



Council Communication

Office of the City Manager

Date

September 22, 2008

Agenda Item No. 25
Roll Call No. 08-
Communication No. 08-577
Submitted by: Jeb E. Brewer, P.E.,
City Engineer

AGENDA HEADING:

Authorization to submit a grant application to the U. S. Department of Agriculture Emergency Watershed Protection Program.

SYNOPSIS:

Recommend approval of authorizing the City Manager to execute and submit an application for funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Emergency Watershed Protection program for soil erosion prevention and repair projects related to the 2008 heavy rains and flooding. The City's role is to act as a governmental sponsor as required by the Emergency Watershed Protection program for soil erosion prevention and repair projects located at 1235 Davis Avenue and at 1624, 1706 and 1712 Pennsylvania Avenue in Des Moines. The application for funding is authorized subject to obtaining agreements with the property owners, as approved by the City's Engineering, Public Works and Legal Departments, for expense reimbursement and operation and maintenance of the project repairs. Grant approval by the Natural Resources Conservation Service is dependent on available funds and project benefits.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Amount: N/A

Funding Source: Proposed agreements with impacted property owners have the property owners providing the required 25% program match.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) operates the Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) Program, with the stated purpose of undertaking "emergency measures for soil erosion prevention to safeguard lives and property from floods, drought, and the products of erosion on any watershed whenever fire, flood or any other natural occurrence is causing or has caused a sudden impairment of the watershed."

During and subsequent to the heavy rains and flooding of the Des Moines River in June 2008, severe soil erosion and landslides occurred at the properties located at 1235 Davis Avenue and at 1624, 1706 and 1712 Pennsylvania Avenue. The Davis Avenue property is located next to a natural creek bed, and the Pennsylvania Avenue properties are located along the Des Moines River, thereby qualifying based on location for potential EWP funding.

In mid-August 2008, representatives of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) met with the City Engineer, Public Works Director, and other City staff to discuss potential funding options through the EWP program for soil erosion prevention and repair projects for these properties. City staff has since met with the NRCS representatives at the property sites to assess the damage and repair options for each site, including the construction of a retaining wall or a property buy-out (including relocation and demolition) for the 1235 Davis Avenue property, and removal and replacement of a garage and lime stabilization or other soil erosion prevention methods for the Pennsylvania Avenue properties.

The City's role in the EWP program is to apply as a governmental sponsor for the prevention and repair projects. Upon approval of the City's application, the EWP program will fund seventy-five percent (75%) of the project costs. The Engineering, Public Works and Legal Departments are currently working with the property owners on agreements in which the property owners will assume the responsibility and liability for operation and maintenance of project repairs, and agree to incur all or the majority of the remaining project costs. The City's application for and participation in the EWP program is to be approved by Council subject to and contingent upon obtaining agreements with the property owners that are acceptable to the Engineering, Public Works and Legal Departments.

The application deadline for the EWP program is sixty (60) days from the end date of the disaster event, as declared by the USDA. The application must be submitted by the second (2nd) week in October to satisfy the deadline.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION(S): NONE

BOARD/COMMISSION ACTION(S): NONE

ANTICIPATED ACTIONS AND FUTURE COMMITMENTS:

Engineering, Public Works and Legal Department will work with the property owners to finalize agreements regarding operation and maintenance and cost-sharing for the EWP projects; City Manager will execute and submit the application to the USDA; City staff will work with NRCS agents and property owners during planning and construction of the project repairs. The final grant will be presented to Council for consideration.

For more information on this and other agenda items, please call the City Clerk's Office at 515-283-4209 or visit the Clerk's Office on the second floor of City Hall, 400 Robert D Ray Drive. Council agendas are available to the public at the City Clerk's Office on Thursday afternoon preceding Monday's Council meeting. Citizens can also request to receive meeting notices and agendas by email by calling the Clerk's Office or sending their request via email to cityclerk@dmgov.org.