



AGENDA REPORT


TO: Jestin D. Johnson
City Administrator

FROM: Dana Riley
Interim Director, OPRYD

SUBJECT: Long Term License Agreement and
State Grant for Peralta Hacienda
Activities

DATE: June 12, 2023

City Administrator Approval


Jestin Johnson (Jun 29, 2023 22:12 PDT)

Date: Jun 29, 2023

RECOMMENDATION

Staff Recommends That The City Council Adopt The Following Pieces Of Legislation:

A Resolution Authorizing The City Administrator To (1) Apply For, Accept And Appropriate Grant Funds From The State Of California Department Of Parks And Recreation Habitat Conservation Fund Program In The Amount Of \$200,000 For Youth Wildlife Activities; And (2) Enter Into A Grant Agreement With Friends of Peralta Hacienda Historical Park In The Amount Of \$200,000 For Use Of The Grant Funds To Provide Youth Wildlife Activities For The Four Year Grant Term; And

An Ordinance (1) Authorizing The City Administrator To Negotiate And Execute A License Agreement With The Friends Of Peralta Hacienda Historical Park (Friends) To Provide Programming At The Peralta House, Adjacent Community Family Gardens, Storage Building, And Center For History And Community, For A 5-Year Term With Two 5- Year Options At A Rate of One Dollar (\$1.00) Per Year; (2) Making Findings That The License For Below Market Rate Is In The Best Interest Of The City; And (3) Making Appropriate California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Findings.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Adoption of the proposed resolution and ordinance will authorize the City Administrator to apply for State grant funds, award the grant funds to Friends of Peralta Hacienda Historical Park ("Friends") for youth wildlife activities, and execute a new 5-year license agreement with Friends who have provided conscientious stewardship and management of the City-owned Peralta Hacienda Historical Park ("Peralta Hacienda") since 2005. The proposed 15-year cumulative duration of this new 5-year license with two 5-year options will show the City's commitment to and appreciation of the Friends' work, and ensure the Friends meet eligibility requirements for a State of California Habitat Conservation Fund (HCF) grant in the amount of \$200,000. Should the City apply for and receive grant monies from the HCF, the City would enter into a grant agreement with the Friends to continue and to expand the youth-centered community programming that the Friends have successfully offered for the past eight years.

BACKGROUND / LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

The Oakland-based Friends nonprofit organization formed in the mid-1970s to preserve, restore, interpret, and maintain the 1870 Antonio Peralta House (“Peralta House”) and park, site of the headquarters of Rancho San Antonio, for the benefit of the Oakland community. The organization began when neighbors joined together to preserve the headquarters of the Peralta Land Grant and to create more open space in Fruitvale, the district with the least open space in the City. National Register Status was obtained for Peralta House, and State Landmark Status for the site in 1977. Friends lobbied successfully for over \$6M throughout a 20-year period to establish the property, parcel by parcel, from state, federal, local, and private sources, incorporating as a 501(c)3 in 1985. Since 2001, Friends have offered a wide range of public programs, including school-day, after-school, summer and weekend events, tours, classes and celebrations, including house and site tours serving 45,000 visitors annually, and school field trips, serving 2,500 students annually.

Friends spearheaded a planning process for the site, receiving \$43,000 from the National Endowment for the Humanities to create the landscape plan and a plan for historical interpretation of the site, leveraging \$215,000 additional funds from the City of Oakland (the “City”). The Oakland City Council unanimously approved the landscape plan, buildings and exhibits in 2002. In 2005, Friends entered into a five-year license agreement with the City that was extended for two subsequent five-year terms. Since that date, the City and the Friends have continuously operated and maintained Peralta House, the adjacent garden area, storage building, and the Center for History and Community, which consists of two buildings—a Community Center and a freestanding restroom/mechanical room (collectively, “the Property”). The City provides general site maintenance, and the Friends provide all educational programming, maintain the exhibits, interior of the house museum, and the outdoor exhibit alcoves.

The Friends have received ongoing support from the Oakland City Council through approval of grants to implement the improvements including East Bay Regional Park Measure WW to preserve open space for recreation and wildlife habitat, State Proposition 40 for habitat, restoration and development of wildlife-related public recreational opportunities; various Oakland park bond measures and state proposition funds such as a grant from the California Department of Parks and Recreation Murray Hayden Urban Parks and Youth Service Program that funded the construction of Friends' multipurpose Center for History and Community.

