

 <p style="text-align: center;">Council Communication Office of the City Manager</p>	Date	July 27, 2009
	Agenda Item No. 35 Roll Call No. <u>09-</u> Communication No. <u>09-505</u> Submitted by: Donald M. Tripp Park and Recreation Director	

AGENDA HEADING:

Acceptance and approval of proposal from Keffer/Overton Architects to complete an historic preservation plan for Fort Des Moines and authorizing and directing the City Manager to negotiate and execute a contract for the provision of same.

SYNOPSIS:

Accept the proposal from Keffer/Overton Architects (John B. “Chip” Overton, Principal & President, 317 Sixth Avenue, Studio 201, Des Moines, Iowa 50309) and authorizing an agreement to complete an historic preservation plan for Fort Des Moines.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Amount: Total contract amount with Keffer/Overton: \$69,675;
 Additional fee for Technical Advisory Network, required as part of Historic Resource Development Program Grant: \$500
 Total Amount = \$70,175

Funding Source: Historic Resource Development Program Grant, \$46,776
 Favrot Grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation, \$4,000
 2009-2010 CIP, G.O. Bonds from Fort Des Moines Stabilization Projects, CP040, PKS990000, PKS172, page 11, \$19,399

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

The Historic Preservation Plan for Fort Des Moines is an initial step in implementing the SuperBlock Master Plan. Through the SuperBlock planning process, members of the public expressed interest in preserving Fort Des Moines, protecting what remains of the parade grounds and reconstructing the historic gazebo. The SuperBlock Plan also calls for tourist accommodations such as a bed and breakfast, and cultural and residential uses within remaining buildings. Some of the buildings may support expansion of the Blank Park Zoo as well. The remainder of the parade grounds is proposed to become a new City park, as a large open space reflecting its historic use and including interpretive elements and a footpath around the perimeter of the grounds. Trails are planned to interconnect the other facilities within the SuperBlock (e.g. zoo, golf course, parks). Chaffee Road, which leads into the Fort, and is targeted to become the avenue to the Zoo's main gate, is proposed to be improved to reflect its historic grand entrance. In order to implement this portion of the SuperBlock Plan, an historic preservation plan is necessary to clarify the vision for the Fort and identify and prioritize rehabilitation efforts.

The Historic Preservation Plan shall be in accordance with *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings* and include at least the following items:

1. Review of existing assessments of historic significance of each building, features of the site, and cultural landscape with updates as needed;
2. Assessment of physical and structural condition and integrity of buildings, infrastructure, and features of the site;
3. Identification of preservation, rehabilitation, and mothballing efforts necessary;
4. Priority schedule of preservation and rehabilitation work;
5. Estimated cost of preservation and rehabilitation efforts;
6. Recommendations for adaptive reuse and connections among the features of the site; and
7. Recommendations for easements or other legal tools to ensure ongoing preservation.

Fort Des Moines is a valuable asset to the City as well as the Country for its significance in black history, women's history, and military history. Originally established as a cavalry post in 1903, Fort Des Moines is one of only two National Historic Landmarks in Polk County and the first to be designated a National Register Historic District. It served as the Provisional Army Officer Training School, which marked both the U.S. Army's first recognition of its responsibility to train black officers and the establishment of a military tradition among African Americans. Fort Des Moines was also the birthplace of the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps (WAAC), later renamed the Women's Army Corps (WAC), during WWII. It was the first and largest such training center during the war, training over 72,000 women, including 3,069 officers--the first women officers in the Army at any level. Since WWII the Army has disposed of major portions of the original 640 acre tract, reducing it to approximately 170 acres. Only 43 of the nearly 350 original buildings remain. The Historic Preservation Plan will address 35 of those remaining buildings.

There are five property owners represented in this study. The City of Des Moines owns 12 of the buildings located in the study area. The Fifth Judicial District Department of Correctional Services owns property comprised of 11 buildings. Tempus Utile, LC, owns property comprised of ten buildings. Fort Des Moines Community Bank owns a duplex (counted as two buildings) and the Blank Park Zoo Foundation owns the historic parade grounds. Ten of the 35 buildings have been maintained and are actively in use, the remaining buildings are either vacant or used for storage while suffering from neglect and deterioration.

