

October 8, 2007

Date

RECEIVE AND FILE REPORT FROM POLK COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD
AND LETTER FROM THE ACADEMY RELATING TO FORMER SCIENCE
CENTER AND AUTHORIZING CITY MANAGER TO NEGOTIATE WITH THE
ACADEMY FOR LEASE OF SAME

WHEREAS, Science Center of Iowa vacated its site in Greenwood and Ashworth Parks effective September 15, 2005; and

WHEREAS, on July 25, 2005 by Roll Call No. 05-1831, the City Council authorized the issuance of a Request for Qualifications to identify potential new uses for the reuse of the former Science Center of Iowa building (“SCI Building”); and

WHEREAS, on November 7, 2005 by Roll Call No. 05-2720, the City Council accepted the conceptual plan submitted by the Polk County Conservation Board (PCCB) and RDG Greenwood Studios (RDG) and directed that Park and Recreation Department staff negotiate an agreement with PCCB/RDG for use of the former SCI Building consistent with the PCCB/RDG proposal; and

WHEREAS, PCCB and RDG have been in the process of determining funding for their proposed use since that time and are not currently prepared to enter into an agreement for use of the SCI Building; and

WHEREAS, PCCB has prepared a September 19, 2007 report indicating its progress on funding; and

WHEREAS, the SCI Building remains unoccupied and the City has incurred approximately \$200,000 in expenses to maintain such building and for utility costs since September 2005 and will continue to incur security and utility costs until it is leased; and

WHEREAS, the City Council finds that a reasonable amount of time has passed since the November 7, 2005 Council acceptance of the PCCB/RDG conceptual plan for use of the SCI Building and that significant progress has not been made by PCCB towards implementation of such plan so that it is not in the best interests of the citizens of Des Moines to continue negotiations of a use agreement for the SCI Building solely with PCCB/RDG; and

WHEREAS, The Academy, a non-profit Iowa corporation which operates a school desires to lease the main level of the SCI Building to operate a non-profit school with classes to begin in Fall 2008, as described in a letter from The Academy dated July 25, 2007; and

Date October 8, 2007

WHEREAS, the City Council further finds that it is not beneficial to the citizens of Des Moines for the SCI Building to continue to be unoccupied for additional significant periods of time and that the best interests of the City are served by providing for occupancy and use of such building without any further material delay.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Des Moines, Iowa as follows:

1. That the report from PCCB and the letter from The Academy be received and filed.
2. That the acceptance of the conceptual proposal for use of the SCI Building by PCCB/RDG is hereby amended to limit the area and use of the SCI Building to those areas which are not used by The Academy, pursuant to a lease agreement with The Academy for the SCI building or a portion thereof which may be approved by Council. The direction to Park and Recreation Department staff to negotiate an agreement with PCCB/RDG is hereby amended to be in conformance with this limitation.
3. That the City Manager or his designee be and is hereby authorized and directed to negotiate an agreement with The Academy for use of the SCI Building as a non-profit secular school, such agreement to require that The Academy be responsible for maintenance of the SCI Building by no later than March 1, 2008.
4. That The Academy is required to hold public meetings with the Greenwood and Westwoods Neighborhood Associations and the surrounding neighborhoods prior to Council consideration of a proposed lease with The Academy for the SCI Building.
5. That the City Manager or his designee be and is hereby authorized and directed to notify PCCB and RDG that acceptance of their conceptual proposal is amended so that further negotiations for use of the SCI building are subject to an agreement for use of same with The Academy.

Moved by _____ to adopt.

(Council Communication No. 07-615)

Approved as to Form: *Ann DiDonato*

Ann DiDonato, Assistant City Attorney

COUNCIL ACTION	YEAS	NAYS	PASS	ABSENT
COWNIE				
COLEMAN				
HENSLEY				
KIERNAN				
MAHAFFEY				
MEYER				
VLASSIS				
TOTAL				

MOTION CARRIED

APPROVED

CERTIFICATE

I, DIANE RAUH, City Clerk of said City hereby certify that at a meeting of the City Council of said City of Des Moines, held on the above date, among other proceedings the above was adopted.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my seal the day and year first above written.

