

City of Placerville
MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 17, 2010
TO: City Council
FROM: Steve Youel, Director of Community Services
SUBJECT: **RESOLUTION APPROVING GRANT APPLICATION**

RECOMMENDATION

Authorize a Resolution approving the application for grant funds through the California State, Nature Education Facilities Program for the restoration of the Meagher House at Gold Bug Park.

BACKGROUND

At the City Council meeting of April 27, 2010, City Council authorized staff to prepare a grant application through the California State, Nature Education Facilities Program (see attached memorandum). The attached resolution from the City Council is required as part of the application process.

The Nature Education Facilities Program is intended to assist communities in funding the development of facilities that educate visitors and inspire environmental stewardship through increased public understanding and knowledge of California's resources.

A considerable amount of time and effort has been spent defining the scope of the project prior to submitting an application to the State. The following is a summary intended to further define the main aspects of the project:

Indoor Use

Once the Meagher House is converted into a Nature Center, it will be utilized as a classroom and office space for the Park Manager. Accommodations will include a bathroom, small kitchen, exhibits, interpretive panels, tables, chairs and a theater system.

Outdoor Use (Porch)

The exterior walls of the house will be affixed with interpretive panels available for viewing by the general public when the park is open.

Outdoor Use (Trail System)

The existing trail system will be incorporated into the landscape to provide for interpretive panels, outdoor exhibits, picnic tables, open air pavilion, native plant garden and a Kiosk at the park entrance.

Outdoor Use (Parking)

Parking space will be added to provide for handicapped access and visitor parking for the nature center. This will be accomplished without compromising the bus turnaround.

Gift Shop Improvements

Park Managers office will be relocated from the existing Gift Shop to the Nature Center to create additional square footage at the Gift Shop for retail sales, additional inventory and space for volunteers.

Nature Center Staffing Alternative

Under normal circumstances, the porch will be accessible to the general public during park visiting hours. The office will be open when the Park Manager is present. The classroom will be open to the public for unsupervised rental. Educational programs and special events conducted by the City will be supervised by a combination of full-time, part-time and volunteer staff.

Hours of Operation

The nature center shall be available for public use daily 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM or by special permit. Although hours of operation could be extended in the future, it is not practical at this time due to a lack of supervision, outdoor lighting and the increased potential for vandalism and overnight camping.

Successful applicants will be notified by January 2011. The grant program is competitive and has approximately \$93 million available for viable projects throughout the State of California. Project grant amounts can be submitted for a minimum of \$25,000 and a maximum of \$7,000,000. To enable funding of a broad variety of sizes and types of projects, applications will be sorted into five funding tiers, based on the grant amount requested. The proposed project will fall within tier three, grant requests in the amount of \$500,001 to \$1,000,000. Approximately \$10,000,000 will be dispersed statewide from tier three. There is no local match requirement associated with this program. The grant application due date is July 1, 2010.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

As previously stated, the Nature Education Facilities Program does not require a financial contribution from the City. However, once the project is complete the City will be committed to the ongoing maintenance and operation of the nature center and improved trail system. City staff is confident this can be accomplished without additional full-time staff. Costs associated with increased utilities and ongoing maintenance will be partially offset by classroom rentals, special events, expansion of the group tour program, increased participation in self guided tours and improved profitability at the gift shop.

The Gold Bug Park Development Committee is financially committed to the success of this project. The completion of a sustainable nature center is their top priority. This committee

is composed entirely of volunteers, who have been instrumental in the development of the park for the past 30 years. The committee has raised over \$1,000,000 on behalf of capital improvement projects throughout the park. Given the past and present accomplishments of the committee, staff is confident that this project will not create a significant financial burden on the City within the immediate future.

Attachments – Grant Application Request Memorandum

Steve Youel
Director of Community Services

Approved for Submittal to City Council:

Reviewed for Fiscal Analysis:

John Driscoll, City Manager/Attorney

Dave Warren, Director of Finance