After the Historic Preservation Plan is completed, the City will be able to use the Plan to determine funding priorities for rehabilitating the City-owned Fort buildings, while implementing the SuperBlock Master Plan. The Plan will aid in determining acceptable alterations, additions, and repairs for preserving the character of the historic landscape and buildings. The other property owners will be able to use the Plan as a guide for renovations as well, or it may encourage them to sell to a developer who is prepared to make those improvements.

In addition to furthering the success of the SuperBlock Master Plan and prioritizing rehabilitation efforts, completing an Historic Preservation Plan for Fort Des Moines advances the following City goals:

Entertainment Destinations: Des Moines will be an entertainment hub for all ages and will attract visitors from the metro region and beyond.

Fort Des Moines is an element of the SuperBlock Master Plan which is planned to become an entertainment destination. The Blank Park Zoo alone is the number two tourist attraction in the State (second to the Iowa State Fair). As a National Historic Landmark, Fort Des Moines has the potential to attract visitors from a large geographic area. With a rehabilitated and re-purposed

Fort, along with the Zoo and other SuperBlock improvements, this area may be able to close in on that number one spot, boosting community pride, spurring economic development, and bringing in tourism dollars.

Pride in Community Assets: The City will set the standard for constructing and maintaining attractive buildings, parks, and infrastructure that represent our world-class city and generate civic pride.

This plan is the first step to restoring these buildings to their original glory and instilling civic pride and military admiration in all those who visit.

A Request for Proposals was issued to find a team of consultants to complete this historic preservation plan for Fort Des Moines. The City received seven proposals from local firms as well as from around the country. The review committee consisted of representatives from the Parks Department, Community Development, Engineering, Economic Development, and the Blank Park Zoo. After thoughtful discussion and careful scoring, the review committee chose Keffer/Overton Architects of Des Moines.

Keffer/Overton has substantial work history with the Fort. Their predecessor firm was one of two firms that designed and oversaw construction of the 174 WAC buildings constructed in 1942. Since 1997, they have reviewed the conditions of and historically consulted on 30 buildings in Fort Des Moines. They have been directly involved in the historical restoration and/or adaptive reuse of seven buildings in Fort Des Moines in recent years.

Keffer/Overton teamed with Genus Landscape Architects, who consulted on the SuperBlock Master Plan, and Dr. Penelope LeFew-Blake, who is the leading historian on Fort Des Moines and the author of several papers and books on Fort Des Moines.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION(S):

Date: May 18, 2009

Roll Call Number: 09-870

Action: Authorizing and directing the City Manager to apply on behalf of the City for a grant in the amount of \$46,776.00 from the State Historical Society of Iowa for a Historical Resource Development Program grant for the purpose of helping to fund the development of a Historic Preservation Plan and execute the contract portion of such grant application. Moved by Kiernan to approve. Motion carried 6-0. (Council Communication No. 09-316)

Date: April 21, 2008

Roll Call Number: 08-743, 08-744 and 08-745

Action: (A) 08-743 Approving Conceptual Plan. Moved by Meyer to adopt. Motion carried 7-0. (B) 08-744 Authorizing Voluntary Acquisition of property. Moved by Meyer to adopt. Motion carried 7-0. (C) 08-745 Recommendation from Plan and Zoning Commission. Moved by Meyer to receive and file. Motion carried 7-0. (Council Communication No. 08-224)

Date: March 10, 2008

Roll Call Number: 08-434

Action: Receive and file SuperBlock Master Plan and refer to various boards and City Manager for review and recommendation. (Council Communication No. 08-112) Moved by Meyer to adopt. Motion carried 7-0.

Date: January 7, 2008

Roll Call Number: 08-077

Action: Update from the SuperBlock Master Plan Committee and request for extension of completion date to April 2008. Sponsor: Meyer. (Council Communication No. 08-023) Moved by Meyer to approve. Motion carried 7-0.

BOARD/COMMISSION ACTION(S):

Plan and Zoning Commission

Date: 04-03-08

Action: Approve the conceptual SuperBlock Master Plan and recommend approval to the City Council.

Park Board

Date: 03-25-08

Roll Call Number: 08-030

Action: Approve the conceptual SuperBlock Master Plan and recommend approval to the City Council.

Date: 2-26-08

Roll Call Number: 08-024

Action: Receive and file the SuperBlock Master Plan

ANTICIPATED ACTIONS AND FUTURE COMMITMENTS:

Council adoption of Historic Preservation Plan upon completion.

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