

AGENDA



Wednesday, June 18, 2008

**Parks and Recreation
RECOMMENDATION FOR COUNCIL ACTION**

Item No. 35

Subject: Authorize negotiation and execution of an addendum to the existing agreement with the Friends of the O. Henry Museum Inc., a Texas non-profit organization, for the City to reimburse costs in an amount not to exceed \$523,675 for improvements and renovations to the Suzanna Dickinson House; and authorizing the City Manager to establish best value selection criteria for contract awards using the best value competitive bidding process.

Amount and Source of Funding: Funding in the amount of \$523,675 is included in the Parks and Recreation Department amended Fiscal Year 2007 – 2008 Capital Budget.

Fiscal Note: A fiscal note is attached

For More Information: Ricardo Soliz, Division Manager 974-6717

Prior Council Action: On March 8, 2007, City Council amended the Fiscal Year 2006 - 2007 Parks and Recreation Department Capital Budget to increase appropriation by \$500,000 for the Susanna Dickinson House project.

On November 7, 2006 Austin voters approved Proposition 3 authorizing \$84.7 million of General Obligation Bonds to fund Capital Improvement Projects. Included in Proposition 3 was \$500,000 for the restoration of the Susanna Dickinson House to serve as a future museum site honoring Susanna Dickinson and funding for facility renovations.

The Parks and Recreation Department (PARD) is requesting approval of an Addendum to the previous Parkland Improvement Agreement. This will allow PARD to provide reimbursement funding to the Friends of the O. Henry Museum Inc. (Friends) to complete the renovation. The Friends have expanded their mission to include the Susanna Dickinson House, which is adjacent to the O. Henry Museum. They have hired and paid for a consultant to prepare a renovation plan for the house and a second, smaller building which served as the kitchen. In the past two years, the Friends have completed renovations on roofs and chimneys on both buildings using grants and funds raised through donations. Completed work also includes a covered walkway connection between the house and the kitchen. This walkway will also serve as an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) entry into the future museum.

The renovations include remodeling the interior and exterior of the main building which will include exhibit spaces, an office, and a conference room. The Friends of the O. Henry Museum Inc. will solicit, manage, and pay for the capital improvements in accordance with City policy and procedures. This agreement provides for the City to reimburse the Friends of the O. Henry for an amount not to exceed \$523,675.

The mission of the Susanna Dickinson Museum is to preserve the home and legacy of Alamo survivor Susanna Dickinson and to celebrate Texas' historical heritage by providing programs and educational resources to the citizens of Austin and visitors to Brush Square.

Located on Brush Square and next to the O. Henry Museum at 409 East 5th Street, the buildings owned by Joseph and Susanna Dickinson Hannig were deeded to the City of Austin in October 2003. An example of Austin's earliest architecture, it was built by Austin businessman and City of Austin Alderman Joseph Hannig in 1869. Joseph Hannig built this stone house for his wife, Susanna Dickinson, who

survived the battle of the Alamo. Susanna Dickinson was later known as the “Messenger of the Alamo” for her valorous deed in warning General Sam Houston that the Alamo had fallen.

Once the house is restored, it will operate as a museum of the Parks and Recreation Department. Educational programs, tours, and special events relating to Texas Revolutionary War history will be offered to the public, as a facility of the Austin Parks and Recreation Department.