



CITY OF SAINT PAUL
Christopher B. Coleman, Mayor



Neighborhood STAR Program
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MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Coleman
Council President Stark
Members of the City Council

FROM: Elizabeth Wefel, Chair *Eliz*
Neighborhood STAR Board

DATE: November 14, 2016

SUBJECT: 2016 NEIGHBORHOOD STAR YEAR-ROUND PROGRAM

Background

On November 9, 2016, the Neighborhood STAR Board reviewed three (3) proposals requesting grant funding through the Neighborhood STAR Year-Round Program. First was a proposal from the China Friendship Garden requesting \$16,700 to install a Chinese pavilion and sculpture in Phalen Park. Matching funds of \$492,000 were promised to this initiative. Next was a \$5,000 proposal from the Maria Flats Condo Association for brick and mortar work on their building located at 376 Maria. Matching funds equaling \$500.00 were pledged to this proposal. Finally, a \$2,960 request from District 10 Community Council to move a stone bench sculpture from McMurray Fields to a triangle watershed garden at Horton, Churchill and Van Slyke near Lake Como. No matching dollars were pledged to this initiative.

Presentations

Linda Mealey-Lohmann, Executive Director of the China Friendship Garden, Bill Zajicek, Society Secretary and Alice Messer, Saint Paul Parks and Recreation, presented their proposal for phase one of planned improvements to Phalen Park. Ms. Mealey-Lohmann provided the history of this sister-city project and their funding request to install foundations for the two gifts coming from China. Ms. Messer added that the improvements will include the gift of a Chinese pavilion replica with pathways, a bridge, Hmong Cultural Plaza and landscaping to be added in three phases over five years. Phase 1, the pavilion and sculpture, are due to arrive from China in spring, 2017.

Next, Will Anderson, presented his proposal for a \$5,000 grant to repair the building's brick and mortar exterior damaged by an old furnace exhaust. Mr. Anderson explained the challenges they have had to date with city inspectors on other improvements to this mixed use building. This work is being mandated by the city in order to receive a certificate of occupancy. The city mandated deadline to make these improvements is June, 2017.

Finally, Michael Kuchta, Executive Director of the District 10 Community Council presented their proposal to utilize \$2,960 in grant funds to move a paisley designed, limestone bench from McMurray Fields to a new storm water run-off garden at the intersection of Churchill, Van Slyke and Horton Streets. This summer more than 50 neighborhood volunteers installed trees, shrubs and plants in the garden to create a neighborhood gathering place. The bench would benefit both garden visitors and public transit users waiting at the adjacent bus stop.

Discussion

STAR Board Member’s discussed their general support for the China Friendship Garden request, voiced concerns regarding the Maria Flats Condominium Association being an ineligible applicant with little matching dollars and questioned the urgency to move the bench sculpture as it would remain at McMurray Fields until city funds or donations could be raised,

Recommendations

The Neighborhood STAR Board was unable to recommend the Stone Bench Sculpture project due to the lack of matching dollars as required by City Council-approved Neighborhood STAR Guidelines. In addition, the Maria Flats Condo Association proposal could not be recommended due to Neighborhood STAR Guidelines specifying condominium associations are an ineligible applicant and the lack of a \$1 for \$1 match.

Rating

The Neighborhood STAR Board rated the Neighborhood STAR Year-Round Program proposals on their own merit on a scale from 1 (low) to 5 (high) with the following results:

<u>Rating</u>	<u>Project</u>	<u>Ward</u>	<u>Grant</u>	<u>Loan</u>
4.2	China Friendship Garden	1 & CW	\$16,700	\$0
2.8	Stone Bench Sculpture	5	\$ 2,960	\$0
2.6	Maria Flats	7	\$ 5,000	\$0

Thank you for your continued support and assistance. If you have questions, or if staff can provide you with additional information, please contact:

Michele Swanson, x66574

Beth Ulrich, x66689

CC: Linda Mealey-Lohmann
Alice Messer
Will Anderson
Michael Kuchta

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