



Administrative Report

H.23., File # 21-2855

Meeting Date: 9/7/2021

To: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

From: CAMERON HARDING, COMMUNITY SERVICES DIRECTOR

TITLE

APPROVE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE CITY OF REDONDO BEACH AND THE SOUTH BAY PARKLAND CONSERVANCY REGARDING HABITAT RESTORATION AT HOPKINS WILDERNESS PARK

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report and the accompanying Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) are presented for the City Council to authorize payments to the South Bay Parklands Conservancy (SBPC) for work that was completed between the dates of September 2019 and January 2021 at Wilderness Park and for future planned restoration efforts. There is a significant amount of background material included with the report including copies of invoices previously submitted by SBPC and paid by the City as well as a copy of an invoice submitted by SBPC and not yet paid. The work that was completed at Wilderness Park is referenced in two prior Budget Response Reports (copies attached) with funding allocated as part of the adopted FY 18/19 and the FY 19/20 budgets.

As described in this report, staff is presenting an MOU between the City and the South Bay Parkland Conservancy (SBPC) for habitat restoration and native plant design services within Hopkins Wilderness Park. The term of the MOU spans from July 19, 2018 through June 30, 2022 and will compensate SBPC for services provided in an amount not to exceed \$77,300.

The City and SBPC desire to enter into this MOU so that SBPC may continue to provide habitat restoration and native plant design services within Wilderness Park at the upper and lower pond areas and for the City to compensate SBPC for those services. SBPC will continue to work collaboratively with Community Services, Public Works, and the City's Arborist regarding coordination of project work, scheduling and plant purchases.

It is important to note that this report and the MOU deal only with work at Wilderness Park. A separate MOU will be needed related to any future SBPC work related to Community Garden efforts in Redondo Beach.

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 campgrounds. Through the years Wilderness Park has remained a popular destination for both visitors and residents but has experienced 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 Friends of Hopkins Wilderness Park. SBPC also began gathering community support and volunteers in an effort to reintroduce native plants and create wildlife habitat connectivity within the South Bay area.

On June 19, 2018, the Redondo Beach City Council approved \$100,000 in funding for Wilderness Park. This allocation comprised of \$19,700 for the upper pond repair/maintenance contract and \$50,000 for the lower pond repair/maintenance contract, with the remaining funds being used 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 Capital Improvement Project budget towards the same services.

In an effort to quickly begin restoration efforts, the City worked with SBPC to perform habitat restoration work. SBPC has invoiced the City for this work which includes plant materials, project management, landscaping, trail surfacing, and re-naturalizing. To date, SBPC has been compensated \$18,316.50 (see attached invoice history).

It is worthwhile to note that there were staffing changes in the City's Community Services Department during the work of the SBPC. In the Winter of 2021, Interim Community Services Director Laurie Koike received an invoice from SBPC and questioned if previous payments to SBPC had been authorized by the City Council. Upon further review, staff determined that the City had paid SBPC in the absence of specific authorization by the City Council and that a Council approved MOU would be an appropriate method to continue the partnership between the City and SBPC and habitat restoration efforts.

At this time, the City is holding Invoice #10 dated March 8, 2021 for the amount of \$10,605 for services provided by SBPC subcontractors and one plant order for the January 2021 planting (see attached invoice. Invoice #10 includes charges for work completed through the end of February 2021. It should be noted that SBPC Invoice #9 was consolidated with Invoice #10, which will be processed for payment once the MOU is approved by Council.

| SBPC Invoices | Amount | Status |
|---------------|-------------|---|
| # 1 - # 8 | \$18,316.50 | Paid |
| #9 | \$5,155.00 | Not Paid; consolidated into Invoice #10 |
| #10 | \$10,605.00 | Payment on Hold |
| Total: | \$28,921.50 | |

The proposed MOU includes a total of \$77,300 for the reimbursement for plant materials and services rendered upon the completion of those efforts. SBPC's total reimbursement shall not

exceed this amount during the MOU term of July 19, 2018 through June 30, 2022. After payment of invoices #1 - #10, which total \$28,921.50, \$48,378.50 remains available in the MOU. These payments include hourly rates for SBPC of \$40 per hour for project management, \$30 per hour for native landscaping services, and \$20 per hour for trail surfacing and re-naturalizing.

The City and SBPC desire to enter into this MOU so that SBPC may continue to provide habitat restoration and native plant design services within Wilderness Park at the upper and lower pond areas and for the City to compensate SBPC for those services. SBPC will continue to work collaboratively with Community Services, Public Works, and the City's Arborist regarding coordination of project work, scheduling and plant purchases. The proposed MOU includes, but is not limited to, the following Scope of Work for SBPC:

LANDSCAPE DESIGN:

- Identify and select native plant palette for purchase.
- Design plant layout with special attention to natural topography, light exposure and specific needs of each plant biome.
- Design basic trail layout and maintenance paths.

SITE PREP

- Clear sites to be planted from overgrown brush and debris using hand tools.
- Improve slopes and underutilized aspects of the park by removing, with City Arborist's consent, invasive plant species, and establishing functioning biomes of local native habitat.

PLANTING

- Unload, organize and water plant inventory, as recommended by Landscape Architect.
- Introduce, with City Arborist's consent, drought tolerant, sustainable native plants found within the California coastal sage scrub, chaparral, oak woodland, dune, grassland/meadow, and Riparian plant communities.

ONGOING MAINTENANCE

- Identify invasive plants and weed around existing native plants.
- Re-naturalize restoration areas with natural found items (logs, rocks, etc.).
- Prune, protect and support existing native plants against trampling.

TEAM MANAGEMENT

- All schedules to be provided to the City seven (7) days prior to the start of each project.
- Organize online sign-ups for restoration crew members with provided waivers and strict adherence to COVID guidelines.
- Manage and train crew members on work tasks, instruct proper use of basic tools, inform of common safety practices and supervise to ensure quality of work.
- Provide project ideas, instruction, opportunities and organizational support to community

members (Eagle Scouts, students pursuing careers in Environmental Sciences, clubs, etc.).

FUNDRAISING/COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- Apply for additional grants and conduct fundraisers to help improve the park amenities and resources (i.e. grants to restore upper/lower ponds, etc.).
- SBPC shall be responsible for coordinating in advance and managing, with City Arborist's consent, scheduling and overseeing all project volunteers.

The City's duties outlined in the MOU include:

- Review and respond to proposed schedules, proposed project work and plant purchases in a timely manner.
- Provide scheduled access to Wilderness Park.
- Conduct yearly review of SBPC plans prior to budget preparation.

It should be noted that this MOU between the City and SBPC is strictly for the work related to Wilderness Park and not for any future work relating to community gardens.

COORDINATION

The Community Services Department coordinated this report with Public Works. The City Attorney's Office has approved the MOU as to form.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact to the City for the implementation of the SBPC project since funding has been previously approved as part of the Capital Improvement Program.

APPROVED BY:

Joe Hoefgen, City Manager

ATTACHMENTS

MOU - City of Redondo Beach and South Bay Parkland Conservancy

G/L Report and Invoice History - South Bay Parkland Conservancy

Invoice #10 - dated March 18, 2021

Budget Response Report #8 (June 5, 2018)

Budget Response Report #15 (June 4, 2019)

CC Minutes - June 19, 2018 (pg. 25)

CC Minutes - June 4, 2019 (pg. 16)

SBPC Website Information - Friends of Hopkins Wilderness Park