The four capital projects listed below were completed through funding from the State of California within the grant performance periods, and have met all post-award requirements:

- 1) Historical Exhibits in the Peralta House Museum for History and Community: \$100,000 from the CA Heritage Fund grant program, completed May 2009.
- 2) Center for History and Community and Adobe Wall Historic Landscape: \$850,000 from the Murray Hayden Fund, capital project completed July 2010.
- 3) Creek Area Improvements: \$792,000 from the Recreational Trails grants program, capital project completed June 2013.
- 4) Interpretive pavilion on the footprint of the original adobe, and picnic area with an adobe oven and community banquet table. \$250,000 by the California Museum Grant Program, capital project completed July 2020.

In 2014, and then again in 2018, Oakland City Council approved the application of the Friends for a four-year grant from the California Habitat Conservation Fund for Wildlife Area Activities, which established the program that will be renewed and expanded through the proposed resolution. The Friends have offered the program to diverse low-income Oakland youth for the past eight years. A new licensing agreement between the City and Friends would ensure eligibility to apply for the current grant cycle, which in turn would allow for continuation and expansion of this successful program for Wildlife Area Activities.

The organization received \$900,000 over five years from the Institute for Museum and Library Services for public programming and has leveraged many times that in additional funding from local, state and national sources. In 2017, Friends won the National Museum Medal, a high honor, from the Institute of Museum and Library Services for services to refugee and immigrant communities.

ANALYSIS AND POLICY ALTERNATIVES

As a nonprofit dedicated to historical preservation and educational outreach, Friends are uniquely qualified to provide stewardship of the Property, operate its cultural museum and offer activities at Peralta House, its adjacent garden, and related areas. The proposed 15-year cumulative licensing agreement would enable Friends to actively seek grants and donations for activities, exhibits, and public programming that require a longer-term operating agreement. This proposed ordinance therefore advances the Citywide priorities of holistic community safety and cultural security.

Peralta Hacienda is located in Fruitvale, whose diverse low-income community has the least per-capita access to open space and the highest percentage of children and youth of any Oakland district. Friends' program addresses disparities and increases opportunities by offering outstanding Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) education while encouraging respect and understanding between cultures and generations. Hundreds of local families depend on the program to avoid having to leave kids at home in front of the television and instead, diverse low-income Oakland youth participate in an outstanding STEM-education program with their peers and caring adults, in a beautiful outdoor environment, at one of Oakland's most historic sites.

The proposed grant program will provide outdoor science, sports and cultural activities for diverse low-income youth at Peralta Hacienda Historical Park. Staff will implement a wide range of new, enriched activities developed during eight years of HCF funding. During the school year, three Saturday wildlife activity programs run September through May. Program 1: Wildlife activities and field trips for children (ages 5-13). Program 2: middle school field trips to East Bay Regional Parks with EBRP rangers and Friends educators. Program 3: Environmental activities, field trips, and projects for teens (ages 14-21). Interns who have completed Program 3 assist adult educators in the children's program (Program 1). During the summer, 230-250 youth total attend the camp. Two wildlife activity programs run Monday through Friday for two months in June and July. Teens' activities and field trips focus on the watershed, pollinators, and reforestation. Interns who have completed the teen program assist the wildlife activities camp for children. In August, 40-50 teens go on a camping and rafting trip on the American River. In addition, teens from Friends' videography and history program are involved in some of the summer field trips and activities.

In the proposed project, the Citywide priorities of holistic community safety and economic and cultural security are advanced through providing experiential educational and occupational opportunities. Teens work as interns to mentor younger children in natural history at activity stations and nature walks. The interns also complete their own more ambitious creek restoration, bird counts, native plant garden stewardship. These activities inspire them to become "Citizen Scientists" who learn as they teach and are taught in turn by the site's staff and environmental education staff. Participants learn concepts such as "ecosystem," "indigenous," and "habitat," with living examples in the park and quantitative experiments. Youth become aware of the species with whom they share the land, and the ways living things, including humans, affect the environment. Social development, physical exercise and health is emphasized through reading, journaling, sports and healthy snacks and meals.

Many of the youth in the program have progressed from Campers to Junior Coaches to Interns. Program field trips enabled youth to visit the Exploratorium, Oakland Museum of California and camping for the first time at Chabot Regional Park. The children were thrilled to see fox, rabbits and other wildlife in their natural habitat for the first time. Youth gain appreciation of the natural environment and see themselves as being responsible for stewardship of public parks.

If the City does not apply for the funds, the nonprofit would potentially find itself ineligible for grants that could otherwise have bolstered their programs and services, thereby depriving youth of vital environmental educational opportunities in one of Oakland's more financially, racially and environmentally inequitable neighborhoods.

FISCAL IMPACT

The fiscal impacts for the City of Oakland include Parks, Recreation and Youth Development employee hours involved in the grant application, reporting and reimbursement processes and the negotiation, execution and monitoring of the license agreement. The City will reimburse Friends for allowed grant purchases and subsequently submit invoices for City reimbursement to the State of California Department of Parks and Recreation for the Habitat Conservation Welcome to Wildlife Program. The state funds in the amount of \$200,000 will be deposited in California Parks and Recreation Fund 2134, Special Programs Organization 509230, Project TBD, Central Administration Program NB01.

