

**CITY COUNCIL  
COMMUNICATION:**

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

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

**02-444**

**SYNOPSIS -**

**AGENDA:**

Authorize staff to submit three grant applications to the Prairie Meadows Race Track and Casino Community Betterment Awards for:

AUGUST 19, 2002

1. Replacement Fencing around Woodland Cemetery along Woodland Avenue and Martin Luther King Parkway.

**SUBJECT:**

2. Restoration of the Woodland Cemetery Receiving Vault - Exterior building repairs and interior remodeling to provide an historical interpretive center.

PRAIRIE MEADOWS  
GRANT  
APPLICATIONS FOR  
PARK AND  
RECREATION  
PROGRAMS AND  
FACILITIES

3. Restoration of the Fort Des Moines (No. 2) Cabin - site development and historical interpretive center.

**TYPE:**

Deadline for submittal of these applications to Prairie Meadows was August 15, 2002. Staff was able to meet the submittal deadline but was unable to meet the August 5th Council agenda deadline for pre-approval. These items will be added to the previous grant approved by Council at the August 5 meeting. They were: Requested Grant Amount

**RESOLUTION**  
ORDINANCE  
RECEIVE/FILE

1. Senior Citizen Subsidy and Summer Youth Golf Instruction Program - \$32,000

**SUBMITTED BY:**

2. Greater Des Moines Softball Park - \$75,000

DONALD M. TRIPP  
PARK AND  
RECREATION  
DIRECTOR

3. James Cownie Soccer Park - \$250,000

Any applications that do not receive Council approval will be withdrawn.

**FISCAL IMPACT -**

		<u>Requested Grant Amount</u>
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1.	Woodland Cemetery Fencing	\$200,000
2.	Woodland Cemetery Receiving Vault	\$186,000
3.	Fort Des Moines Cabin	\$175,000

No impact on City CIP budget.

**RECOMMENDATION -**

**Approval.**

**BACKGROUND -**

**1. Replacement Fencing around part of Woodland Cemetery**

Woodland Cemetery was the City of Des Moines' first public cemetery. It opened in 1848 and became the burial site for Des Moines' first residents. It has been designated a local historic landmark by the Des Moines Historic District Commission.

The galvanized wire mesh fencing surrounding the cemetery is estimated to be over 50 years old. It has become brittle and subject to breaking and rust. Staff would like to see the mesh fence replaced with a wrought iron fence that is more appropriate for such an historic facility. With the current construction of Martin Luther King Parkway on the eastern side of the cemetery, the City plans to replace approximately 1300 feet of mesh fencing with new wrought iron fencing and stone piers. This leaves an additional 800 feet to replace on the eastern boundary. In order to provide a more secure and aesthetically pleasing view of the cemetery from the new Parkway, the 1200 feet of fencing along the southern boundary of the cemetery (Woodland Avenue) should also be replaced. A total of approximately 2,000 feet of additional wrought iron fencing and piers would provide an attractive enclosure for this beautiful historical park within the City of Des Moines. Total cost of the additional fencing is estimated to be \$200,000.

**2. Restoration of Woodland Cemetery Receiving Vault**

The Receiving Vault is a large brick and concrete building recessed into the side of a small hill in Woodland Cemetery. It was built around 1882 to serve as a holding facility for persons who had died but could not be buried until the frozen winter ground had thawed. It is believed

to have been constructed with some of the first reinforced concrete ever used west of the Mississippi River. The City recently matched a \$25,000 private donation to repair the roof and an exterior wall in order to prevent any further deterioration of the Vault's interior. A local architect has produced a design that would be used to restore the building and interpret the fascinating history of Woodland Cemetery. When fully restored, it is expected to attract local visitors, particularly school groups, and tourists to hear its unique story. Three phases are suggested for the restoration of this building:

<b>Phase I</b>	Includes exterior cleaning, joint mortar/sealing, gate repair, door replacement	\$37,000
<b>Phase II</b>	Includes restoration of vestibule floors, walls, and ceilings; electrical service, lighting, door and window repairs, installation of art elements and display infrastructure	\$74,000
<b>Phase III</b>	Includes interior vault restoration, HVAC system, steel support columns, display walls and wall system	\$75,000
	<b>Total Estimated Cost</b>	<b>\$186,000</b>

### **3. Restoration of the Fort Des Moines (No. 2) Cabin**

The birthplace of the City of Des Moines began in the year 1843 at the junction of the Des Moines and Raccoon Rivers when soldier-workmen began the construction of Fort Des Moines (No. 2). A row of cabins was built for the officers on what is now SW Water Street. Though the early cabins did not survive, the site has remained continuously in the hands of what was to later become the City of Des Moines. In June of 1965 through the efforts of the Polk County Historical Society, a dedication was held for the first replacement building of old Fort Des Moines (No. 2). Because exact reconstruction of an 1843 building would have been very difficult, an old but well preserved hand-hewn log cabin of the 1840 period was located in Washington County, purchased, disassembled, and moved to Des Moines.

Almost no restoration of the historic cabin took place until the summer

of 2002 when the Des Moines City Council authorized spending up to \$75,000 to repair and preserve the building (Phase I). The Council action required that the Polk County Historical Society work together with staff to raise private funding for the remaining costs to provide site development (Phase II) and interpretation of the birthplace history (Phase III). The cost estimates for Phase II - \$75,000, and Phase III - \$100,000 give a total project cost of \$175,000.

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