



Economic Development
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TO: Michael C. Van Milligen, City Manager

FROM: Jill M. Connors, Economic Development Director

SUBJECT: Downtown Rehabilitation Grant for Dubuque Dream Center Improvements

DATE: June 19, 2020

INTRODUCTION

This memorandum presents for City Council approval a downtown rehabilitation Grant Agreement for physical improvements at the Dubuque Dream Center facility at 1600 White Street.

BACKGROUND

In August 2019, at the annual goal setting process, the Mayor and City Council selected the Dubuque Dream Center as a Top Priority. City staff has met with Dubuque Dream Center Executive Director Robert Kimble to learn about any barriers to the continued success of the Dubuque Dream Center. One of the most significant barriers is operational funding. In the Fiscal Year 2021 Economic Development Department budget, there is a recommendation to provide \$40,000 per year for the next two years to provide operational support to the Dubuque Dream Center. Mr. Kimble identified a capital improvement project that could be made at the facility at 1600 White Street that could generate significant operational funding.

Mr. Kimble described that in routine delivery of services to the almost 200 families who are engaged in "In Your Life Mentoring," the legal definition of childcare services is met, qualifying Dubuque Dream Center families for State of Iowa childcare financial assistance. Dubuque Dream Center has many clients who could do direct pay for the services, with the potential for up to \$800,000 per year in annual operating funding.

DISCUSSION

The obstacle to the Dubuque Dream Center receiving such funding is that the facility does not meet the State of Iowa childcare guidelines, including not having adequate green space.

The Dubuque Dream Center has identified a \$636,000 capital improvement project to be completed over the next two years that would lead to the Dubuque Dream Center qualifying for up to \$800,000 a year in operating revenues from childcare services. The Dubuque Dream Center has identified \$360,000 in resources for this project, \$276,000 short of full funding.

The Mayor and City Council have budgeted \$200,000 a year beginning in the current fiscal year (FY2020) to assist downtown non-profit organizations with building renovations related to Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) improvements and for weatherization, alternative energy and energy efficiencies.

The improvements needed for the Dubuque Dream Center's existing facility and the creation of green space meet the general intent of the funding and as well as this City Council priority. This project also will fit the City's neighborhood reinvestment and workforce development goals.

RECOMMENDATION/ ACTION STEP

I respectfully recommend that the Mayor and City Council approve the attached downtown rehabilitation Grant Agreement in the amount of \$276,000 for physical improvements at the Dubuque Dream Center facility at 1600 White Street.

CC: Cori Burbach, Assistant City Manager