

ITEM # 29
DATE August 26, 2008

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: PLAN TO REPORT ON ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES AT ADA HAYDEN PARK

BACKGROUND:

At the August 12, 2008 City Council meeting, staff was directed to develop a plan to report on the environmental issues at Ada Hayden Park. The request was that no additional data collection be initiated at this time but that a summary of previously gathered data be provided in such a way that an overall perspective of the park's health could be understood. Staff committed to bring the plan back to Council for approval within six weeks.

Because staff understands a proposal for development in the Ada Hayden Park watershed just north of the corporate limits will be brought before Council in the very near future, it is believed that City Council would benefit from receiving background information regarding the health of Ada Hayden Park prior to this development request. For this reason, staff has placed a high priority on providing thoughts about a critical first step in a plan as quickly as possible.

Staff would propose that a special Council workshop be held at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, September 16, 2008. At that workshop, staff would invite researchers and other experts to share their findings and experiences directly with Council and answer any questions.

Staff envisions the workshop taking place in three discrete modules.

Module 1. Staff will assemble a panel of individuals who have recently conducted research in Ada Hayden Park and will ask them to present their findings on the current state of the park, its lake and wetlands, and the ecological pressures currently being exerted on the park.

Module 2. Staff will expand the panel by bringing in additional experts who can share their experiences with different management techniques that have been implemented around the state. They will be asked to share their perspectives of the balance and trade-offs between urban and agricultural land practices, to provide examples of "good" and "bad" land management practices in both rural and urban settings, and to discuss the different options that could be implemented to maintain the Ada Hayden Park lake at an acceptable level of water quality.

Module 3. Staff will involve a roundtable discussion where Council and members of the public will be able to ask questions of the panel participants.

The attached list reflects the proposed makeup of the expert panel, including the names of anticipated participants. Care was taken when establishing the expert panel to not presume any specific recommendations or outcomes. The focus will be on providing objective information to Council to allow informed policy-making.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Approve the plan proposed by staff to convene a panel of subject matter experts at a Council workshop at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, September 16, 2008.
2. Do not approve the plan proposed by staff and direct staff to pursue a different format for the requested report.
3. Take no action at this time.

MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

The importance of providing background information in advance of anticipated development requests in the Ada Hayden Park watershed has made responding to Council's direction a priority. Staff has developed a plan to organize and facilitate a workshop where issues related to the overall ecological health of Ada Hayden Park can be presented and discussed.

Staff proposes to bring in researchers who have first-hand knowledge of the current state of Ada Hayden Park to present their findings. In addition to the researchers, staff proposes including input from other experts from around Iowa to share their experiences in sustaining the water quality of Iowa lakes. **Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council adopt Alternative #1, thereby approving the proposal to schedule a workshop at 7:00 p.m. on September 16, 2008.**

The goal of the proposed workshop will be to provide objective information to the Council, and to give Council members the opportunity to ask questions directly of the subject matter experts. Following the workshop, the Council may wish to establish priorities, create formal policies, or provide additional direction to staff to further the goals of the Council related to Ada Hayden Park.

**City of Ames, Iowa
Water and Pollution Control Department**

**Proposed Expert Panel
Council Workshop on Ecological Health of Hayden Park
September 16, 2008**

Individuals who have conducted on-site research in Ada Hayden Park

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|---------------------------------------|--|
| Bill Simpkins –
(Invited) | Professor, Geological & Atmospheric Sciences, Iowa State University (Groundwater Quality) |
| Tim Stewart –
(Confirmed) | Assistant Professor, Natural Resource Ecology & Management, Iowa State University (Wetland Performance) |
| Chris Rehmann –
(Confirmed) | Professor, Civil, Construction & Environmental Engineering, Iowa State University (In-lake Water Quality Monitoring) |
| Jeff Kopaska –
(Invited) | Fisheries Research Biologist, Iowa Department of Natural Resources (In-lake Water Quality Monitoring) |
| John Downing -
(Invited) | Professor, Ecology, Evolution, and Organismal Biology, Iowa State University (In-lake Water Quality Monitoring) |

Individuals who can offer a broad perspective on sustaining lake water quality

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| Wayne Petersen –
(Invited) | Urban Conservationist, Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship |
| Aaron Musselman –
(Tentative) | Story County District Conservationist, Natural Resources Conservation Service |
| Mike McGhee -
(Invited) | Lake Restoration Coordinator, Iowa Department of Natural Resources |
| John Paulin -
(Confirmed) | Director, Prairie Rivers Resource Conservation & Development |