



City of Tracy
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Memorandum

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Date: February 4, 2022
To: Mayor and Council Members
From: Michael Rogers, City Manager
Via: Don Scholl, Director of Public Works
Subject: Tracy Tree Foundation Follow-up

During 'Items from the Audience' of recent Council meetings, Mr. Wes Huffman made multiple requests of the Council to provide the Tracy Tree Foundation (TTF) \$20,000 for the planting of trees at the proposed Nature Park near Legacy Fields. Council requested that staff follow up with Mr. Huffman. Though this was not an action item, Council expressed a desire for staff to incorporate this funding into the upcoming proposed budget. This memo is an update on this item.

On December 20, 2021, Director of Public Works Don Scholl and his staff met with Mr. Huffman to gather more details about his request. Mr. Huffman's main concern was that funding be provided to get trees planted at the Nature Park site sooner rather than later, and that this process be done by volunteers. The discussion included an overview of the many successful Arbor Day and other volunteer tree planting efforts organized by staff, and how staff might assist. Staff also noted that it would be best if the design and grading of the site was completed prior to planting the new trees in order to avoid selecting the wrong trees and/or removing/moving newly planted trees once plans for the site are finalized. (NOTE: An irrigation system or accommodations for watering the new trees would also be required to avoid significant losses and ensure proper establishment.) The option to begin propagation and grow-out of trees in containers was considered. It was noted that the City does not have a greenhouse or grow-out grounds for this type of project, nor staff to attend to the containerized trees. For this reason, the option of contracted growing was suggested to Mr. Huffman. Mr. Huffman was appreciative of the discussion. The group agreed to get in contact again in January on this item.

Since the staff meeting with Mr. Huffman, the TTF has received a \$20,000 grant from the California Foundation for Stronger Communities. TTF is now funded to develop and implement their plan. The receipt of the grant funds was confirmed by Mrs. Mary Mitracos during the February 1, 2022 Council meeting during 'Items from the Audience'.

February 4, 2022

Page 2 of 2

The grant funding came because of a recommendation to the Foundation by former Interim City Manager Bob Adams (Mr. Adams sits on the board of the Foundation). Mr. Adams notified staff on January 15th that \$20,000 had been awarded. Following that notification, Mr. Scholl notified Mr. Huffman via email of this award and encouraged him to contact the City's Park Planning & Development Manager, Richard Joaquin regarding plan development for the site. Staff has not heard back from Mr. Huffman yet, but we believe this will satisfy the request and meet the needs of TTF related to this project. As always, we welcome working with local groups on a wide variety of volunteer projects to help build a more beautiful Tracy and foster pride in our community.

NOTE: Tracy Tree Foundation no longer has a valid MOU with the City. Staff offered an extension of the previous MOU to TTF prior to its expiration, however, TTF declined to extend that agreement.