THE CITY OF ASHEVILLE

STAFF REPORT

Council Meeting Date: August 24, 2021

Subject: Approval of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2022- 24 Memorandum of Understanding with the Friends of the WNC Nature Center

Staff Resource(s): Peggy Rowe, Interim Parks and Recreation Director
Chris Gentile, Director, WNC Nature Center

Action Requested: Adoption of a three-year memorandum of understanding between the City and the Friends of the WNC Nature Center and adopt a budget amendment in the amount of $100,000 in the General Capital Projects Fund to accept and budget a one-time donation from the Friends of the WNC Nature Center.

Background:

- For the past few decades, the Friends of the WNC Nature Center, a 501c3 not-for-profit fundraising organization, has supported the work of the WNC Nature Center through cash donations, marketing and promotional activities, special events and membership.
- Since the Center embarked on its current Master Plan in 2010, the Friends have committed over $3 million in capital funding. These dollars have been used in the construction of the upgraded red wolf exhibit/arachnid adventure playground, the new front entrance and welcome plaza and the addition of the red panda exhibit to name only a few.
- The Friends will make a $100,000 restricted cash donation to be used by the Nature Center for capital repairs/improvements and upgrades in FY 21/22 and have pledged to commit at least $100,000 per year for the next two Fiscal Years.
- Additionally, a portion of the Friends' restricted cash donation each year will be used to foster Diversity Equity and Inclusion at the Nature Center through initiatives and programs that strengthen existing partnerships between the Nature Center and local programs/organizations that currently reach audiences from marginalized communities.
- The Center will focus on building relationships to enhance existing networks of people, programs, and partnerships in Western North Carolina working to advance equity and inclusion, especially as it relates to outdoor education and the environment, across the Western NC region and particularly within Asheville's communities.

Council Goal(s):

- Fostering an equitable and diverse community

Pro(s):

- Continue the strong relationship between the City of Asheville's Western North Carolina Nature Center and the Friends of the WNC Nature Center.
- $100,000 cash contribution from the Friends of the WNC Nature Center to the City of Asheville to be restricted for use at the WNC Nature Center to improve and enhance facilities as well as expand the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Programming at the Center in FY 21/22

Con(s):

- None.

Fiscal Impact:

- $100,000 in funds for use at the Nature Center to improve and update facilities and expand Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion programming.

- These funds will be accounted for in the City's General Capital Projects Fund. Under the previous MOU, revenue from the Friends of the WNC Nature Center went to support General Fund operations at the Nature Center.

Suggested Motion:

- Motion for a resolution authorizing the City Manager to enter into an agreement with the Friends of the WNC Nature Center; and the associated budget amendment in the City's General Capital Projects Fund in the amount of $100,000 utilizing the Friends of the WNC Nature Center funds.

Attachment(s):

- Resolution
- Budget Amendment

RESOLUTION NO. 21-____

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO ENTERING INTO A THREE YEAR MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH THE FRIENDS OF THE WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA NATURE AND ADDITIONALLY TO ACCEPT A DONATION THIS YEAR FROM THE FRIENDS

WHEREAS, the City of Asheville has authority pursuant to N.C.G.S. 160A- 20.1, the City of Asheville may enter in agreements with not for profit entities to carry out any public purpose the City is authorized to engage in; and

WHEREAS, the Friends of the Western North Carolina Nature Center ("Friends") is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation with a purpose to support the WNC Nature Center with resources to provide and enriching and educational experience for Nature Center visitors; and

WHEREAS, The Friends of the WNC Nature Center has had a 40 year partnership with the WNC Nature Center; and

WHEREAS, The Friends of the WNC Nature Center has raised over $3 million in capital for enhancements to the Nature Center since 2015 and wished to continue this support; and

WHEREAS, the City and Friends have entered into Memorandums of Understanding ("MOUs") since 2005 regarding fundraising efforts by the Friends and the respective responsibilities of the parties; and

WHEREAS, the last MOU with the Friends ended in 2019 and the City and Friends now wish to enter into a new three year MOU in which the Friends agrees to commit at least $100,000 annually for use by the Nature Center upon mutually agreeable terms; and

WHEREAS, the Friends would additionally at this time like to donate, and the City would like to accept, $100,000 to be placed in an account for use by the Nature Center to make site repairs and improvements in FY 21/22;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ASHEVILLE THAT:

The City Manager is hereby authorized to enter into a three year Memorandum of Understanding with the Friends of the Western North Carolina Nature Center, to accept a donation in the amount of $100,000 from the Friends for the purposes stated above, and to execute any and all documents necessary to give effect to this resolution.

Read, approved and adopted this the 24th day of August, 2021.

_____ _____

City Clerk Mayor

Approved as to form:

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City Attorney

ORDINANCE NO. _____

BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENT

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ASHEVILLE

That the City of Asheville Fiscal Year 2021-22 Budget Ordinance be amended to add an appropriation of $100,000 to the General Capital Projects Fund as follows:

GENERAL CAPITAL PROJECTS FUND

Revenues:

Friends of the Nature Center Donation	$100,000
Total Revenues	$100,000

Appropriations:

Maintenance and Repairs	$100,000
Total Appropriations	$100,000

That this ordinance shall be in full force and effect upon the date of final passage.

Read, approved, and adopted this the 24th day of August 2021.

_____ _____

City Clerk Mayor

Approved as to form:

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City Attorney