

AGENDA REPORT

DATE November 1, 2005

ITEM: Boys & Girls Club- Letter of Support for Lease of Piece of Chowen Springs Park for new Center

INITIATED BY: Boys & Girls Club of North Central Montana

ACTION REQUESTED: Approve Letter of Support

PRESENTED BY: Cheryl Patton, Assistant City Manager

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RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends the City Commission approve the following motion:

MOTION: I move the City Commission approve the attached letter of support for the Boys & Girls Club's effort to construct a new Center on the northeastern corner of Chowen Springs Park and authorize the Mayor to sign the letter.

SYNOPSIS: The Boys and Girls Club is beginning a fund raising campaign to raise funds necessary to construct a new Center estimated to cost \$7 million. They have received a sizeable pledge of \$500,000 toward the project, another pledge of \$50,000 and currently have \$200,000 in the bank.

The Club desires that the City partner with the Club toward this Center by agreeing to lease a piece of Chowen Springs Park as the proposed location of the new Center. The land lease would be the City's contribution to the project.

Since the fundraising could take several years, staff does not recommend that the City Commission commit the land at the present time. However, staff recommends that the City Commission approve a letter of support for the project that can be used for fundraising which demonstrates the current Commission's support for the concept of a Center to be constructed on park land at the northeastern corner of Chowen Springs Park.

Staff further recommends that the City Commission commit its support for the Center for three years in order to allow the Club an appropriate time to secure funding. The Park Board and the Housing Authority Board of Commissioners have both approved the project concept subject to final design and completion of fundraising.

The Housing Authority would also be leasing land to the Club for the project. The Housing Authority expects that a day care facility will be constructed with the Center. The daycare services would be convenient to the public housing tenants.

Attachment: Letter of Support

Cc: JoAnn Maxwell, Boys & Girls Club
Great Falls Housing Authority Board of Commissioners
Park and Recreation Board
Patty Gumenberg, Park and Recreation Interim Director

November 1, 2005

Gary Wilson, President
Board of Directors
Boys & Girls Clubs of North Central Montana
PO Box 652
Great Falls, MT 59403

RE: Letter of Support

Dear Mr. Wilson:

The Great Falls City Commission is very supportive of the efforts of the Boys & Girls Clubs of North Central Montana to build a new Center. The location you have selected, at the northeast corner of Chowen Springs Park (see conceptual site plan enclosed), appears acceptable and would be supported by the current City Commission based on our understanding that the Park Board and the Housing Authority Board are also supportive. Our support is conditional, pending final plans and the actual ability of the Club to raise the funding necessary to complete the construction. Since the City Commission is not capable of committing future City Commission's to future actions, we can only demonstrate our support for your project if you are ready to begin construction within the next 3 years.

The support the City Commission expects to provide the Boys and Girls Club is a lease of the piece of city-owned park land necessary for the new center's building at \$1.00 for up to 99 years. It is envisioned that the lease could be in effect, as long as the center was properly maintained and continued to be used as a Boys and Girls Club with fees affordable to the low income population of our city. The land would remain in the City's ownership.

Goal 6 of the current City of Great Falls' goals states that "*we will form partnerships with other governments and organizations to make better use of public resources in providing services*". The City Commission supports the mission of the Boys & Girls Clubs to enable the youth of Great Falls to become productive, responsible and caring citizens.

The Club is a Safe Haven for the Weed and Seed strategy, and we agree that this partnership is important to our community.

We understand that the Club will be designing a timeline for your fundraising and construction which will include benchmarks. We would request that your organization keep the Commission informed of your progress, at least on a yearly basis.

The City Commission looks forward to the success of the Boys and Girls Club in constructing a new Center in Great Falls. The Center will be an important part of the future of this community. The chosen location is excellent due to its proximity to our largest public housing neighborhood. Best wishes as you begin this important undertaking.

Sincerely,

Randy Gray, Mayor