



Legislation Details (With Text)

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A Resolution of Appreciation and Gratitude to the Incline Friends for their Partnership with the Mt. Manitou Incline

Summary: Established in 2011 the Incline Friends is an organization designed to assist the City with fundraising efforts, individual contributions and corporate donations, media outreach, public outreach and volunteer projects.

Previous Council Action: N/A

Background: During the Manitou Incline Master and Management Plan, the planning process called for a group of people to work with the communities of Colorado Springs and Manitou Springs to address issues that revolved around the Manitou Incline (Incline). Originally created as the Incline Task Force, the group morphed and evolved into the Incline Friends once the Master Plan was adopted by the City of Colorado Springs and Manitou Springs. One of the most important “steps” the Incline Friends have made is establishing themselves as a 501(c)3 organization. The organization officially received its designation in July 2012. Not only did this solidify the Incline Friends as a recognized organization by the state, it was key to making their fundraising efforts successful.

The Incline Friends, in conjunction with Colorado Springs, have hosted three volunteer projects. Work completed during these volunteer projects includes construction of the new trail that allows people who park in the Barr Trailhead parking lot to access Tie #1, the official start of the Incline. Numerous social trails have been closed (multiple times), vegetation has been pruned along the Incline, hazardous rebar has been removed, and water bars and drainage structures have been cleaned out. On-going projects include reclosing the social trails as people reopen them, cleaning up trash on the Incline and Barr Trail, and cleaning out drainage channels, primarily in Conditions 1-4.

The Incline Friends have held several fundraisers, which have all been very successful. They have hosted the showing of three movies, *Unbreakable: the 2010 Western States 100*, *Bicycle Dreams--*, and *Colorado Trail Run*; combined these three events have raised over \$9,000. The Incline Friends

have also participated in a “Karma Hour” hosted by Bristol Brewery. The Karma Hour was one of the most successful evenings ever for this brewery, bringing in over \$350 to the Incline Friends, and \$300 in additional donations. A donation tube was installed at the base of the Incline so hikers can unload their pockets before making the mile trek up the Incline. Since installing the donation tube in September 2012 it has yielded roughly \$3,500. In addition to these efforts, local businesses have stepped forward to offer their support. Purple Mountain Coffee, D’Vine Wine, and Big View Photography provide the Incline Friends a portion of their proceeds on their Incline related merchandise. To date \$450 has been received from these businesses. To encourage Incline users to stay in Manitou Springs and spend money, through the 2014 membership drive, all Incline Friends Members will receive a discount card which provides discounts to a dozen establishments in Manitou Springs. The Incline Friends will continue to work with iManitou to grow the program each year. Through an informal survey, 74% of Incline users remain in Manitou Springs and visit their retail establishments either before or after completing the Incline.

The Incline Friends were selected to participate in the 2013 *Indy Give!* Program. During their first year in the program, they were one of the top fundraising organizations, with the number of overall donors and young donors. The Friends have submitted their application to participate in the 2014 *Indy Give!* Program. If they are selected to participate, they will work on raising funds for the new northern trail at the top of the Incline, intended to alleviate congestion from Barr Trail and work to raise funds for the new trailhead at the base of the Incline. This trailhead will be equipped with permanent restrooms, picnic tables, and space for a potential concession stand.

The Incline Friends found it hard to show the huge support for restoring the Incline, so they put together a petition and asked Incline users to sign and show their support. During the course of one weekend, August 10 and 11th, 2013, they collected just shy of 900 signatures. Use of the Incline was down that weekend due to the devastating flooding that Manitou Springs experienced Friday night; however, they were still able to capture about half of the users both days. Signatures were collected during the morning hours from 6 a.m. to 10 a.m. As the Friends were talking with the Incline users, the users were very appreciative of any support that could be given to the Incline, especially as the Incline and our community as a whole had been recently pounded by the excessive rains. People signing the petition were asked to provide their zip code. The zip codes were mapped and all but seven (7) states were represented by visitors. This simple survey shows how the Incline has a strong national draw and is a vital component as one of our many tourist attractions.

The Incline Friends have truly embraced a grassroots effort to raise their contribution for the Manitou Incline Trail Enhancement Project.

Financial Implications: The Incline Friends have raised \$60,000 that will be given to the City of Colorado Springs for the Manitou Incline Trail Enhancement Project.

Board/Commission Recommendation: N/A

Stakeholder process: The Incline Friends presented the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board with a \$60,000 check at their May 8, 2014 Board Meeting. Staff made a brief presentation explaining the work and service they provided to the Parks Department and the community as a whole.

Alternative Recommendation:

[N/A]

Proposed Motion: Staff recommends approval of the resolution of appreciation for the hard work and dedication of the Incline Friends group.