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Title: John Venezia Community Park Resolution of Support for Great Outdoors Colorado Grant Request

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Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
10/27/2015	1	City Council	adopted	Pass
10/12/2015	1	City Council Work Session	referred	

John Venezia Community Park Resolution of Support for Great Outdoors Colorado Grant Request

From:

Karen Palus, Director of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services
Jeff Webb, Senior Grants Analyst

Summary:

The Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department is currently seeking a \$350,000 Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) grant to go towards the equipment and construction of two playgrounds within the John Venezia Community Park. Should the grant request be successful, the GOCO funds will help to provide the necessary funding to ensure that the play equipment at Venezia Community Park meets not just ADA-accessible standards, but also meets the more stringent universally-accessible rating. In doing so, the playgrounds at our newest community park will become some of the most accessible and inclusive playgrounds within the Pikes Peak region.

Great Outdoors Colorado offers competitive grants to eligible entities for a variety of park, trail and open space needs across Colorado. Great Outdoors Colorado grants are wholly funded through state lottery proceeds. Staff is seeking a Resolution of Support from City Council as a necessary step to completing a Great Outdoors Colorado Grant Application.

Previous Council Action:

No previous action has been taken by City Council on this grant Resolution of Support. However, in previous years Council has appropriated funds for the construction of John Venezia Community Park.

Background:

In accordance with the Colorado Springs Parks, Recreation and Trails 2015-2025 Master Plan, the City pursues a variety of park facilities and recreation opportunities for the Colorado Springs

community. The Master Plan identifies a significant deficit of large developed community parks in the northern reaches of Colorado Springs. In 2005, the John Venezia Community Park site was identified as a priority for development; support for construction of the park was reiterated during the development of the 2015-2025 Parks Master Plan public process.

In 2006 an extensive public master plan process was conducted for the John Venezia Community Park. This planning process engaged the community in three public meetings which established the vision and programming for the park. Demographics, geographic deficiencies in community parkland, current user trends, and recent development patterns all indicate the need for development of the John Venezia Community Park site.

In 2009 the original John Venezia Community Park Master Plan was approved by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board. However, due to funding issues and the economic downturn, the construction of the community park was placed on hold indefinitely.

During the fall of 2014, funding solutions became available to aid in the initial phases of construction of the community park. When additional funding was identified, the Parks Department again took the master plan to the community to ensure the plan would meet the recreational needs of the community. After two public meetings and re-approval by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, staff was able to finish preparing the construction documents and put the park out to bid. Please refer to Attachment A - Conceptual Plan.

Construction of the first phase of John Venezia Community Park is currently underway. The elements being reserved for a future phase include the tennis courts, pickleball courts, in-line/basketball court, the multi-use field lighting and tennis court lighting, the Hay Loft shelter, and the trail connection between the western edge of the park to Lexington Boulevard. The Venezia Park playgrounds have been identified for Phase 1 of this project. This grant will support development of these playgrounds and will help to close a funding gap that remains on Phase 2 of the John Venezia Community Park project.

Financial Implications:

Should this grant application be successful there will be two primary impacts upon this project. First, this grant will help to ensure that the planned Venezia Park playgrounds become universally accessible, allowing all citizens in our city have a fun, inclusive place to play. Second, the Great Outdoors Colorado grant funds will be specifically identified for the playground improvements and will free up funds previously dedicated to the playgrounds for Phase 2 elements of the park project. If the grant is denied, the playgrounds will be built to the lower level of accessibility and Phase 2 projects will continue to be held until additional funding becomes available.

Board/Commission Recommendation:

The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board unanimously approved the proposed resolution of support for the John Venezia Community Park GOCO grant request during its September 10, 2015 meeting.

Stakeholder Process:

N/A

Alternatives:

N/A

Proposed Motion:

Move to approve the resolution in support of the GOCO grant request for \$350,000 to be used to build universally accessible playgrounds in John Venezia Community Park.

N/A