

★ **Roll Call Number**

Agenda Item Number

28A

Date... January 9, 2012

Communication from the Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden (GDMBC) requesting a letter of support from the City of Des Moines regarding the Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden's application for a Vision Iowa Community Attraction and Tourism (CAT) grant to be used for the Greater Des Moines Botanical Center expansion. The City's support for this application does not increase or change the City's financial commitment or obligation for the Botanical Center other than what has been agreed to as part of the long term Lease, Operation and Management and Maintenance Agreement and the Urban Renewal Development Agreement with GDMBC, approved by the City Council on May 9, 2011, by Roll Call Nos. 11-0822 and 11-0825, respectively.

MOVED by \_\_\_\_\_ to receive and file and directing the City Manager to prepare and send such letter of support to the Vision Iowa Board on behalf of the City of Des Moines.

(Council Communication No. 12-022 attached)

Sponsored by Council Members Mahaffey and Meyer.

Approved as to Form:

  
Ann DiDonato  
Assistant City Attorney

COUNCIL ACTION	YEAS	NAYS	PASS	ABSENT
COWNIE				
COLEMAN				
GRIESS				
HENSLEY				
MAHAFFEY				
MEYER				
MOORE				
TOTAL				

**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.

MOTION CARRIED APPROVED

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor

\_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk

Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden  
A NEW BEGINNING

28A

January 9, 2012

Richard Clark  
City Manger  
City of Des Moines  
400 Robert D. Ray Drive  
Des Moines, Iowa 50309

Dear Mr. Clark

The Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden is requesting a letter of support from the City of Des Moines for our 2012 Vision Iowa Grant Application.

As part a multi-year effort local community leaders have undertaken a bold and financially sustainable plan for our 14-acre green space in downtown Des Moines through the re-development of the Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden to:

- Engage the increasingly diverse Greater Des Moines community in the world of plants;
- Become a central player in the cultural, education, and scientific communities of Greater Des Moines;
- Transform the landscape of the Botanical Garden;
- Revitalize and enliven the Garden's interior public spaces;
- Participate in the educational STEM (scientific, technology, engineering, and math) Initiative;
- Create dynamic public programs and events;
- Connect the Garden to the Principal River walk;
- Relate the Garden to the larger world of public gardens and horticulture;
- Create a robust public forum for discussion of contemporary environmental issues.

This comprehensive renovation and expansion will make way for exciting new ecological programming. In partnership with other non-profits and education organizations we will be the site to educate our community on the essential relationship between plants, land, water and human beings.

To accomplish these goals, a capital campaign to secure \$10 million for construction, operations, and endowment is underway. The Vision Iowa Grant would help the Garden obtain our fundraising goals.

An agreement with the City of Des Moines to lease for the facility has been approved and operational support of \$645,000/year for the first 10 years of operation has been secured. The lease could begin as early as January 2013 and renovation/expansion will take 12-18 months. With support from Vision Iowa in the amount of \$1.4 million and the completion of our capital campaign this project will meet the financial goal and construction will begin by 2013 and the first phase of the master plan will be completed in early 2014.

**Background on the Project**

Opened in 1979, the Des Moines Botanical Center is located in downtown Des Moines, its large geodesic dome boasting a stunning variety of plants in a conservatory format. The Botanical Center is situated on 14 acres of centrally located community green space along the Des Moines River and operated today by the Des Moines Water Works. Attendance and support for the Center waned by the late 1990s as operating costs sharply increased.

Since 2001, attendance has been steadily increasing for both special exhibits and general admission. Starting in 2009, the City of Des Moines and Friends of the Botanical Center collaborated to assume management of the facility in January 1, 2013 and rebrand it as the Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden.

The newly formed Board of Directors have successfully negotiated a lease agreement with the City of Des Moines and secured ten-year commitments of \$645,000 in annual operating revenue from the City of Des Moines and other interested public entities, thereby making private management possible and providing a firm base for the launch of a much needed \$10 million capital campaign and subsequent renovation and expansion of the Botanical Garden.

The letter of support by no means commits the City of Des Moines to any financial obligations or approval of plans.

Sincerely,



Stephanie Jutila

President and CEO

[sjutila@botanicalgarden.com](mailto:sjutila@botanicalgarden.com)

515-323-6261