

★ **Roll Call Number**

Agenda Item Number

33

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 May 19, 2014

Date

Request from Larry James and Kathryn Dickel, City Sounds – the Des Moines Public Piano Project, to speak regarding placing a couple pianos on public right-of-way.

Moved by _____ to

| COUNCIL ACTION | YEAS | NAYS | PASS | ABSENT |
|----------------|------|------|------|--------|
| COWNIE | | | | |
| COLEMAN | | | | |
| GATTO | | | | |
| GRAY | | | | |
| HENSLEY | | | | |
| MAHAFFEY | | | | |
| 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





Project Description

Inspired by Iowa City's "Tickle My Keys" project, MIDWESTIX and the DES MOINES MUSIC COALITION endeavor to bring together partners in Des Moines to place public pianos in Downtown Des Moines throughout the summer (June-October) as part of "CITY SOUNDS: Des Moines Public Piano Project."

Logistics

Where do the pianos come from?

Our community! The community would have the option through this program to donate quality pianos for use in the project. Our partner, West Music, also receives a healthy amount of inquiries for help with relocating pianos. To assist with the vetting process, a short application form will be available on the project website to assess baseline quality of the pianos. Results of this form will be sent to our partners at West Music who will evaluate the opportunity and send a piano specialist to inspect the pianos that make it through the applications process.

How do they get transported?

Once a piano is identified for donation our partners at West Music evaluate the piano for baseline quality, transport the piano from the owner's home to their store, tune the piano, arrange for local artists to decorate it, and deliver it to the installation site.

Where do they get stored over the winter?

West Music picks up the pianos at the end of the season, stores them over the winter and delivers them to the installation site the following season. However, many times the pianos are replaced on a yearly basis.

What maintenance is required?

Each piano is custom fitted with a secure cover. This cover is unlocked and locked each morning and evening by the piano's caretaker. Additionally, the cover is engaged in the case of inclement weather by a caretaker, which is ideally is a sponsoring/nearby business. Should

weather be forecast to be inclement all day, the caretaker can elect to keep the cover on throughout the entire day.

Should the piano need tuning or sustain any damage that requires repair, the piano's caretaker will report it to the project supervisor so that appropriate maintenance/ repairs can be arranged.

How, where and when are they installed?

Pianos are typically located in places that are easily accessible by the public and near a sponsoring business to accommodate easy caretaking. We will work with our partners to identify 6 ideal sites in Downtown Des Moines. Potential sites include Art Park, Walnut Street, Court Avenue District, Outside DART building, Des Moines Social Club, Cowles Commons, Riverwalk and the East Village, Gray's Lake/ Waterworks Park. Should the program grow, sites outside of the downtown area could be considered including Ingersoll, Sherman Hill, Drake, Valley Junction, and Beaverdale.

Installation sites will require core drilling to secure the piano to the ground to protect it from damage or theft.

We're aiming to have the pianos installed by June 1, 2014.

What is the cost and who pays it?

We are estimating that each piano will need to be sponsored by an individual, organization or company at the \$2500 level per year. This sponsorship covers transportation, storage, installation, insurance, maintenance and cover.

How do they engage the public and other partners?

The pianos offer an instant and accessible way for music lovers to engage with the community as a whole. Whether you are playing the instrument or listening to it being played, both actions allow for our community to come together spontaneously around music.

Many of the pianos in other communities are adopted by other artists or arts organizations and painted to add another dimension of art to the environment and experience of the public pianos.

How will the project be promoted within the community?

The project will have a supporting website and social media indicating the locations, sponsors and art partner information. In addition, we will develop ongoing programming around the pianos that will engage the public in the project on a consistent basis.

Prospective Partners

Operation Downtown/ Downtown Community Alliance:

Provides daily caretaking of pianos. Putting covers off and on.

City of Des Moines:

Provides necessary permits and core drilling services.

Sponsor/Participating Business:

Provides funding and/or caretaking for the piano.

West Music (committed):

Provides transportation, installation, storage and need maintenance to the pianos.

Des Moines Music Coalition (committed):

Fiscal Sponsor Organization, accounting, promotion.

MIDWESTIX (committed):

Provides ongoing sponsorship, marketing and management support for project.

Cost

\$2500/piano per year.

Benefits

We are lucky in that this type of project has been successfully implemented in other cities so we know both the challenges and the benefits. We've outlined the logistical challenges above. Here are some of the benefits:

Increased traffic to a specific location.

Facilitators in other communities have indicated these pianos are a magnet for traffic and often times help sponsoring businesses draw people into their businesses or bring people into parts of the city that need more pedestrian traffic. They also can provide ongoing marketing benefit to sponsoring businesses as they act as a completely unique "billboard" of sorts.

Continuing to build on our reputation as a city with the highest quality of life and support for the arts.

These pianos not only speak with music but their mere presence lets natives and visitors alike know that they are in a place that values the power and beauty of the arts. This project is a perfect complement to the commitment our city has already made to public visual art.

Filling our environment with the beauty of music.

Music is a source of happiness and serenity for most people. This power is magnified amongst the hustle and bustle of an urban core.

Encouraging interactive relationships with citizens and visitors.

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If you have further questions or interest regarding the project please contact:

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