City Clerk

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Mayor

GreenWood Update

October 1, 2007

Background and Project Overview. The mission of GreenWood is to connect people with nature through the arts to create an environmentally healthy community. It involves developing highly dynamic conservation-and-arts programming, using an energy-efficient (LEED) gold or platinum standard to remodel the former science center building in Greenwood Park as a hub for this activity. The goal: to reach more than 300,000 persons annually with nature/arts-based programming, including at least 20,000 who have intense, in-depth “GreenWood Experiences.”

The Partners Thus Far. GreenWood is a public/private partnership involving Polk County Conservation, City of Des Moines, RDG Planning and Design, Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, Metro Arts Alliance, Open Arts, Scavo High School and individual Greenwood neighbors forming a Working Partnership to develop the project. In addition, Strategic Partnerships are being forged with IPTV, the Des Moines Y Camp, Boys & Girls Club of Central Iowa, the Des Moines Public Schools, the ISU College of Design, the Des Moines Art Center, DMACC, and Metro Waste Authority, with other partnership opportunities being frequently offered to GreenWood and actively explored including Very Special Arts Iowa, Iowa Dept of Natural Resources, Iowa Dept of Cultural Affairs, and Iowa Dept of Education.

Funding to date has been provided by The Great Outdoors Fund, Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, Polk County Conservation, individual project neighbors, other private individuals and companies, and the Greater Des Moines Community Foundation (the largest planning grant in its history has been awarded to this project) with substantial in-kind support provided by the Core Development Team members and entities.

Feasibility Study Status and Results Thus Far. Background research has included a series of public connecting pieces (including scores of personal meetings, two strategic leader sessions and public involvement highlighted below), and visits to facilities with nature/arts-based programming in Minneapolis and St. Louis. A detailed Strategic Business Plan has been developed for use with a series of personal meetings and formal one-on-one interviews. Initially 25 to 35 interviews are intended, approximately 25 have occurred thus far with 10 more in process. Currently vital appointments with government leaders are being set – including those needed to complete this phase of the Financial Feasibility Study with City Council members, the City Manager and Polk County Supervisors. Additional interviews and feasibility study components may be recommended.

Initial results indicate exceptionally favorable reviews for the mission, vision, facility and site plans as well as the overall programming intent and offerings of GreenWood. Both individual private donors and corporate giving leaders are confidentially strategizing with the consultant conducting the interviews (TPG’s Paul Kirpes) to identify giving strategies, how to expand and structure their potential commitments (significant six-figure range), and how to prioritize the many options to attract additional potential givers (major and grassroots donors as well as volunteers). Neighbors and private individuals in diverse settings are expressing their support for GreenWood and offering to volunteer.

Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation has committed up to \$10,000 to cover winter heating season expenses at the former science center building as the study process progresses and fundraising gets underway. At the same time, contingent financial commitments including the following two have already been secured – prior to any formal fundraising campaign:

- The Great Outdoors Fund, a private 501C3 that earlier agreed to serve as fiscal agent for the GreenWood Center, has committed **\$50,000** over five years, contingent upon an additional \$5.5

million in fundraising, including \$700K in cash commitments by the City of Des Moines, by April 30, 2009.

- Based on the current business plan, Polk County Conservation Board has committed **\$500,000** over five years with the same contingencies in place.

The Greenwood Legacy. GreenWood, as proposed, is the next generation of the legacy and the commitment of the park, remembering that the donors of the park envisioned it staying an active, vibrant part of the community as reflected on the plaque at Ashworth Pool: “Here on the neighboring prairies they respected and loved, they lived to witness the transformation of a primitive land into a rich and powerful commonwealth. In commemoration of those pioneer days, they have dedicated this piece of virgin land to the people as a playground forever.”

Public Enthusiasm. – a few of more than a dozen examples:

- At a brainstorming session in mid-January 75 people from the neighborhood and community turned out to provide input into what GreenWood should be all about. We expected 15.
- On a cold and rainy Earth Day, over 600 people attended an event at the former Science Center to participate in activities similar to those which will be offered as part of the GreenWood experience. As at the brainstorming session, the enthusiasm was overwhelming.
- September 8, 2007 -- 225 participants turned out for a nature and arts Monarch butterfly program at Greenwood park that was developed as a GreenWood Experience.
- Seniors on Eco-Tours bus trips lead by PCC, un-prompted bring up the subject of GreenWood and express their support and interest in participating.

Project Strengths.

