



Administrative Report

H.5., File # 23-5949

Meeting Date: 9/19/2023

To: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

From: CAMERON HARDING, COMMUNITY SERVICES DIRECTOR

TITLE

APPROVE A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH THE SOUTH BAY PARKLAND CONSERVANCY FOR HABITAT RESTORATION AND LANDSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS TO THE UPPER AND LOWER POND AREAS AT HOPKINS WILDERNESS PARK

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The South Bay Parkland Conservancy (SBPC) has provided ongoing support and service to maintain the upper and lower pond areas at Hopkins Wilderness Park for many years. The most recent Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) outlining this work expired on June 30, 2022. The SBPC has continued to support restoration efforts of the park and desires to enter into a new, retroactive MOU with the City that would continue its work at Hopkins Wilderness Park through June 30, 2025, with an option to extend the agreement for an additional two-year term. The proposed MOU would compensate the SBPC in an amount not to exceed \$25,000 per year, and \$50,000 total for the first two years of the agreement. Compensation for the third year of the agreement, and the possible two-year extension, is negotiable and will be determined by capital funds available at the time. The scope of work includes landscape design, site prep, planting, ongoing maintenance, team management, fundraising, and community involvement in addition to the SBPC's involvement in the development of conceptual designs for the upper and lower ponds, per the Strategic Plan. The SBPC will continue to work collaboratively with personnel in the Community Services and Public Works Departments on the coordination and scheduling of project work and landscape purchases.

BACKGROUND

Hopkins Wilderness Park, located at 1102 Camino Real, was constructed in 1977 as a center for camping, nature study, and conservation. The 11-acre site was developed to incorporate ecological habitats that included forest, meadows, streams, and ponds as well as an amphitheater and three overnight campground sites. Through the years, Wilderness Park has remained a popular destination for both visitors and residents while experiencing its share of challenges including drought, vandalism and an arson fire in 2007 that engulfed one acre of land in the vicinity of the amphitheater. In 2017, in an effort to address restoration needs, the SBPC voluntarily began efforts to revitalize Wilderness Park by establishing the Friends of Hopkins Wilderness Park group. SBPC also began gathering community support and volunteers in an effort to reintroduce native plants to the park and create wildlife habitat connectivity within the greater South Bay area.

On June 19, 2018, the City Council approved \$100,000 in funding for Wilderness Park, which included \$19,700 for the upper pond repair/maintenance contract, \$50,000 for the lower pond

repair/maintenance contract, and the remaining funds for habitat restoration and native plant design services. On June 28, 2019, the Redondo Beach City Council approved carryover funding in the amount of \$17,000 for continued habitat restoration and native plant design services and an additional \$30,000 from the FY 2020-21 Capital Improvement Project (CIP) budget towards the same services.

In an effort to formalize the City's partnership with the SBPC, a retroactive MOU was approved by the City Council on September, 7, 2021 that outlined the work that the SBPC was already completing in the park. The term of this MOU expired on June 30, 2022.

At this time, staff is recommending the approval of a new, retroactive MOU with the term July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2025. The MOU provides an optional extension for an additional two-year term, expiring June 30, 2027, subject to approval of an additional funding allocation.

The proposed MOU includes a maximum \$25,000 annual reimbursement to the SBPC, with a total not to exceed amount of \$50,000 for the initial two years of the agreement. These payments include hourly rates for SBPC of \$45 per hour for project management, \$35 per hour for native landscaping services, and \$20 per hour for trail surfacing and re-naturalizing.

The proposed MOU includes, but is not limited to, the following Scope of Work for the SBPC:

- Landscape Design
- Site Prep
- Planting
- Ongoing Maintenance
- Team Management
- Fundraising/Community Involvement

Additionally, the MOU includes the SBPC's involvement in the development of conceptual designs for the upper and lower ponds at Wilderness Park. This was requested by the City Council at its Strategic Planning session on April 25, 2023 under Goal 3 Increase Environmental Sustainability.

All work completed by the SBPC will be coordinated with the Public Works Department prior to its completion. The City will continue to support the efforts of the SBPC at Wilderness Park, work collectively with the SBPC to develop projects that could be considered for inclusion in the City's CIP, and collaborate with the SBPC to maintain the City's Geographic Information System (GIS) inventory for trees and plants planted by the SBPC throughout the park.

COORDINATION

The Community Services Department coordinated with the Public Works Department as well as the City Attorney's Office to develop the scope and terms of the MOU.

FISCAL IMPACT

The \$50,000 of funding for the first two years of the MOU was included as part of the Wilderness Park CIP Project approved during the FY 2023-24 budget adoption process. Funding for year-three of the MOU, and beyond, will be determined at a later date based on available capital funds.

APPROVED BY:

Mike Witzansky, City Manager

ATTACHMENTS

- Agmt - Memorandum of Understanding with the South Bay Parkland Conservancy
- Insurance - South Bay Parkland Conservancy