

ITEM: 16  
DATE: 7/14/15

## COUNCIL ACTION FORM

**SUBJECT: NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENT PROJECT GRANTS FOR 2015/16**

**BACKGROUND:**

The City Council has appropriated Local Option Sales Tax funds to finance the Neighborhood Improvement Program (NIP). This year, \$50,000 was approved for neighborhood programs, with \$25,000 earmarked for the NIP and the remaining \$25,000 allocated for a broader array of neighborhood projects.

As you will recall, there are two main goals of the NIP: (1) to strengthen a neighborhood's appearance with the addition of permanent physical improvements, and (2) to promote a greater sense of community through resident participation in a neighborhood project.

Each project application is rated on the following 100-point system. A project must achieve at least 50 points to be considered:

Resident Involvement (30 points maximum):\*

...the number of residents donating their time and/or labor to accomplish the project

...the number of residents donating funds to the project

\*10 points 1-25 people; 20 points 26-50 people; 30 points over 50 people

Project Impact (30 points maximum):\*\*

...the number of residents who will be positively affected by the improvement

\*\*10 points 1-25 people; 20 points 26-100 people; 30 points over 100 people

Safety (10 points maximum):

...enhancement of safety in the neighborhood

Public Space (10 points maximum):

...promotion of social interaction by utilizing public space

Improved Housing (10 points maximum)

Environment (10 points maximum):

...support for the environment

To date in FY 2015/16, two applications have been received for a total funding request of \$7,692.95. The Review Panel, comprised of City staff members and two citizens, scored the applications and recommended that both projects be approved for funding. The Neighborhood Improvement Project Review Panel is requesting approval by the City Council of the following projects:

**Roosevelt Neighborhood Association & Friends of Neighborhood Park.** The project will include a 20' x 30' gabled shelter/stage to be built in the southwest corner of Roosevelt Park. Electrical outlets will be installed for music amplification and other uses. The stage will be the venue for the donor-driven Roosevelt Summer Sundays Concert Series. The Concert Series is free and open to the public. It is known as one of Central Iowa's premier family-friendly events and regularly welcomes audiences of over 200 attendees. The shelter/stage will be part of the newly created Roosevelt Park and is intended to serve as the "hub" of the Roosevelt Neighborhood.

The total cost of the project is \$10,000. Requested City funding is \$5,000. The applicants are providing cash in the amount of \$5,000. Neighborhood involvement has included numerous hours in neighborhood meetings, participation in a very large fundraising campaign, and Neighborhood representatives working closely with staff from the City's Parks and Recreation Department regarding the design of the stage/shelter and the other amenities planned for Roosevelt Park.

**Indian Grass Court Neighborhood Association.** The project's purpose is to beautify the large cul-de-sac in the center of Indian Grass Court by adding low-maintenance perennial plants and trees. This cul-de-sac has become an eyesore in the neighborhood because it is filled with weeds and debris. The renewed area will serve as a gathering space for neighborhood meetings, block parties, and potlucks, as well as be much more attractive to passersby.

The total cost of the project is \$5,385.89. Requested City funding is \$2,692.95. The applicants are providing cash in the amount of \$2,692.94 as well as labor to plant hostas, daylilies, and grasses and in-kind contributions of water and fertilizer.

The Review Panel recommended that the following stipulations be placed on approval of the Grant: (1) The required permits and utility locations must be obtained before digging. (2) The space must be used for neighborhood gatherings, such as block parties, potluck, and meetings. (3) The residents of the area will plant hostas, daylilies, and grasses in spaces designated by Country Landscapes. (4) The Neighborhood Association will contact the City's Department of Parks and Recreation for direction as to what species of trees may be planted. (5) The Neighborhood Association will assume all maintenance responsibilities for the plantings in the cul-de-sac.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

1. The City Council can approve the expenditure of \$7,692.95 to fund NIP grants for the Roosevelt Neighborhood/Friends of Roosevelt Park stage/shelter project and the Indian Grass Court Neighborhood cul-de-sac beautification project.
2. The City Council can reject any or all of the projects for funding at this time.

**MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

Supporting projects that strengthen neighborhoods is in keeping with one of the City Council's goals. Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council adopt Alternative #1, thereby approving Neighborhood Improvement Program grants for the Roosevelt Park project in the amount of \$5,000 and the Indian Grass Court project in the amount of \$2,692.95.