



MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor and City Councilors

From: Rich Olson, City Manager
Bobbi White, Parks and Recreation Director

Date: July 8, 2015

Re: Consideration – Authorization to Submit a “Play Together Construction Grant for Accessible Playgrounds” for Pasquotank County

BACKGROUND:

On July 1, 2010, the City and County governing bodies combined their respective recreation departments to form the Elizabeth City/Pasquotank County Parks and Recreation Department. The County pays 55% of the department’s operating budget and the City oversees the operations of the department. For several years, the Parks and Recreation Department has wanted to replace the playground equipment at Fun Junktion Park due to its age, deterioration and safety concerns. Staff has also found it difficult to find replacement parts for repairs.

ANALYSIS:

In May 2015, East Carolina Behavioral Health announced to City and County Recreation Departments in Beaufort, Bertie, Camden, Craven, Chowan, Currituck, Dare, Gates, Hertford, Hyde, Jones, Martin, Northampton, Pamlico, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Pitt, Tyrrell, and Washington counties an opportunity to apply for their Play Together Construction Grant for Accessible Playgrounds. Funding will be applied to the construction of accessible playgrounds and playground equipment for up to eight parks of various sizes depending on the population. Staff would like to pursue this grant opportunity to replace the playground equipment at Fun Junktion to make it an all-inclusive play area. Accessible playgrounds are fully functional and accessible to individuals with special needs and individuals in wheelchairs. At this time, the Elizabeth City/Pasquotank School System has almost 1000 special needs children in their system. This will be a wonderful facility to offer these children an opportunity to play along with their friends. This grant does not require any matching funds and staff believes we have a good chance of being funded. The Parks and Recreation Department will act as the applying agency for Pasquotank County and administer the grant funds if selected. Staff will present the grant information

City Manager’s Office

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to the County during their July 13, 2015 meeting to request permission to apply for the ECBH grant on the County's behalf.

FINANCIAL:

There will be no direct expense for the City of Elizabeth City associated with this grant request other than staff time to apply for the grant and administration of the grant, if funded.

The Finance Committee discussed this matter during their meeting of July 8, 2015. Upon motion by Councilman Donnelly, seconded by Mayor Peel, the committee unanimously recommended approval by the City Council.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

By motion, authorize the Elizabeth City/Pasquotank County Parks and Recreation Department staff to submit a grant application to East Carolina Behavioral Health for a Play Together Construction Grant for Accessible Playgrounds on behalf of Pasquotank County for the construction of a fully accessible playground to be constructed at Fun Junktion Park.

BW/vdw