



Legislation Text

File #: 14-0649, **Version:** 2

A Resolution Recognizing the History of Locomotive "Old 168" and Finding a Public Purpose is served by a Lease Agreement between the City of Colorado Springs on behalf of its Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department and the Cumbres and Toltec Scenic Railroad Commission, Providing for the Rehabilitation and Return to Service of Locomotive "Old 168"

From:

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Summary:

On October 27, 2014, the City Council heard a proposal from the Cumbres and Toltec Scenic Railroad (C&TSRR) to rehabilitate and operate steam locomotive 168, which is now on display in Antlers Park. On October 28, the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department held a public meeting to seek input about the proposal. Staff has created a draft lease agreement based on the C&TSRR proposal and feedback received during previous meetings. On December 11, 2014, the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Advisory Board reviewed the proposal and the draft lease agreement. The board voted unanimously to approve the proposed lease. On January 5, the C&TSRR Commission also voted unanimously to support the lease agreement. On February 24, the City Council heard an update on the status of the negotiations between the City of Colorado Springs and the C&TSRR, and Council Member Knight offered additional comments and options. As a result of the dialog and public input, the City has finalized a lease agreement and City Council resolution accepting the agreement, which is presented for approval. Please refer to Attachment A for a draft of the proposed lease agreement.

Previous Council Action:

In 1955, City Council delegated responsibility for the care and maintenance of 168 to the Parks Department. This item was presented for "information only" at the October 27, 2014 City Council Work Session. A summary of questions and responses from this session are attached. Please refer to Attachment B.

Background:

The steam locomotive in Antlers Park was manufactured in Philadelphia in 1883 by Baldwin Locomotive Works. That year the Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad (DRGW) purchased the engine. It pulled the first DRGW passenger cars from Colorado Springs to Ogden, UT. It is unusual in that it is a narrow gauge locomotive, designed to move through narrow canyons and rocky precipices. It was in service for 50 years, before being retired in 1933 due to reduced demand caused by the depression and the availability of newer, more powerful steam locomotives.

In 1938, the DRGW donated 168 to the City of Colorado Springs as a monument to the contributions

of General William Jackson Palmer. In addition to founding Colorado Springs and creating a rich vision for the community and its extensive park system, Palmer also founded the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad and the Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad. His railroads were the economic lifeblood for southern Colorado and beyond. The engine was placed on display near Cascade Avenue, adjacent to the second Antlers Hotel. It was one of the first public monuments featuring a steam locomotive in the United States. According to 1938 coverage in the Gazette, the engine symbolized "progress, commerce and civilization." When the present Antlers Hotel was built in the 1960s, Old 168 moved to its present location in the park.

Over the past 76 years the City of Colorado Springs has struggled to provide proper maintenance and upkeep for Old 168. In 1955, the DRGW threatened to repossess it, charging that the City was not properly maintaining it. In response, City Council delegated maintenance responsibilities to the Parks Department and repairs were completed. In 1978, the locomotive was again in poor condition and the community initiated a fundraising campaign for a major restoration project. To assist with this community awareness effort, citizens nominated 168 for National Register status, and it became a listed resource in 1979. Renovation work was completed in 1984. There has been little maintenance on the locomotive since that time. The 1984 renovation was completed by John Bush, who now serves as the President of the Cumbres Toltec Operating LLC. Mr. Bush will be in charge of rehabilitating the locomotive for operation on the railway.

Financial Implications:

If the locomotive is moved, the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department agrees to rehabilitate the current site of the display. Actual cost estimated at less than \$2,500.

Board/Commission Recommendation:

This item was presented to the Historic Preservation Board on October 6, 2014 as an information item. While this Board does not have oversight regarding the disposition of the locomotive, they will have an opportunity to provide input during the National Register review process. Additionally, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board reviewed the item and voted unanimously to approve the agreement on December 11, 2014.

Stakeholder Process:

On October 28, 2014 the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department held a public meeting to seek input about the proposal. The notes from this meeting are attached. Please refer to Attachment C.

Alternatives:

Reject the lease proposal and develop a plan and funding mechanism for maintenance of Locomotive #168 in its current location.

Proposed Motion:

Supporting the Resolution and Lease Agreement between the City of Colorado Springs and the Cumbres and Toltec Scenic Railroad Commission for the use of locomotive 168 for the purposes outlined in the agreement.

N/A