



Legislation Text

File #: 2015-0176, **Version:** 4

Title/Name/Summary

Orland Park Nature Center

History

Project: Orland Park Nature Center final design and engineering plans.

Purpose: The Village proposes to develop and operate an Orland Park Nature Center facility on a 3.5 acre parcel on LaGrange Road just north of the Metra line.

Requested Actions: Consultant approval for the Nature Center final site design and engineering plans.

Project Attributes:

Address: 13901 LaGrange Road

Size: 3.5 acres (less IDOT taking)

Comprehensive Plan Planning District: Sandburg District

Comprehensive Land Designation: Open Space

Existing Zoning: BIZ Business District

Proposed Zoning: No change at this time

Surrounding Zoning & Land Use: North: E-1 undeveloped land; South: Open lands District; Orland Crossing park land (across RR tracks); East: Open lands District; Orland Crossing park land (across RR tracks); West: Forest Preserve District of Cook County - McGinnis Slough

Discussion

In April 2012, the Village purchased the former Pebble Creek Nursery property with funds from the Village's Open Lands Program, with the vision to restore and preserve the land, and to convert the existing building and property to a nature center. Since that time, the property has been cleaned up by Village's Parks personnel, and a conceptual master plan has been completed and approved by the Village Board. The next step is to select a consultant to do the final site engineering and design plans, which also includes assistance in securing outside permits, contractor selection and construction observation.

On September 15, 2015, an RFP was issued seeking final site design and engineering plans. The final plans will be based on the Village Board approved master plan, with the exception of building improvements, detailed exhibits, and signage, which will be addressed at a later time. Fifteen firms submitted proposals. The proposals were all reviewed and analyzed by staff, who narrowed the selection down to four finalists to be interviewed. A Village interview team was formed that included representatives from the Open Lands Commission, Village Board, and Development Services staff.

A matrix spread sheet was used to evaluate the proposals based on the RFP selection criteria that included: quality of proposal and completeness (20%); successful experience on other projects (20%); organizational capacity (15%); experience of firms and individuals (15%); references (15%); and price proposal (15%). The four finalist were brought in for interviews. All offered different

strengths, however the matrix scoring and general consensus of the interviewers was that Upland Design Ltd, teamed with Environmental Resource Associates, was the best fit for the project. The firms and the individuals to be assigned the project exhibited a great depth of park and nature center experience that could contribute significantly to the successful execution of the project. Although nature center elements are similar to those found in general park projects, a nature center is a unique animal due special considerations. Upland seemed to know nature centers, how they operate, and what is needed to make them successful. They were involved in the design of Lake Katherine Nature Center (Palos Heights) and Iron Oaks Nature Center (Olympia), among others. Additionally, based on the interview that included the key team members: Upland (Landscape Architects), and ERA Engineering (Civil Engineer and Ecologist), the team showed a keen insight into what would work for our project as well as identifying potential issues. The team had already visited the site and offered good practical, down to earth advice on potential project issues. The team of landscape architects, engineers and ecologists will help assure a properly engineered site but with a close eye aesthetics and quality of the public space and nature center experience.

Upland's price proposal was the second lowest of the fifteen RFP responses. The lowest price proposal was significantly less, consisting mostly of volunteer services. However, after careful and thoughtful evaluation by Village staff and the Open Lands Commission, and after the evaluations of the four finalist firms based on the weighting of selection factors listed in the issued RFP, the interview team, and Open Lands Commission agreed that the Orland Park Nature Center project would be greatly enhanced by the use of a consultant that specializes in parks and nature center projects.

The four Upland reference checks echoed the interview team's impressions and were all extremely positive. The firm was described as thorough, knowledgeable, cooperative, and flexible, very in tune with green projects and nature centers, and good listeners with creative solutions to problems. They adhere responsibly to budget and schedule. They often go above and beyond, and will step in to solve problems. They work well with contractors. One reference also had worked extensively with the sub consultant ERA and was very happy with their performance and results.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The final plans will be financed with \$50,000 that was included in the 2016 Village budget for nature center engineering, with the balance of \$12,761 paid for through Open Land funds, for a total cost of \$62,761. Upland has agreed to include the bird watching station in the final plans, which was not included in the originally issued RFP. (The tentative plan is to re-use Centennial Park Plans for the structure.)

OPEN LANDS COMMISSION DISCUSSION

On January 5, 2016, the Open Lands Commission considered the selection of a consultant to complete the plans. There was considerable discussion due to the large gap between the lowest price proposal and the recommended firm. However, the consensus of the group was that with all factors considered Upland Design was the best choice for the project.

OPEN LANDS COMMISSION MOTION

On January 5, 2016, the Open Lands Commission voted 6-0 to approve the hiring of Upland Design for the final design and engineering of the Orland Park Nature Center project.

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE MOTION

On January 18, 2016, the Development Services Committee voted 3-0 to recommend the hiring of Upland Design for the final design and engineering of the Orland Park Nature Center project.

This case is now before the Board of Trustees for final approval.

Recommended Action/Motion

I move to approve the hiring of Upland Design Ltd. as lead consultant to produce final site design and engineering plans for the Orland Park Nature Center site, per the Upland proposal submitted October 15, 2015, and contingent on final contract negotiations.