The State of California Department of Parks and Recreation Habitat Conservation Fund Program grant requires a dollar-for-dollar match that will be provided by Friends in the amount of \$200,000 (\$50,000 per year) through a grant award from the Oakland Fund for Children and Youth. Friends also raise funds for the program from the San Francisco Foundation, Youth Outside, the Kaiser Foundation and others. Each year through the duration of the grant, the Friends will provide documentation to the City of available matching funds on or prior to the July 1 fiscal year start date.

PUBLIC OUTREACH / INTEREST

Friends have determined that expanding program activities for youth are a community priority. To determine community wishes, Friends have held meetings of residents twice per year since 1999. Friends received a \$43,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to plan the landscape, exhibits and site interpretive programs. Historians, community members,

Life Enrichment Committee
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officials, designers, institutional partners and environmental specialists came together for two three-day conferences to identify site themes and create the landscape master plan. In 2004 Friends received a \$140,000 program planning and implementation grant from the Institute for Museum and Library Services, with further input meetings from community members and other stakeholders. Friends also gather feedback regularly through questionnaires distributed to visitors, and through meetings and interviews with educators, historians, scientists, interpretive experts and City officials to plan and implement each project. Friends have documented all stakeholder input. Creek and native plant garden stewardship groups have grown up around Peralta Hacienda and have presented their wishes and findings at board and staff meetings and their ideas have been incorporated and facilitated. Coupled with interest in the site's nature areas, the most common plea has been for youth programs.

The value of the program is attested in hundreds of evaluation forms and testimonials. In the nine years since the program has been offered, each year's summer program has been full to capacity at 150 children and 40 teens daily, far beyond the amount expected when HCF funding was first received in 2014.¹ Friends enjoy glowing evaluations from youth and parents about both the summer and weekend programs. With funds granted in 2018, educational offerings expanded to two summer programs, with age-appropriate activities for children 5-13 and youth 14-22, as well as three weekend programs serving both children and teens from September to May. Friends' funding base have increased, with repeat funding from Justice Outside, the San Francisco Foundation, and others, along with the site's annual grant from the City of Oakland, \$140,000 from the Sugar Sweetened Beverages Tax, and six years of funding from the Oakland Fund for Children and Youth, making long-term sustainability a reality. During the last year of the pandemic, a daily Learning Hub for Oakland's neediest children provided two hours daily of wildlife area outdoor science activities through a \$350,00 grant from the Oakland Education Foundation. Friends have offered historical programming at the site since 2001. Working for six years with the Oakland Unified School District, curriculum-based history programs were created through the Teaching American History Grant program. In 2012 the organization gathered input from 80 K-12 teachers in two weeklong Landmarks of American History Workshops.

COORDINATION

The City Attorney, Budget Bureau and Friends of Peralta Hacienda Historical Park were consulted in preparation of this report.

SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES

Economic: The proposed program will generate employment opportunities in Oakland and benefit the local economy. The Peralta Hacienda Historical Park Welcome to Wildlife Program will draw a broad public to Oakland, as well as local youth and families. Visitors will come out of interest in the unique events that present local and natural history, and then linger in Oakland to shop and eat. Visitors will learn about local businesses through the Friends' Business Partnership Program, which promotes Oakland merchants through the website, flyers, bulletin boards and staff announcements. In addition, the Welcome to Wildlife Program provides many youth internships and paid positions for neighbors, empowering the community. Program

¹ This number was only slightly reduced during the pandemic to abide by strict health protocols.

participants also benefit from question and answer sessions with professionals from the East Bay Municipal Utilities District, California State Water Boards, Planet Bee Foundation, and 100K Trees for Humanity, giving youth an idea of future employment opportunities in environmental fields.

Environmental: The Welcome to Wildlife program builds awareness and respect for the East Bay's natural environment. Riparian plantings, water quality experiments, bird counts and other science activities explored in the program will enhance the creek area and archive useful environmental information. Youth groups who tend the native plant garden will improve the appearance and educational capacity of Peralta Hacienda.

