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A Resolution of Acceptance Supporting the Agreement Between the City of Colorado Springs and the State Board of the Great Outdoors Colorado Trust Fund for the Harlan Wolfe Park Flood Restoration and Park Improvement Project

From:

Karen Palus, Director of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services

Summary:

To help communities across Colorado restore parks, trails and open spaces that were damaged or destroyed in the historic September 2013 floods, Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) offered \$5 million statewide in emergency grant funds. Communities in the 11 counties declared federal disaster areas following the September 2013 flooding (Adams, Arapahoe, Boulder, Clear Creek, El Paso, Fremont, Jefferson, Larimer, Logan, Morgan and Weld) were eligible to apply for the special GOCO grants. The GOCO board awarded grants in early summer 2014 for 14 flood recovery projects that will help communities in Boulder, El Paso, Jefferson, Larimer, Morgan and Weld counties recover from the floods.

As part of this GOCO grant opportunity, the City of Colorado Springs Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department submitted an application to help restore and enhance the badly damaged Harlan Wolfe Park, located in southwest Colorado Springs. We are pleased to announce that this grant application was successful and that GOCO will be awarding the City \$98,521 to repair food damage, rebuild trails, and expand amenities at Harlan Wolfe Park. These funds will greatly improve Harlan Wolfe Park for both the community at large and for the nearby neighbors, many of whose homes were damaged in the same September floods.

In order to receive Great Outdoors Colorado grant dollars, City Council must pass a resolution of acceptance for the Harlan Wolfe Flood Recovery and Park Improvement Project grant funds.

Previous Council Action:

N/A

Background:

Harlan Wolfe Park is an open space park located in southwest Colorado Springs at 905 West Cheyenne Road. This 4-acre gem of a park was donated to the City in 1996 and is home to a large Pikes Peak Urban Garden (PPUG) demonstration garden, two acres of walking trails, vibrant riparian habitat, and the historic 1894 John Wolfe House. As an open space park, Harlan Wolfe does not have typical park amenities such as swings or slides. Instead the natural environment and the large community garden are the major park attractions. Cheyenne Creek flows along the entire southern length of Harlan Wolfe Park.

In the September 2013 floods, gentle Cheyenne Creek turned into a raging river. As the September flood waters damaged much of Colorado Springs, the low-lying lands near Cheyenne Creek in the Cheyenne Canon neighborhood, were particularly hard hit. This included extensive damage to Harlan Wolfe Park where trails were destroyed, trees were uprooted, the foundation of a 1960's-era home on the property was irreparably damaged, and large quantities of sediment were deposited throughout the park. With the support of this grant, flood damage to Harlan Wolfe Park will be repaired and improvements recommended in a 2009 park master plan will be completed.

In 2009 a public planning process was initiated and a new master plan for Harlan Wolfe Park was developed. With input from neighbors and stakeholders, a plan to provide for environmental education, expand wildlife viewing opportunities, build an outdoor pavilion/gathering space, and add additional parking was developed. Thanks to this grant from Great Outdoors Colorado the City will be able to complete repairs to the damage from last year's flood as well as improve and enhance the park by implementing the community-supported master plan recommendations. Through this grant-funded project, a destructive event will become an opportunity to enhance Harlan Wolfe Park.

Financial Implications:

None anticipated. The Great Outdoors Colorado Flood Recovery Grant requires a twenty-five percent cash match for the project. The Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department is able to use FEMA funds already dedicated to Harlan Wolfe Park to wholly meet this match requirement. No general fund dollars will be used for this project.

Maintenance for this project will be provided by a combination of existing Parks Department resources along with the help and dedication of neighbors, Friends Groups, and other project partners. No general fund dollars will be used for the maintenance of this project.

Board/Commission Recommendation:

The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board received a project update at their August 14th Board Meeting. On this day, the Board unanimously endorsed the project and passed the following Resolution:

“The Colorado Springs Parks and Recreation Advisory Board supports the Harlan Wolfe Flood Recovery and Park Improvement Project and recommends that City Council pass a Resolution of Acceptance supporting the agreement between the City of Colorado Springs and the State Board of

the Great Outdoors Colorado Trust Fund so that the City may receive \$98,521 in grant funding for this project.”

Stakeholder Process:

The Harlan Wolfe Park Flood Restoration and Park Improvement Project has been designed and planned based on the recommendations of the community supported master plan, consultation with FEMA staff, and meetings with stakeholder groups including Pikes Peak Urban Gardens, the Friends of Cheyenne Canon, the Historic Preservation Alliance, the Cheyenne Creek Conservation Club, and Mile High Youth Corps. Additionally, the Parks Department will hold at least one public meeting for neighbors and community members to receive further project feedback. This meeting is anticipated for September.

Alternatives:

Council is being asked to pass a Resolution of Acceptance for a Great Outdoors Colorado Flood Recovery Grant in the amount of \$98,521 to repair and enhance Harlan Wolfe Park. Council may elect not to pass a Resolution of Acceptance. Doing so would forfeit all of the GOCO grant dollars.

Proposed Motion:

Pass a Resolution of Acceptance for a Great Outdoors Colorado Flood Recovery Grant in the amount of \$98,521 for the Harlan Wolfe Park Flood Recovery and Park Improvement Project.

N/A