

**CITY COUNCIL
COMMUNICATION:**

ITEM _____

**OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER
CITY OF DES MOINES, IOWA**

98-378

SYNOPSIS —

AGENDA:
AUGUST 24, 1998

To set an informal hearing date on adoption of the Gray’ s Lake Master Plan on September 14, 1998.

SUBJECT:

GRAY’ S LAKE -
SETTING DATE OF
INFORMAL
HEARING FOR
MASTER PLAN AND
RELATED ITEMS

FISCAL IMPACT –

N/A

TYPE:
RESOLUTION
ORDINANCE
RECEIVE/FILE

RECOMMENDATION –

Establish September 14, 1998, as an informal hearing for the Gray’ s Lake Master Plan and direct the City Manager to submit an accompanying implementation plan.

SUBMITTED BY:
RICHARD CLARK
DEPUTY CITY
MANAGER

BACKGROUND –

Gray’ s Lake Park has been under control of the City of Des Moines since 1970. The Park is 165 acres, including a 100 acre man-made lake. The City owns approximately one-half of the property and the remainder is controlled through a lease which expires in 2019. The leased property is owned by the Weitz Corporation.

After years of discussion about the underutilization of Gray’ s Lake, on July 21, 1997, by Roll Call No. 97-2581, the Des Moines City Council authorized expenditure of funds to develop a master plan for Gray’ s Lake. A consultant team was hired and a planning team (Gray’ s Lake Focus Team) was created to develop plans for the future utilization of Gray’ s Lake. The Team developed a set of goals, conducted market research, identified planning alternatives, and developed an agreed-upon Master Plan for Grays Lake. The plan includes several recommendations, but the overriding principle is to combine a premier level of active public recreation

developments with private developments on the southwest and southeast areas of the Lake. Many complicating factors were discussed. They include: access, flooding, ownership, covenants, and funding.

The plan was presented to the Des Moines City Council on December 22, 1997, and they were asked to receive and file the plan, refer it to several City Boards, and authorize staff to work on the previously mentioned technical matters. The schedule was to bring all of this work back to the City Council in March 1998 for plan adoption. Before this occurred, the Weitz Corporation approached the City with the potential of an Entertainment Center development on the southeast corner of the Lake. Staff worked on this project to ascertain if technical issues could be resolved, first with a plan to bring the proposal back to the Focus Team if the proposal was viable. A City-appointed committee was established to review the development and that group recommended that such a development would be more suited to Court Avenue. This initiative potential delayed any further Master Plan adoptions for Gray' s Lake.

During the past eight months, a staff team has been working on the technical issues and the Weitz Corporation has been pursuing market research related to potential development of their property (old Holiday Inn site) on the southwest corner of the Park.

Staff intends to reconvene the Gray' s Lake Focus Team in the next two to three weeks to report on the technical issues and discuss project costs and phased public recreation development.

The Master Plan has had extensive study and review by several neighborhood, business, and park user groups. In addition, a technical staff team has been working on a feasibility analysis and implementation plan. This plan will address phasing of proposed park improvement and related cost, private development opportunities, needed street improvements, land requirements, and a fiscal impact analysis. We also anticipate working with the Weitz Corporation to address the demolition of the old Holiday Inn property. It' s anticipated that a recommended implementation plan will be presented to the Des Moines City Council on September 14, 1998, in conjunction with the hearing on the Gray' s Lake Master Plan.

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