The programs build relationships among the youth, who identify as environmental guardians, and reinforce principles of respectful interactions throughout the program. The current curriculum for Wildlife Activities has been refined and expanded by Friends Environmental Educators: Jorge Lara, who has taught for ten years in outdoor schools and trained in the Reggio Emilia Approach; Lyna Lee Estigoy, a former art educator and camping instructor for the Golden Gate National Recreation Area; and Diane Wang, a former classroom teacher who came to Peralta as a Teacher-Ranger through a program of the National Park Service Anza National Trail and later directed the Oakland Unified School District Learning Hub at Peralta Hacienda in 2019-20. The Lawrence Hall of Science BEETLES Program is at the core of the curriculum, seeking to develop observation skills, curiosity, and metaphorical thinking among the children and youth engaging with nature. Collaborators include East Bay Municipal Utilities District, UC Berkeley, California State Water Boards, 100K Trees for Humanity, Planet Bee Foundation and East Bay Regional Parks, as well as teachers and administrators at local schools ASCEND, United for Success, Life Academy, and Latitude High School. The curriculum has also benefited from insights of indigenous leaders such as scholar Beverly R. Ortiz, Ohlone artist Linda Yamane, and Corrina Gould, educator and spokesperson for the East Bay Ohlone people.

In terms of long-term impact, individuals in the community gain increased empathy with the neighborhood ecosystem as a wildlife habitat and learn how to protect local species: participating youth and families will become aware that they are living in an ecosystem with other plants and animals, even within the city. They will connect their own actions to the effects on wildlife and act more responsibly. Programs lead to increased community stewardship and improvement of local parks: program youth participate in regular stewardship of the creek and native plant areas, building a habit of engagement in public open spaces. Youth see how helping to keep parks and waterways clean is good for other living things, which they have learned about and have come to value. Thus, conditions at Peralta Hacienda and other wildlife areas will improve.

Race & Equity: Fruitvale, where Peralta Hacienda is located, is a diverse low-income community with the least per capita open space in Oakland and the highest percentage of children and youth of any district in the city. Fruitvale is the center of Oakland's Latino community, has one of the largest percentages of Native American residents in an urban area, and is home to refugee populations from Southeast Asia and the Middle East. During the COVID pandemic, the neighborhood had the highest infection rate in Alameda County. Many Fruitvale families are recent immigrants who do not know of, or go to, East Bay Regional, State, or National Parks. Language barriers and the uncertainties about their welcome inhibit them from exploring for themselves. Children are often at home during the weekends and in the

summer while their parents are at work, watching screens and playing video games, yet screen time doesn't support children's interpersonal, physical or motor skill development, or their connection to the natural world. Isolation during the pandemic made this problem worse. Peralta Hacienda's six-acre site, Native Plant Garden Area and Peralta Creek Nature Area, afford one of the few opportunities for local youth and families to learn about wildlife and habitats in a natural setting. While many families in Fruitvale do not feel safe allowing their children to roam freely, they are eager to send their children to Welcome to Wildlife programs at Peralta Hacienda, where they know their children will not only be safe, but also will be stimulated intellectually, emotionally and physically. The free programs are needed to nurture environmental leaders by introducing local children, youth, and families to the East Bay's flora and fauna, promoting their curiosity about and connection to the natural world, and introducing them to concepts of ecological change and to the region's parks.

For the last two summers, summer staff received training in trauma-informed pedagogy so that both adult educators and teen interns can deal appropriately with the trauma that many children have experienced. Nearly one-fourth of the children in the 2021 summer camp had experienced a death in the family due to the pandemic or violence. Friends' trademark is creating a setting for safe cross-cultural communication through storytelling, both personal and traditional, including elders of many cultures.

Long-term impact of Friends' programs includes increased use of parks by community members of color: it is well documented that communities of color often feel excluded from, or don't know about wildlife areas. 95% of participants in Welcome to Wildlife are of color. Youth will have positive experiences at Peralta Hacienda and other East Bay parks and see that wildlife opportunities are open to them throughout the region. Many family members volunteer in Welcome to Wildlife; families will find out where the parks are and what they offer and will explore other parks in East Oakland and beyond. The project is designed to serve children and youth 5-21. In a cascading mentorship approach, experienced interns mentor younger children in activities, after doing their own more complex projects. Participants' ethnicities are approximately 50% Latino and Mayan Mam, 20% African American, 20% Asian Pacific Islander (Cambodian, Mien, Vietnamese, Bhutanese Nepali and Thai), with the remaining 10% Native American, Euro American, African and recently-arrived Middle Eastern youth. The Friends partner with youth programs offered by Lao Family Community Development, The Unity Council, New Doors, and OUSD's Exploring College, Career, and Community Opportunities, which offer paid educational opportunities to immigrant, refugee and other low-income youth aged 14-21. The Friends also collaborate with East Bay Regional Parks in a joint field trip program. Alameda County Department of Health provides free lunches every day to all summer participants.

ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL

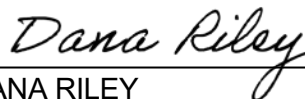
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For questions regarding this report, please contact Donté Watson, OPRYD Recreation General Supervisor, at (510) 238-2003.

Respectfully submitted,



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