



Agenda Item:

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COUNCIL COMMUNICATION City Manager's Office

GENERAL INFORMATION

Agenda Date: 11/07/05
Agenda Item Type: Resolution

Communication No.: 05-623
Roll Call No.:

Submitted by: Donald M. Tripp, Park and Recreation Director

SUBJECT—

Authorize staff to begin negotiations with Polk County Conservation/RDG Greenwood Studio to develop a 28E Agreement for the reuse of the former Science Center based on the conceptual plan submitted in response to the (RFQ) issued on July 25, 2005 for use of the former Science Center of Iowa building in Greenwood/Ashworth Parks.

SYNOPSIS—

The City Council authorized staff to issue a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to identify potential new uses for the vacated Science Center facility in Greenwood Park. By this action, Council also adopted a process for accepting public input on new uses, including establishing a citizen review committee.

On November 1, 2005, the committee met with staff to review the proposal submitted by Polk County Conservation/RDG Greenwood Studio. The committee reached consensus that the conceptual plan submitted met the requirements of the RFQ and recommended that City staff begin negotiations to develop a 28E to formalize the terms and conditions for reuse of the Old Science Center Facility.

FISCAL IMPACT—

None

RECOMMENDATION—

Approval

BACKGROUND—

Since 1977, the Science Center of Iowa (SCI) has operated a science center facility in Greenwood/Ashworth Parks. The structure was built on City-owned property pursuant to a science and industry grant whereby, the City of Des Moines provided SCI the land for the facility as long as it was used as a science center. SCI has been largely responsible for all maintenance and other expenses relating to the facility. Recently the SCI opened their new location at 401 West Martin Luther King Junior Parkway. SCI vacated the facility effective September 15, 2005.

In response to the Council authorization on July 25, 2005 (Roll Call No. 05-1831), City staff issued a RFQ that was distributed to approximately a dozen interested parties, publicized on the City Website and in the Des Moines Register. Two proposals were received in response to the RFQ. The initial proposal submitted by the Des Moines Cultural Coalition was subsequently withdrawn. Staff and the citizen review committee met on November 1, 2005 to review the remaining proposal submitted jointly by Polk County Conservation/RDG Greenwood Studio. Committee members present included Christine Hensley, Bob Mahaffey, and representatives from Greenwood Historic Neighborhood Association, Ingersoll Park Neighborhood, Linden Heights, Salisbury Oaks and Waterbury Neighborhood Associations.

As part of action on July 25, 2005, Council also directed staff to hold a public meeting to accept input on the proposals received in response to the RFQ. Because only one proposal was received, staff recommends accepting public input at the Council meeting when the 28E Agreement is brought for approval.

Highlights of the proposal include the following:

The joint proposal would allow for collaboration between Polk County Conservation and Greenwood Studios which is an integration of art and science, but also anticipates the building could provide a venue for other public uses to include but not limited to:

- Visitor Center, trailhead, art studio, lectures, presentations, classes, demonstrations, exploration.
- Editing suite to create film using the environment.
- Working with at-risk youth.
- “Conservation Colony” bringing conservation groups together.
- Collaborating with the Art Center.

In addition, the proposal identified the following possible revenue sources:

1. Conservation Colony – Studio
2. Meeting Space Rentals
3. Black Box Theater (planetarium)
4. Sylvan Amphitheater
5. After School/Preschool
6. Art Education studio space

The consensus of the committee was to recommend to the Council that staff be authorized to begin negotiations to draft a 28E Agreement based on the conceptual plan as submitted for review by the committee and presentation for Council action at a later date. The Parks and Recreation Board will also be consulted before any final agreement is recommended to the City Council. In the interim, the City will continue to maintain the minimum heat and security to help assure proper maintenance of the buildings infrastructure.

