Iowa (SCI) will spend over \$40 million for the construction of the new SCI on the approximate 3.7 acre property. In addition, SCI is obtaining about \$20 million in additional funding to provide for long-term program and building needs. At this time, about \$40 million has been committed for this project.

**SUBMITTED BY:**

RICHARD CLARK  
DEPUTY CITY  
MANAGER

City: There are several financial considerations for the City and other entities related to the SCI proposal. In addition to the utility and Market Street relocations and provision of general parking in the area discussed in the January 28, 2002 communication to Council, another item-archeological review-has been raised by the State of Iowa.

*Utility Relocations Prior to Conveyance*

The City will convey the site to SCI in "as-is" condition subject to the removal or relocation of several utilities described below.

A. Overhead Power lines: The contract provides for the City, SCI, and

other entities to identify funding and the scheduling for the undergrounding of the high-power 'blue line' poles located on the north side of MLK Parkway from SW 5th to the Des Moines River. MidAmerican Energy estimated the cost for the undergrounding to be about \$500,000 to \$600,000 per block or a total of about \$2.7 million. It is our intention to seek funding from non-City sources to help pay for this cost.

If a mutual agreement cannot be reached on the undergrounding when SCI presents its final design plans to the City, SCI may withdraw from the contract.

City staff has met to discuss potential options for the undergrounding of these lines. Additional work is needed to reach agreement on this issue.

B. Sewer: Relocate the SW 4th Street combined sewer, which serves several buildings north of the site, to SW 3rd Street. Engineering staff estimated the cost of the sewer relocation to be about \$90,000.

The City will work with SCI to negotiate utility easements for the following items that will not impact the location of the SCI building:

- a. The 12-inch storm sewer connecting into a drain on current. Market Street leading to SW 3rd Street should be retained if possible; it provides drainage for City-owned lot on the north side of Market Street.
- b. The 12-inch water main from SW 3rd to SW 4th Streets located on the current Market Street alignment.

#### *Relocation of Market Street*

As part of the SCI site, Market Street between SW 3rd and SW 4th Streets will have to be relocated somewhat north of its current location; the relocated Market Street will then 'match up' with the SW 4th-SW 5th Streets portion of Market Street. The Engineering staff has provided a preliminary estimate of \$300,000 to \$350,000.

#### *Provision of Off-Site Public Parking*

The contract requires the City to work with SCI to determine what parking will be available for SCI patrons in the vicinity of SCI property. City staff has met on a preliminary basis and will convene a group of stakeholders in the immediate area to explore potential solutions.

#### *Permit Fees*

SCI has requested the City waive the permit fees as part of the VISION Iowa process to obtain funding from the State of Iowa. The estimated fees for building and related permits for the SCI project are in the \$65,000 to \$75,000 range. There may be additional charges to SCI for building plan reviews due to the specialized nature of its museum and movie theater functions.

Council, at its January 28, 2002 meeting, directed the Legal Department to provide for an ordinance change to allow the permit fees to be waived for VISION Iowa projects. The first reading of the ordinance is scheduled for the March 18, 2002 meeting.

#### *Archaeological*

The State Historical and Preservation Office (SHPO) has strongly recommended an archeological reconnaissance be undertaken on this property before construction begins in spring 2003. City staff is in the process of determining the feasibility of this request and potential options, including funding.

#### **RECOMMENDATION -**

**Approve execution of the urban renewal contract with SCI.**

#### **BACKGROUND -**

SCI has selected the 3.9 acre site located between SW 3rd and SW 5th Streets, immediately north of the MLK Parkway, for its new campus.

#### **General Timing for the SCI Proposal**

After Council receipt of this proposal on January 2, 2002, a period was opened for any other proposal to compete against the SCI proposal. No proposals were received by the March 8, 2002 deadline.

After execution of the contract, several benchmarks must be met before the land is conveyed to SCI:

- Agreement on provision of parking or SCI can be released from contract (June 17, 2002).
- City and SCI have written agreement on method, funding, and schedule for burial of 'blue line' poles. (Our goal is to reach agreement in concept by mid-June, 2002.)
- Council approves construction plans and financing before conveying

land (May 12, 2003).

- Completion of construction and opening of new SCI within two years of the date of conveyance.

### **SCI Proposal**

Minimum development requirements and competitive criteria, using the SCI proposal, were developed for any proposal to meet and exceed in order to be considered as a competing proposal.

The SCI proposal, briefly:

#### *Design*

- Building and Uses: Enclosed museum building(s) with at least 90,000 gross square feet that accommodate a science center museum and related accessory uses including a wide-screen domed theater with at least 200 seats, café, and gift shop.
- Vehicular Access: There shall be no direct vehicle or pedestrian access to the property from MLK Parkway. The improvements shall include a car and bus drop-off area within the property to a major public entrance that includes a structure to accommodate waiting passengers.
- Entrance, Pedestrian Access, Loading: A large public main entrance to the museum shall be located on the north building façade in the vicinity of the intersection of 4th and Market Streets. This entrance shall have a strong visual presence and provide weather protection to pedestrians by incorporating a canopy, awning, arcade, or other architectural form. A 20-foot wide paved sidewalk shall be installed to connect pedestrian traffic to the museum building, Market Street, and adjoining commercial developments.

In addition, the improvements on the property shall include wide sidewalks with signage and human-scale lighting that accommodates easy and convenient pedestrian-oriented linkages to and from the Court Avenue business district, the riverfront, and Sec Taylor Stadium. Truck maneuvering and all loading/unloading functions must occur on the property. All truck maneuvering, loading, and parking areas shall be separate from the pedestrian access improvements.

- Building Materials: The museum building(s) shall be inviting and attractive from all directions and be constructed of durable and good quality materials. The style, color, and type of exterior materials shall complement existing structures in the area. Exterior materials may include stone, brick, or other types of masonry units, concrete, glass,

tile, or a combination of these materials. Metal may also be used if it is durable and good quality. Exterior insulation systems are not permitted. The north façade of the museum building shall provide a highly attractive presence that shall be expressed through use of transparent glass and other high quality materials to provide a people-attracting appearance to this immediate area.

- Equipment and Trash Enclosures: All service equipment and trash containers must be located within the museum building(s).

- Outdoor Improvements and Landscaping: The improvements shall include outdoor science related program space and exhibits and other amenities such as a plaza, playground, benches, tables, gardens or sculptures. Open space and border areas (defined as area between curbs and property line) shall be landscaped with trees, shrubs, and vegetative ground cover appropriate in scale and massing to the museum building(s). All deciduous trees shall be a minimum of 2½ inches in caliper, measured 6 inches from the ground when planted. Coniferous trees shall be a minimum of 6 feet tall when planted, be balled and burlapped stock.

- Signage: All signage shall comply with the "C-3R" Central Business District Mixed Residential District Regulations of the Zoning Ordinance and be appropriate and compatible with the architecture of the museum building(s) and the surrounding area. The developer shall prepare a comprehensive graphics package for exterior signs and images as part of the Conceptual Development Plan.

- Lighting: All exterior lighting must be designed in a manner that does not intrude upon existing and planned residential uses in the area. Developer shall prepare a comprehensive lighting plan that indicates lighting design layout and levels of illumination as part of the submitted Conceptual Development Plan.

#### *Other*

- Conveyance of the property will occur after the Council approves the financing and final design plans. (This will occur in 2003.)

- Estimated cost of the development is about \$40 million that has been committed to the project. An additional \$20 million is being raised to provide for long-term program and building needs.

- The property must be used and maintained as a science center; transfer or sale of the property must be approved by the Council.

- A good faith deposit of \$50,000 was made.

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