

 <p style="text-align: center;">Council Communication Office of the City Manager</p>	Date: January 9, 2012
	Agenda Item No. 28 Roll Call No. <u>12-0046</u> Communication No. <u>12-020</u> Submitted by: Donald M. Tripp, Director of Park and Recreation

AGENDA HEADING:

Pledging support for the Blank Park Zoo Foundation, Inc. to apply for a Vision Iowa Community Attraction and Tourism grant to fund a portion of the expenses related to development of improvements at the A. H. Blank Park Zoo.

SYNOPSIS:

This action pledges support for the Blank Park Zoo Foundation, Inc.’s Vision Iowa Community Attraction and Tourism grant application to provide for funding of a portion of expenses relating to development of improvements that comply with the approved master plan for the A. H. Blank Park Zoo.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Amount: The Blank Park Zoo Foundation, Inc. (BPZF) is requesting \$2,000,000 from Vision Iowa.

Vision Iowa requires a contribution from the local municipality and county before they will consider any grant request. The BPZF is not requesting any new additional financing from the City. The BPZF has previously committed to \$16,600,000 in Zoo improvements by the end of 2015 and the City has previously agreed to commit \$8,100,000 in grant funds to the Zoo via the economic development agreement with BPZF. In total, the BPZF will make \$18,000,000 in improvements to the Zoo before the end of 2014, for a total of \$24,700,000 in zoo improvements before 2015.

Funding Source: No additional City funds are being committed beyond what has previously been approved as part of the long-term lease agreement and economic development grant agreement

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

On April, 25, 2011, by Roll Call No. 11-0712, the City Council approved a long-term lease agreement with the BPZF for operations, management and maintenance of the A. H. Blank Park Zoo (Zoo), which increases the BPZF’s level of responsibility, authority, and management over Zoo facilities and operations. On April 25, 2011, by Roll Call No. 11-0715, the City Council approved an urban renewal economic development agreement with BPZF for an economic development grant in the amount of \$8,100,000 to be used for costs related to expansion, improvement and enhanced operations, management and maintenance of the Zoo.

On April 25, 2011, by Roll Call No. 11-0709, the City Council approved a new master plan for the Zoo. The plan facilitates the BPZF’s goal to propel the Zoo into a premier regional attraction by enhancing

existing and adding new facilities and exhibits. Among the improvements shown on the master plan is an Africa Exhibit that will encompass the endangered black rhinoceros and eland antelope exhibits, an indoor giraffe viewing and feeding experience, a second giraffe yard for expanded breeding and population management, and an educational pavilion.

A Vision Iowa CAT grant is critical to completing the final phase of the Wild About Animals Campaign that will underwrite the BPZF's planned Zoo expansion and improvements. With 400,000 visitors annually, the Zoo is consistently ranked as one of the top three cultural attractions in Iowa. Attendance is expected to increase to over one half million per year once the planned Africa Exhibit is completed.

The BPZF has invested \$8,500,000 over the past two years and plans on investing another \$10,000,000 in capital improvements over the course of the next few years. To date, the City has reimbursed the BPZF \$4,400,000 (which is included in the above mentioned \$8,500,000) of its \$8,100,000 commitment toward the cost of these recent improvements per the economic development agreement. In July, the Zoo opened its first major attraction in ten years, the David Kruidenier Australian Adventure. Finishing touches are being completed on a new and improved sea lion exhibit, which is set for a grand opening in March. A new Zoo entrance is among other improvements in the works at this time.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION(S):

Date: May 23, 2011

Action: Approving the following items regarding A.H. Blank Park Zoo Entrance Improvements:
([Council Communication No. 11-328](#))

Date: May 23, 2011

Roll Call Number: 11-0866

Action: (A) [Iowa](#) Department of Transportation (IDOT) Revitalize Iowa's Sound Economy (RISE) Agreement. Moved by Hensley to adopt. Motion Carried 7-0.

Date: May 23, 2011

Roll Call Number: 11-0867

Action: (B) [Iowa](#) Department of Correction Grant Contract for development of the Safety Barrier Improvements. Moved by Hensley to adopt. Motion Carried 7-0.

Date: May 23, 2011

Roll Call Number: 11-0868

Action: (C) [Agreement](#) with The Blank Park Zoo Foundation, Inc. for construction and funding. Moved by Hensley to adopt. Motion Carried 7-0.

Date: May 23, 2011

Roll Call Number: 11-0869

Action: (D) [Ordering](#) Construction and fixing date for Receiving of Bids, (6-14-11) and Hearing (6-27-11), Construction Estimate, \$1,850,000. ([Council Communication No. 11-303](#)) Moved by Hensley to adopt. Motion Carried 7-0.

Date: April 25, 2011

Roll Call Number: 11-0709

Action: Items regarding the A. H. Blank Park Zoo: ([Council Communication No. 11-229](#)) [Conceptual](#) Master Plan by the Blank Park Zoo Foundation, Inc. **Moved by Coleman to adopt. Motion Carried 7-0.**

Date: April 25, 2011

Roll Call Number: 11-0712

Action: Items regarding the A. H. Blank Park Zoo: ([Council Communication No. 11-229](#)) [Hearing](#) on Long-term Lease, Operation, Management and Maintenance Agreement. **Moved by Coleman to adopt. Motion Carried 7-0.**

Date: August 23, 2010

Roll Call Number: 10-1384

Action: [Authorization](#) to apply for a Revitalize Iowa's Sound Economy (RISE) grant to fund a portion of the expenses relating to development of the Blank Park Zoo entrance improvements. ([Council Communication No. 10-517](#)) **Moved by Hensley to adopt. Motion Carried 7-0.**

BOARD/COMMISSION ACTION(S): NONE

ANTICIPATED ACTIONS AND FUTURE COMMITMENTS:

Approve agreement between the City of Des Moines and the Blank Park Zoo Foundation, Inc. for Construction of the A.H. Blank Park Zoo Africa Exhibit.

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