


COUNCIL COMMUNICATION

 CITY OF DES MOINES OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER	Number:	23-201	Meeting:	April 24, 2023
	Agenda Item:	38	Roll Call:	23-598
	Submitted by:	James M. Hoff, Facilities Manager		

AGENDA HEADING:

Resolution approving Memorandum of Agreement with Iowa State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO) regarding demolition and future improvements at Fort Des Moines.

SYNOPSIS:

The City seeks to make substantial changes to three (3) Fort Des Moines buildings due to the collapse of Building 309 in 2022 and the need to demolish Buildings 135 and 308 due to structural stability issues. This work will adversely affect the Fort Des Moines National Historic Landmark, and SHPO has required that its approval, as contemplated by the Covenants, be provided only through execution of a Memorandum of Agreement setting forth terms required of the City for demolition and of future work in the Fort Des Moines area.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Amount: Estimated cost to demolish buildings is between \$300,000 and \$500,000

Funding Source: American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funding

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- Fort Des Moines was established in 1903 as a cavalry post and designated a National Historic Landmark in 1974.
- According to the National Park Service webpage “National Historic Landmarks are nationally significant historic places designated by the Secretary of the Interior because they possess exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the heritage of the United States.”
- Contributing to its landmark status are three (3) historically significant periods:
 - In 1917, it became the site of the Provisional Army Officer Training School, which was the U.S. Army’s first extensive attempt to train African American men for military leadership.
 - During World War I, the Fort was recognized for the contributions of Hospital #26 for servicing injured veterans, of note were its specialties in orthopedic surgery.

- During World War II, it was home to the first Women's Army Auxiliary Corps where more than 72,000 women completed training to assist the military.
- Building 135 was completed in 1904 and was originally constructed as a granary storehouse.
- Buildings 308 and 309 were completed in 1942 and were originally constructed as mess halls.
- The Memorandum of Agreement includes the following terms:
 - Allows the City to demolish and remove Buildings 135, 308 and 309;
 - Requires the City to provide records to SHPO;
 - Requires the City to improve Chaffee Road (included in CIP); and
 - Requires the City to work with Blank Park Zoo to update their Zoo Masterplan to include Buildings 122, 123, 126 and 127.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION(S):

Date: November 20, 2017

Roll Call Number: [17-1998](#)

Action: Consideration of proposal to demolish three (3) City-owned buildings at Fort Des Moines known as Buildings 135, 308 and 309, pursuant to Des Moines Municipal Code Section 58-70. ([Council Communication No. 17-810](#))

B) Not forward the proposal to the Landmark Review Board, and direct staff to provide guidance to the Council within 90 days. Moved by Gatto to adopt. Motion Carried 6-1. Nays: Moore.

BOARD/COMMISSION ACTION(S): NONE**ANTICIPATED ACTIONS AND FUTURE COMMITMENTS: NONE**

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