



Agenda Item:

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COUNCIL COMMUNICATION City Manager's Office

GENERAL INFORMATION

Agenda Date: 09/12/05
Agenda Item Type: Resolution

Communication No.: 05-492
Roll Call No.:

Submitted by: Donald M. Tripp, Park and Recreation Director

SUBJECT—

Urban Conservation

1. Professional Services Agreement for certain Natural Forest Regeneration Services.
2. Reforestation plan for six major parks.

SYNOPSIS—

As a part of its Urban Conservation effort, the Park and Recreation Department recommends the following actions:

1. Approve a Professional Services Agreement with Prairie Wetlands, (Tre Wilson, Sole Proprietor, 1235 Davis Avenue, Des Moines, Iowa 50315) to provide professional services for the planning and implementation associated with natural forest regeneration for five major city parks.
2. Receive and file the Reforestation Plan for six major parks.

FISCAL IMPACT—

1. Professional Services Agreement - \$7,920. Funding is available in the Forestry Improvements Account: CP040 PKS990000 PKS146.
2. Reforestation Plan for six major parks – No fiscal impact.

RECOMMENDATION—

1. Approval of Professional Services Agreement
2. Receive and file the Reforestation plans for six major parks.

BACKGROUND—

As the City Department responsible for the care of a significant portion of City-owned land, the Des Moines Park and Recreation Department is leading the way in developing an environmentally-friendly park and building management system under the banner of Urban Conservation. Toward this end, the Urban Conservation Advisory Committee of the Park and Recreation Board was formed in 2004. Comprised of a diverse group of environmentally concerned citizens, the Committee is charged with assisting the Board and the Department in the identification of policy issues and field practices designed to conserve, protect and restore our renewable natural resources.

The actions recommended are in line with the Urban Conservation initiative. On July 26, 2005 the Des Moines Park and Recreation Board received and filed the Reforestation Plans for Ewing Park, Grandview Park, Greenwood Park, MacRae Park, Pioneer Park and Union Park. This Reforestation Plan was a cooperative effort between the Park and Recreation Department, the City Forester, and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR).

One of the initial steps for implementing the Reforestation Plans for five of the six parks is to proceed with natural forest regeneration efforts, which include the prescribed burning of certain woodland areas. The prescribed burns are a cost effective way of maintaining our forests by eliminating invasive undergrowth and propagating native tree species. Undertaking prescribed burns within an urban area should be planned and supervised by an experienced professional.

The Purchasing Division of the Finance Department received one proposal for providing the professional services associated with the prescribed burning of woodland areas for the natural reforestation process. The firm of Prairie Wetlands is the only firm known to provide these services in central Iowa. The five parks, which will require prescribed burn plans, are Ewing Park, Grandview Park, Greenwood Park, MacRae Park and Pioneer Park.

Before a prescribed burn is undertaken in a woodland area, the consultant will prepare a Burn Plan. The Burn Plan will include:

- A public meeting with neighboring property owners to inform them of the process.
- Written notification to the property owners prior to the burn.
- Notification to the Police and Fire Departments.
- Identifying and scheduling burn areas within the five parks.
- Onsite supervision of the actual prescribed burns.

This Reforestation Plan for the six major City parks is the first phase of the City's planning and implementation for reforestation of City properties. The initial planting of 80 trees will occur in Union Park in October and November of this year. In line with the recommendations of the recently completed reforestation study, the trees will be planted in the vicinity of the shelter and new wading pool. As suggested in the study, 20 of the trees will be Swamp White Oak. The remainder of the trees will consist of 15 each of 'Autumn Blaze' Red Maple, Hackberry, Kentucky Coffee Tree, and American Linden. Additional tree plantings are scheduled for March/April and October /November 2006.

Reforestation plans for additional parks will be completed as funding is budgeted in the CIP budgeting process.