
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TITLE: Use of \$250,000 Westwood Hills Nature Center Donation & Master Plan

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Discuss the use of the \$250,000 donation to Westwood Hills Nature Center and Master Plan.

POLICY CONSIDERATION: Does the City Council agree with staff recommendations on how to spend the \$250,000 or have recommendations on how to spend the money that was donated to the Nature Center? Is the City Council in agreement with starting a Master Plan process for Westwood Hills Nature Center?

SUMMARY: On November 17, 2014 City Council accepted a donation from Kathleen Hugget who graciously donated one sixth of the remainder of her Trust to Westwood Hills Nature Center. The one sixth interest amounts to \$245,331.67 as of September 18, 2014 plus accrued interest from that date. As stated in the trust, this donation is given with the restriction that it be used for the care and maintenance of Westwood Hills Nature Center. This donation could be for items such as, but not limited to, enhancing the live animal/raptor outreach program, installing a water garden below overlook deck, installing a history exhibit with interpretive panels and/or investing in a new interpretive center by naming a classroom after the donator.

Also, a master plan of Westwood Hills Nature Center is to be conducted this year as stated in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). There is \$50,000 budgeted in the CIP to conduct the master plan. The interpretive center is in need of repair and it is imperative that a master plan be conducted. The master plan will include topics such as a facility study and program evaluation including, but not limited to, schematic design and location of the interpretive center, assessment of classrooms with educational components, parking lot needs, etc. along with current and future program assessment needs. The master plan process will definitely involve stakeholder input through a public process.

FINANCIAL OR BUDGET CONSIDERATION: The \$250,000 donation will be used for the care and maintenance at Westwood Hills Nature Center. The master plan is placed in the Capital Improvement Plan for \$50,000.

VISION CONSIDERATION: St. Louis Park is committed to being a leader in environmental stewardship. We will increase environmental consciousness and responsibility in all areas of city business.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS: None

Prepared by: Jason West, Recreation Superintendent
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