

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH THE FRIENDS OF EMMA MCCARTHY LEE PARK AND MUNN WOODS

BACKGROUND:

In July 2014, the Friends of Emma McCarthy Lee Park and Munn Woods (FEMLPWW) filed for incorporation and in September 2014 became incorporated. As stated in the attached Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), the group's mission is as follows:

- Partner with community members, city government, educational institutions, and conservation organizations to enhance the natural environment
- Support public awareness, educational programs, and research efforts
- Secure supplemental financial resources
- Build connections between recreation, learning, and appropriate public use of this land
- Develop a network of supporters and volunteers to assist with management, protection, and restoration efforts

The Parks and Recreation Commission has given staff direction to develop a Memorandum of Understanding with all Friends groups so each group has clearly defined expectations for working with the City. **There has been a MOU with the Friends of Ada Hayden Heritage Park since 2010 and that MOU has been used as a model for the agreement with the Friends of Emma McCarthy Lee Park and Munn Woods.**

As the City continues to grow and additional parks are developed, Friends groups may play a vital role in the development, maintenance, and protection of the park systems resources. The FEMLPWW can play this role and help accomplish items staff cannot do alone.

The Parks and Recreation Commission has recommended City Council approve the attached Memorandum of Understanding with the Friends of Emma McCarthy Lee Park and Munn Woods.

ALTERNATIVES:

- 1) Approve the Memorandum of Understanding with the Friends of Emma McCarthy Lee Park and Munn Woods.
- 2) Do not approve the Memorandum of Understanding with the Friends of Emma McCarthy Lee Park and Munn Woods.
- 3) Refer back to staff.

MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

The Friends of Emma McCarthy Lee Park and Munn Woods is a fledgling Friends group and it is unknown how much they can accomplish. However, the group did organize successful outings during the past year to remove invasive species in Emma McCarthy Lee Park. Robin Switzer, Friends Group President, is very passionate and committed to working with Parks and Recreation to enhance Emma McCarthy Lee Park and Munn Woods. **Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council support Alternative #1, thereby approving the attached Memorandum of Understanding with the Friends of Emma McCarthy Lee Park and Munn Woods.**

Memorandum of Understanding

Between Friends of Emma McCarthy Lee Park and Munn Woods

And the City of Ames, Iowa

1. Background: The Friends of Emma McCarthy Lee Park and Munn Woods (FEMLPMW) was incorporated in July 2014 with the state of Iowa as a nonprofit tax exempt organization to operate exclusively for charitable, scientific and educational purposes. It is the intent of the Board of Directors that FEMLPMW will operate exclusively for the public benefit of Emma McCarthy Lee Park and Munn Woods. FEMLPMW is working with the Federal Internal Revenue Service to become approved as a tax exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, of 1986, as amended.

2. Vision: The vision of the Board of Directors of FEMLPMW is to maintain and improve Emma McCarthy Lee Park and Munn Woods as a beautiful and ecologically healthy natural area and to provide nature-oriented outdoor recreation and education.

3. Goals: The goals of the organization are: (1) to partner with community members, city government, educational institutions, and conservation organizations to enhance the natural environment, (2) support public awareness, educational programs, and research efforts, (3) secure supplemental financial resources that may be used by the City of Ames for projects selected by the Parks and Recreation Commission and approved by the City Council, (4) build connections between recreation, learning and appropriate public use of this land, and (5) develop a network of supporters and volunteers to assist with management, protection, and restoration efforts.

4. Fundraising Activities: In support of the City of Ames and the Parks and Recreation Department, FEMLPMW will conduct public fundraising efforts, will maintain bank accounts, financial records, investments, and respond to requests from the City of Ames for projects that are within the ability of FEMLPMW.

5. Organization: FEMLPMW has an organizational structure that supports and sustains a vibrant and dedicated membership, identifies and recruits knowledgeable and enthusiastic committee leaders and members, and maintains a viable cooperative relationship with the Department of Parks and Recreation and the City of Ames.

6. Four Acre Tract Maintained as it was at the Time of Settlers: In the property deed, it is stipulated four acres of land shall be maintained as it was at the time of settlers. Judge McCarthy, at the time the park was deeded to the City, believed that preserving our native ecosystems is an important function of this unique park. FEMLPMW recognize restoring four acres within the park also provides the opportunity to further commemorate Emma McCarthy Lee. To ensure this restoration happens, the

FEMPLPMW accepts the responsibility for maintaining this four acre tract of land and will be done in close coordination and agreement with the Ames Parks and Recreation Department.

7. Relation to the City of Ames: The Board of Directors of FEMPLPMW recognizes the role of the City of Ames as the body responsible for the operations of Emma McCarthy Lee Park and Munn Woods, the establishment of park policies, and the development for plans and budgets for these areas. FEMPLPMW agrees to coordinate its activities with the Department of Parks and Recreation.

8. Duration of the Agreement: This agreement shall take effect immediately and will stay in force in perpetuity, or upon the dissolution of either entity. The agreement may be revised at any time, but shall be reviewed by both parties at least every five years.

Approved by resolution of the Ames City Council at its regular meeting on

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Ann H. Campbell, Mayor

Date

Robin W. Switzer
President of the Board of Directors

Date

Friends of Emma McCarthy Lee Park and Munn Woods

Vision

The Friends of Emma McCarthy Lee Park and Munn Woods work to maintain and improve Emma McCarthy Lee Park and Munn Woods as a beautiful and ecologically healthy natural area and to provide nature-oriented outdoor recreation and education.

Mission

The mission of the Friends of Emma McCarthy Lee Park and Munn Woods is to:

- Partner with community members, city government, educational institutions, and conservation organizations to enhance the natural environment
- Support public awareness, educational programs, and research efforts
- Secure supplemental financial resources
- Build connections between recreation, learning, and appropriate public use of this land
- Develop a network of supporters and volunteers to assist with management, protection, and restoration efforts

Goals

Organization

- Build an organizational structure that assures longevity, continuity and membership involvement
- Enlist the support of talented and passionate leaders and members
- Develop and maintain a cooperative relationship with the City of Ames

Fundraising

- Recruit members and collect dues and contributions
- Apply for grants to fund projects
- Respond to requests for special projects envisioned by the City

Public Awareness

- Educate the community and park users about the mission/vision of the Park and Woods
- Create and maintain a website about the Park and Woods

Public Education

- Develop interpretive programs on wildlife, ecology, conservation, and land management
- Disseminate research results

- Promote the Park and Woods as a place for environmental research

Habitat Management

- Help with controlling invasive alien vegetation
- Prevent erosion and environmental degradation
- Assist with control of littering, vandalism, and dumping

Monitoring and Surveys

- Facilitate biological studies
- Help with monitoring of water quality and ecosystem function

Projects envisioned:

Short-term projects (1-3 years)

- Coordinate and sponsor invasive vegetation removal efforts
- Develop directional and interpretive signage
- Adopt several areas for landscaping
- Improve trails and fight erosion

Long-term projects

- Develop an exercise par course
- Construct bird- and wildlife-watching outlooks
- Build a crossing over Clear Creek in Munn Woods to prevent erosion
- Reduce canopy cover in overstocked upland forest areas to encourage regeneration of oak in Munn Woods
- Define and protect a 4-acre tract of land in Lee Park to fulfill the terms of the bequest to the City made by Judge Lee
- Install park boundary signs