Destination. Our research shows that this will be a Midwest and potentially national destination facility, site, and organization. While GreenWood is education research based, cutting edge in its approach and programs, GreenWood is distinct in the breadth of partners, strategies and programming. Programming representative of the GreenWood experience has been offered and well received locally. Providing the opportunity for a “culture and education colony” of tenants to be housed under one roof may be unique in the metro area, but has been successful elsewhere. (City assistance with Wayfinding signage strategies may be needed).

Location. The setting is ideal with access to all of the amenities of Greenwood and Ashworth Parks, the Des Moines Art Center, and the Bill Riley Bike Trail which provides ready access to the Des Moines Water Works Park and serves as a quick connector to other cultural and recreational facilities such as the Des Moines Science Center, Principal River Walk, Botanical Center and downtown Des Moines, and beyond – GreenWood site connects the core metro to the suburbs and vice versa. The concept of GreenWood being a central hub Des Moines metro’s Central Park (Des Moines River / River Walk, including Gray’s Lake etc to Maffit Reservoir) came from business leaders and is resonating with prospective constituents

The Programs. Low cost or no cost programming will range from outdoor nature & arts activities for children ranging from pre-school through high school to lectures and workshops on sustainable design, safe water, painting, creating furniture from recyclable and reusable materials **for persons of all ages**. The potential for diverse and impactful experiences is *virtually limitless – including formal programming, exhibits, events, and supported “ready when you are” self-guided activities and experiences.*

The Brand. At the same time Des Moines strives to achieve national status as a green community, it hopes to build on its artistic, culturally vital brand. GreenWood serves as a banner project that integrates both, while also building upon Des Moines capacity and reputation for effective education and human services.

The Reach. GreenWood is the type of initiative that can generate broad-based financial and volunteer support and services, as well as engage and benefit all generations, diverse populations (urban, rural, ethnic, underserved, etc). Approximately 20% of the State's population resides in Polk and contiguous counties, providing ready access to the opportunities that GreenWood will offer to a significant population base. In addition, the partnership with Iowa Public Television (and others) provides the opportunity to offer programs statewide.

Strategic Business Plan Highlights.

1. The working draft of the Strategic Business Plan, with very conservative assumptions, shows positive cash flow and net financial sustainability over the first three years of operation. For example, the capital and operational expenses for the proposed building addition are included in the plan, but the revenue components of that addition are currently factored at zero in the plan. Demonstrating that in this example GreenWood is still more than viable operationally – even without the addition.
2. The facility will be available for rent for weddings, receptions, meetings, workshops, and a variety of other uses which will provide a steady source of revenue throughout the year. Non-profits will be offered the opportunity to rent office space in the facility and to use the facility for a nominal fee for GreenWood mission related activities including artist exhibitions, musical or dramatic productions and similar uses.
3. Polk County Conservation will be the main tenant of the building and will be responsible for day to day maintenance, scheduling and operations. The City of Des Moines will remain responsible for the grounds and roadways.
4. Benefits to the City include but are not limited to: 1) an ongoing public use of the facility, 2) low cost or no cost programming available to City residents, 3) an anticipated yearly participation in GreenWood events of 300,000 either on-site or through outreach efforts, 4) another appealing opportunity for the “culturally creative” segment of the population, and 5) no further responsibility for the former science center building.
5. The project has a total value of more than \$15 million, but will only require a public-private cash investment totaling no more than \$9.2 million. The schedule of giving anticipates roughly half of that value will be generated from the public sector, and half from the private sector.

THE ACADEMY
READING, WRITING, REACHING POTENTIAL

July 25, 2007

Richard A. Clark, City Manager
City of Des Moines
400 Robert D. Ray Drive
Des Moines, IA 50309

RE: *The Academy lease proposal*

Dear Rick:

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak with you, Don Tripp, and members of the Polk County Conservation Board on July 2, 2007. I am writing to summarize our proposal to lease the former science center property in Greenwood Park.

The Academy is prepared to immediately lease the upper level of the building and would be willing to discuss a lease of the entire building. If we can execute a lease by the first week of August we would be prepared to begin renovations and intend to occupy the building in early January.

I propose to make a down payment valued at \$100,000 in the form of conveyances of real property located in the vicinity of E. 14th and Hartford. I have previously provided the parcel numbers to Property Management.

As I stated in the meeting, we believe that The Greenwood Project would bring tremendous benefit to the community, and I would work in good faith to allow progress to continue alongside and in conjunction with The Academy.

Respectfully,



David L. Phillips
Director of Strategic Planning

