

**CITY COUNCIL  
COMMUNICATION:**

**02-643**

**AGENDA:**

DECEMBER 16, 2002

**SUBJECT:**

ACCEPTANCE OF  
OWNERSHIP OF  
MYRON AND JACKIE  
BLANK DISCOVERY  
CENTER AT BLANK  
PARK ZOO

**TYPE:**

**RESOLUTION**  
ORDINANCE  
RECEIVE/FILE

**SUBMITTED BY:**

DONALD M. TRIPP  
PARK AND  
RECREATION  
DIRECTOR

**ITEM 66-A**

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

**SYNOPSIS —**

Propose Council action to accept ownership of the Myron and Jackie Blank Discovery Center from the Blank Park Zoo Foundation.

**FISCAL IMPACT —**

There is no fiscal impact associated with this action. The Zoo Foundation paid the construction costs and reimburses the City for operating expenses.

**RECOMMENDATION —**

**Approval.**

**BACKGROUND —**

On May 3, 1999, by Roll Call No. 99-1411, City Council approved a 28E Web of Life Agreement with the Blank Park Zoo Foundation for the construction of the Discovery Center. The Agreement stipulates that the Zoo Foundation pay all construction costs, and to reimburse the City for operating expenses of the Discovery Center. The Zoo Foundation conducted a private fund-raising campaign to pay for the \$6.7 million construction cost, and continues to raise private funds to pay the operating costs of \$475,000 annually. The Agreement also stipulates that upon approval by Council of the completed project, ownership of the Discovery Center would transfer to the City. The Zoo staff took occupancy of the Discovery Center on August 7, 2001, to prepare the exhibits for opening to the public on September 1, 2001.

Because the City took occupancy of the Discovery Center on August 7, 2001, it is recommended that Council approve transfer of ownership, effective this date.

Once the City approves the completion of the Discovery Center, the Web of Life 28E Agreement will be terminated. The Foundation has agreed to fund operating expenses until July 1, 2003, if the facility is accepted before that time. An amendment to the 28E in which the Foundation agrees to this continued funding of the operating expenses should be executed by the Foundation prior to or at the time of the City's acceptance.

	<p>The Agreement also includes the intent of the parties to enter into a future 28E Management Agreement whereby the City would continue to own the Zoo, with the Zoo Foundation responsible for managing operations. Negotiations are currently being conducted, with a target date of July 1, 2003 for implementation of a new 28E Management Agreement.</p>
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