From: Pomeranz, Jeff A.
To: City Council
Subject: 9-15-2023 Council Communications - 384
Date: September 15, 2023 4:49:56 PM
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USDA Award

The United States Department of Agriculture Forestry Service (USDA) awarded Cedar Rapids $6 million through the *FY 2023 USDA Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry - Inflation Reduction Act* grant program on Thursday. Cedar Rapids will use the funding to restore, enhance and expand equitable tree canopy and to restore public wooded areas in neighborhoods designated as disadvantaged communities.

Thank you very much for the support you have provided to this effort. It required significant efforts in policymaking and administrative work to reach the milestone of $6 million awarded for the ReLeaf Plan on Thursday. Our commitment to planning, developing partnerships, and collaborating to achieve this success has been truly remarkable from the outset.

I want to extend my appreciation to several individuals who dedicated themselves to making this event a shining example of community building and success. Firstly, Assistant City Manager Angie Charipar played a critical role in bringing the team together and ensuring that every detail was executed flawlessly. Amanda Grieder was also invaluable in supporting Angie and the entire team. The contributions of our Parks and Recreation team, including Hashim Taylor, Mitch Ahrendsen, Chad Peterson, and Carole Teator were indispensable to the success of this effort. Many have commented on how beautiful Greene Square Park looked, and that wouldn't have been possible without the hard work of the City team. I also wish to acknowledge Phillip Platz for his tireless efforts. The numerous drafts, revisions, and final documents produced were a testament to how our team collaborates for the betterment of the City.

Once again, I extend my sincere thanks to the Council and City team for your contributions in getting us to this point. While there is still much work ahead of us, this accomplishment underscores the abilities and teamwork of our entire organization.

Fall Tree Planting

Fall tree planting is underway. The ReLeaf contractor wrapped up planting 572 trees on the west side of Cedar Rapids this week. By the end of the season, more than 1,550 trees will be planted along City streets and in parks. The contract includes two years of watering. Trees Forever's Growing Futures program will also begin planting this weekend. This effort will plant 500 trees along City streets this Fall. Growing Futures is a youth-employment program that also engages volunteers to help plant trees. Students from Kennedy High School will plant 33 trees at Pierce Park on 9/23. Kennedy's National Honor Society members are recruiting students to volunteer that day. Trees Forever-trained TreeKeepers will assist City staff in training and overseeing the participating students. The planting is funded, in part, through a grant from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

Greenway Parks Plan

City staff met with Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates (MVVA) and the entire consultant team to kick off the Greenway Parks planning process on 8/24. Over the next several weeks, in-person and online engagement opportunities will be available for community members to share their vision for the Greenways. MVVA will conduct site visits in Cedar Rapids from 10/3–4 and attend a Public Open House for the Plan on 10/3, from 5–7 PM at the Ellis Clubhouse & Event Center. A more detailed update will be provided to the City Council Development Committee at their 9/25 meeting. A complete list of engagement opportunities is available on the project webpage.

Westside Library Park Plan

The Westside Library Park planning process is underway with additional community outreach events planned this Fall. An open house will be held from 4:30–6:30 PM on 9/27 at the Ladd Library, with additional in-person and online engagement opportunities available through 10/13. Engagement will be focused on the desired character elements for the park space (i.e. natural versus built-up, passive versus active recreation, etc.). A more detailed update will be provided to the City Council Development Committee at their meeting on 9/25. A full list of engagement opportunities is available on the project webpage.

New Bohemia Dog Park

Parks and Recreation staff are preparing bids for the New Bohemia Dog Park project, with a goal to open the park by Summer 2024. The site currently lacks electrical and water utilities and amenities such as fencing. Staff is working on bids to add these needed components. The site is an old railroad corridor; extensive work is needed to establish appropriate grass turf.

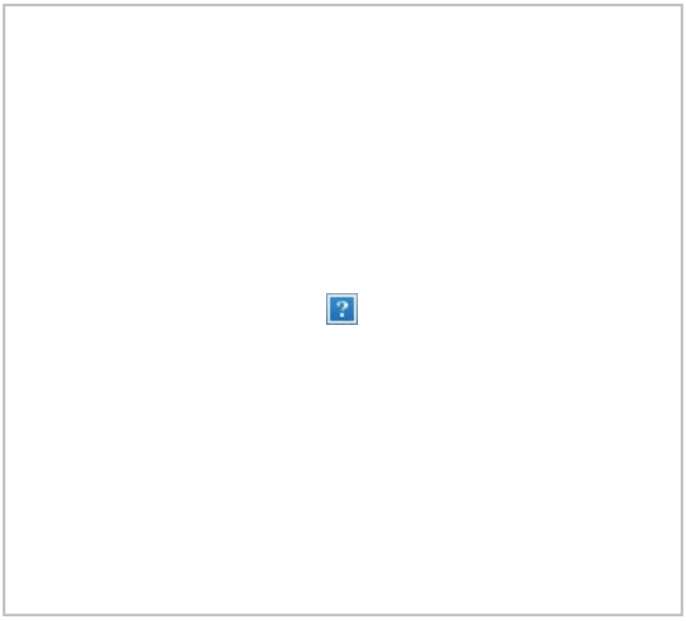
IDNR Report and Penalty

In March, the City notified the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) of a fish kill in McLoud Run. The fish kill was the result of a water main break located at Terrace Hill Drive NE and Evergreen Street. As a result, chlorinated drinking water discharged into a storm sewer which empties into McLoud Run, Iowa's Urban Trout Stream. Last week, the City received an Administrative Consent Order from IDNR to pay restitution for the fish killed. The fine amount is $21,022.10, with an

administrative penalty of $2,000, for a total of $23,022.10. The Attorney's Office and Utilities Department will work with IDNR to determine opportunities to negotiate this penalty to a lesser amount.

Five Seasons Parking Ramp Mural

The Public Art Commission identified the Five Seasons Parking Ramp tower as a priority location for a mural, thanks to its high visibility to downtown pedestrians, drivers, and visitors. Correspondingly, the City's largest mural, Together We Bloom, was installed there in September 2022. The final phase of the project includes an informational sign, already installed nearby, and lighting, which will be installed in the coming weeks. Lighting will ensure observers can appreciate the mural's impact around the clock.



Skatepark Lights

Alliant Energy recently installed an electrical meter at Riverside Skatepark, bringing electrical service to the park for the first time. Staff are working through minor issues preventing the lights at the skatepark from being turned on, with hopes to have full lighting capacity available soon.

AARP Iowa Hosts Generational Dinner

As part of Cedar Rapids' Age-Friendly efforts, AARP Iowa recently hosted a "Generations Dinner." The dinner convened a cross-generational group of residents to discuss what an Age-Friendly community means to them — and to inspire new ways of thinking. Members of several City of Cedar Rapids Boards and Commissions participated in the event. By gathering a diverse set of perspectives and backgrounds, participants had the opportunity to learn, share, and connect across generations, reflecting on what Cedar Rapids means to them.