

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF PUBLIC ART COMMISSION'S ART IN THE PARKS PROJECT

BACKGROUND:

The City Council has annually approved the Public Art Commission's (PAC) program of Art in the Park as part of the annual funding process. The Art in the Parks Program works in conjunction with PAC's larger mission, which is to create an environment that incorporates art into the lives of all Ames citizens. This program is a larger initiative utilizing budget allocations from three years.

This year the Commission has developed a program that will encourage broad participation from members of the Ames community – a Birdhouse Competition. The proposed structures will be placed in park locations based on intended birdhouse types. PAC desires Moore Memorial Park to be the preferred location if appropriate for the submitted houses.

The goals of this project are as follows:

- Encourage construction of functional and aesthetically pleasing birdhouses
- Encourage the use of environmentally sensitive materials
- Demonstrate ways to attract wildlife by creating unique backyard and park habitats
- Inspire creativity in backyard and park habitats
- Encourage artistic and hand-crafted approaches to birdhouse design
- Help support our students, children, families, and community

The overall goals are to celebrate the beauty in nature and the creativity of the residents of the Ames Community, and to provide an opportunity for community participation in this year's Art in the Parks project. The City Council appropriated \$25,000 in FY 2018/19 for this project. That total includes the carry-over funding from previous years.

PAC has reached out to several potential partners in this undertaking. These include the Ames Parks and Recreation Department, Ames Elementary School art teachers, the Ames High School Art Club, Big Bluestem Audubon Society, ACPC Preschool, Girl Scout and Daisy troops, Northwood Preschool, Prairie Flower Preschool. Confirmations of interest have been received from those participating in the project.

The Commission will also seek a guest artist or artists to work with the community and area schools and preschools for birdhouse decorating workshops. The Commission will also work with ornithologists and wildlife experts for special events to talk about Iowa birds and the importance of conservation of Iowa natural landscapes.

After the birdhouses are mounted in City parks, they will be evaluated annually for soundness and either remain in the park system or be decommissioned. The appropriated

City funding will go to support the installation, maintenance, and decommissioning of the birdhouses. PAC will work with the Parks and Recreation Department in this process. Additional information regarding this Art in the Parks proposal is listed below and will be finalized in the upcoming month.

Entry Categories will include:

Children (up to 12 years of age)

Youth (ages 12-17)

Architects and Artist

Adult single

Adult team (2 or more)

Senior (over 65)

Whimsy (for artistic display only and not intended for exterior installation)

Tentative Timeline:

Competition Registration Begins: January 14, 2019

Submission of completed Birdhouses: March 11-15, 2019 at the Octagon

Exhibition of Birdhouses at the Octagon Center: March 30 – May 18, 2019

Judging of Birdhouse entries: April 13, 2019

Close of voting for People's Choice Award: April 14, 2019

Awards: April 22, 2019 (Earth Day)

Installation in Parks: May 20-31, 2019

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Approve the undertaking of the Birdhouse Competition and authorize the Public Art Commission to proceed with further development and implementation of the project.
2. Refer the project back to the Public Art Commission for reconsideration of an alternative Art in the Parks program.

COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

The Public Art Commission provides a useful and appreciated service to the Ames community by administering the Art in the Parks program. The proposed birdhouse competition will provide an interactive activity for residents as well as provide educational opportunities for interested individuals. There are multiple categories so people can enter a birdhouse as an individual or group (e.g., a family, business, etc.).

The Commission will provide birdhouse kits so all residents have an opportunity to participate. Materials for installation will be provided by the PAC, which will coordinate volunteers to install the birdhouses. This is a positive community activity that will provide bird habitat within the park system without placing additional duties on City staff.

Therefore, it is the Public Art Commission's recommendation that Council approve Alternative #1 as stated above.