



Legislation Text

File #: 21-0229, **Version:** 2

TO: Mayor Richard C. Irvin

FROM: Gio Santana, Superintendent of Parks & Recreation
Dan Powell, Zoo Manager

DATE: 5/6/2021

SUBJECT:

A resolution authorizing the acceptance of a \$50,000.00 grant from the DeMoon Family and authorization for expenditures to construct an education area to be installed on the grounds of Phillips Park Zoo.

PURPOSE:

Acceptance of a \$50,000.00 grant from the DeMoon family and authorization for expenditures not to exceed \$50,000.00 for the purposes of building an education area inside the Phillips Park Zoo.

BACKGROUND:

The DeMoon family has been a long-time supporter of the Phillips Park Zoo, having provided donations that were utilized to improve animal visibility and animal care capabilities in several areas, including the Otter viewing glass installation, several new reptile enclosures and the installation of various shift-doors for the wolves and cat enclosures via the Kara foundation. In 2019-2020 leadership of the Kara Foundation changed resulting in a modification of their philanthropic ideals, and a 10-fold increase in their donation size.

The Zoo lacks a centrally localized area that can be used for education chats, staff presentations, and as a gathering point for zoo tours or other zoo programming. Acceptance of this grant would allow construction of an education area that will be constructed just inside the zoo's entrance, see exhibits 1 and 2 for the location and rendering. Construction at this site will also allow the education area to double as the "elk observation area" when not in use for education purposes. This would also replace the need to rebuild the elk observation deck, which has been closed due to the need for repairs.

DISCUSSION:

Construction of the education area will not only serve as a multi-purpose functioning area for zoo programming and other zoo events, it will also eliminate an area that is a current eyesore as well as make great use of approximately 3,000 sq. ft. that is currently unused & fenced off space. Construction of the education area will also provide an avenue for the sale of "sponsorship brick pavers" which the proceeds will be used to fund future zoo projects and other zoo improvements.

Staff has finalized the design and have begun the process of working with various local vendors to obtain pricing on the materials for the installation. Due to the magnitude of the work, staff plans to

obtain the services of a contractor to complete the installation. Each of these purchase orders are estimated to be under \$25,000 and the appropriate procurement policies will be followed. It is estimated that the entire project will be completed within the grant amount and no additional City funding will be required. Any remaining funds from the grant will be used to purchase landscaping to enhance that area; Parks staff will be able to complete the installation of the landscaping.

As this project is not currently in the budget, a budget amendment will also be completed upon execution of this resolution.

IMPACT STATEMENT:

Denying approval of the grant could jeopardize future donations from the DeMoon family, and will delay construction of said education area, as well as leave the zoo without an elk observation area.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

We recommend approval of the resolution authorizing acceptance of the grant and authorizing the expenditure of funds in an amount not to exceed \$50,000.

cc: Finance Committee



CITY OF AURORA, ILLINOIS

RESOLUTION NO. _____
DATE OF PASSAGE _____

A Resolution authorizing the acceptance of a \$50,000.00 grant from the DeMoon Family and authorizing the of expenditure funds not to exceed \$50,000.00 for construction of an education area to be installed on the grounds of Phillips Park Zoo

WHEREAS, the City of Aurora has a population of more than 25,000 persons and is, therefore, a home rule unit under subsection (a) of Section 6 of Article VII of the Illinois Constitution of 1970; and

WHEREAS, subject to said Section, a home rule unit may exercise any power and perform any function pertaining to its government and affairs for the protection of the public health, safety, morals, and welfare; and

WHEREAS, Purchase of materials and construction of said area fits within the grant amount; and

WHEREAS, this project is a much-needed improvement for our Zoo; and

WHEREAS, a budget amendment will be processed in order to add this project to the 2021 budget, and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Aurora, Illinois, as follows:

A resolution authorizing the acceptance of a \$50,000.00 grant from the DeMoon Family and authorizing the of expenditure funds not to exceed \$50,000.00 for construction of an education area to be installed on the grounds of Phillips Park Zoo.