

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TITLE: Approve Contract with Architect for Westwood Hills Nature Center Project

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Motion to approve an agreement with the architectural firm of Hammel, Green and Abrahamson, Inc. (HGA) for the design of the Westwood Hills Nature Center's Interpretive Center Building and surrounding area.

POLICY CONSIDERATION: Is the City Council comfortable entering an agreement with HGA for architectural services at Westwood Hills Nature Center?

SUMMARY: Staff solicited proposals from architectural firms to design the Westwood Hills Nature Center's Interpretive Center Building and surrounding areas. Through a thorough vetting and interviewing process, staff recommends HGA as the selected architect firm. HGA has eight branches located throughout the country and has been headquartered in the Twin Cities since 1953. On June 7, staff recommended HGA to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission because of their vast experience with unique architectural design as well as specific expertise in animal exhibit design and visitor experience. The PRAC made the following recommendation: *Commissioner Cantor made a motion to recommend the City Council enter into a contract with HGA to provide architectural services for the Westwood Hills Nature Center project. Commissioner Foulkes seconded the motion. The motion passed on a vote of 6 – 0.* Staff and HGA presented the proposal at the City Council Study Session on June 12.

FINANCIAL OR BUDGET CONSIDERATION: The city would enter into a \$1.3 million contract with HGA for architectural services which include schematic design, design development, construction documents and continual work on the project. The City's CIP has funding in 2017 to begin preliminary design for the construction of a new Nature Center building, and additional funding in 2018 for design. The current CIP estimates an \$11 million project in 2019.

NEXT STEPS: Staff will provide the City Council an update at the completion of each step below to check in and affirm direction to move to the next step:

1. 2017 & 2018: Public input, schematic and design development
2. Early October 2018: Construction Documents
3. 2019 – 2020: Construction with completion in 2020.

VISION CONSIDERATION: St. Louis Park is committed to being a connected and engaged community. St. Louis Park is committed to being a leader in environmental stewardship.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS: None.

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Brian Hoffman, Inspections Director

Approved by: