



City Council

Authorization to Apply for US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Environmental Education Local Grants Program

Agenda Date: 3/22/2016
Agenda Item Number: 4.E
File Number: 16-0322

Type: decision **Version:** 1 **Status:** Passed

Title

Authorization to Apply for US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Environmental Education Local Grants Program

Recommended Action

Committee Recommendation:

Not referred to a committee.

City Manager Recommendation:

Move to authorize staff to submit a grant application to the EPA to create a conservation work program for high school students.

Report

Issue:

Whether to submit a grant application in the amount of \$91,000 to the EPA to create a conservation work program for high school students.

Staff Contact:

Joe Roush, Environmental Services Supervisor, Public Works - Water Resources, 360.753.8563

Presenter(s):

None - Consent Calendar item

Background and Analysis:

The purpose of the EPA Environmental Education Local Grants Program is to support local environmental education projects. EPA expects projects to increase public awareness of environmental issues and provide participants with skills to make informed environmental decisions.

If the City receives the grant, staff will use the funds to further develop the Olympia Conservation Corps. The Olympia Conservation Corps was a pilot project between Community Youth Services (CYS) and the City of Olympia in 2011 and 2012. The original pilot program hired high school students to perform conservation-related work for the City. It also provided positive mentoring for the participants. Some members of the City Council may remember the oak bench built by the

participants and presented to the City Council in 2012.

Staff proposes to host a team of high school students to do conservation work in 2017. We plan to develop a more formal mentoring program using the Garden Raised Bounty (GRuB) youth mentoring program as a model. Staff participated in GRuB's Youth mentoring institute (see hyperlink) and is working closely with GRuB to scope this work effort. Grant funds will be used for program development, staff training and student (corps member) stipends.

Besides creating an environmental education opportunity for youth, this program builds staff capacity for the habitat restoration work we already perform.

The grant application is due April 8, 2016. EPA will notify applicants in August 2016. This gives staff time to develop program materials, train crew leaders and recruit corps members for work in the summer of 2017.

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

The proposal is consistent with neighborhood and community environmental interests. City staff is working directly with GRuB staff to review our program materials. We anticipate collaborating directly with them on recruitment and training of the program staff that will act as crew leaders.

Staff will also reach out to CYS based on our past collaborative history on this program. The City anticipates that CYS will help identify qualified youth for this program.

Options:

- Option 1: Approve the request to submit the grant application. This allows staff to apply for the grant by the deadline and implement the project in 2016-2017.

- Option 2: Decline the request to submit the grant application. Staff would not apply for grant funding but may re-evaluate the potential to implement the project with alternative funding.

Financial Impact:

Staff plans to pursue the maximum grant award of \$91,000. The grant requires a 25% match which can be fulfilled using City staff time.

Attachment:

Hyperlink