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News Release

Commission OKs engineering for Phase 1 of Wilson Park plan

12-week process will include playground RFP, splash pad preliminary design

ARKANSAS CITY, Kan. (November 22, 2018) — The City Commission of Arkansas City voted 4-0 on Tuesday night to approve an agreement with Wichita-based LK Architecture for professional architectural, electrical, plumbing, mechanical and structural engineering services for Wilson Park.

The agreement kicks off the official design of Phase 1 of the Wilson Park Master Plan, which is set to include the new farm and art market canopy, playground, restroom, splash pad, and walking paths.

Over the next 12 weeks, LK Architecture also will make minor updates to the master plan, which it was instrumental in helping to create in 2015 and 2016. As part of the \$60,500 agreement, LK will subcontract with Hydro Dramatics, of St. Louis, Missouri, for the splash pad design and MKEC Engineering, also of Wichita, for all structural engineering. Smith & Oakes will provide civil engineering.

A prefabricated farm and art market structure will be designed and purchased through Poligon Products, and then assembled on site by City staff to reduce construction costs significantly.

"This (12-week process) really kicks off the entire project," said City Manager Nick Hernandez.

"Also, (LK is) going to help us with a grant application with the State of Kansas through a Land and Water Conservation Fund (grant) for the splash pad, as well, to help offset (costs) and enhance it."

Earlier this year, the City of Arkansas City applied for \$263,144.11 in matching funds from the V.J. Wilkins Foundation for the advancement of the Wilson Park Master Plan. This money would be part of the Foundation's \$500,000 Challenge Grant to match, dollar for dollar, funds raised for the Master Plan.

The City's match consisted of in-kind contributions toward the 2017 restoration of the BNSF train engine and tender in the park, including \$1,382 from Mid-West Electric, \$97,330 from L.G. Pike Construction and \$97,242 from Rob Carroll Sandblasting & Painting. It also includes a \$10,000 grant from BNSF, given as part of a Heritage Community Award that Arkansas City received for the work.

For immediate release

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The Wilkins Foundation has agreed to accept in-kind contributions in lieu of cash contributions and thus has pledged \$205,954 toward the project, payable in three installments of \$68,651 annually in 2018, 2019 and 2020. The \$60,500 cost of this agreement will be reimbursed through this year's payment.

Additionally, the Foundation noted a pending agreement with Creekstone Farms to provide 10 annual payments of \$30,000 toward Wilson Park, as payment in exchange for an economic exemption, which will provide sufficient match for the remaining \$295,000 of the Challenge Grant. Accordingly, the Foundation has extended the grant-match deadline to June 30, 2019, which will allow for full usage of it.

"We are extremely grateful to the V.J. Wilkins Foundation and Board of Trustees for their support of this important community project since the very beginning," Hernandez said. "This grant is both a large gift and a big challenge, but it is a challenge I am confident Arkansas City will continue rising to meet."

After some discussion, Commissioner Duane Oestmann made a motion to approve the agreement and Commissioner Karen Welch seconded his motion, which was approved unanimously.

Although the City maintains a list of citizens who signed up in 2017 to be part of the design process for individual elements of Wilson Park, more volunteers are needed to make this project a reality.

Residents interested in serving on a design committee or learning more about it are encouraged to contact Public Information Officer Andrew Lawson at (620) 441-4415 or alawson@arkansascityks.gov.

Donating to Wilson Park

To generate momentum for the project and demonstrate that funds will be used as their donors intended, the City of Arkansas City has initiated the Friends of Wilson Park, a contribution fund residing with Legacy Regional Community Foundation, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization based in Cowley County.

Payments may be made at www.legacyregionalfoundation.org/Donations or mailed to Legacy Foundation, P.O. Box 701, Arkansas City, KS 67005. Cash, checks, credit and debit cards are accepted.

Checks should be made payable to Legacy Foundation with "Friends of Wilson Park" indicated on the check's memo line. Donations may be made to individual components of the Master Plan, if so desired. This also should be noted in the check's memo field. (See next section for further details.)

In addition to cash gifts, gifts of stock, bonds, mutual funds, real estate, life insurance, bequests and other financial vehicles also may be accommodated by Legacy Regional Community Foundation.

Legacy also can set up payment plans for donations that span up to three years, with reminders. It also will provide receipts that validate the tax-exempt status of any donations to Friends of Wilson Park.

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Park donors will be recognized and thanked publicly on the Friends of Wilson Park Facebook page at www.facebook.com/WilsonParkFriends, unless they specifically request to remain anonymous.

Funds donated for specific portions of the Wilson Park Master Plan will be disbursed to the City only as each portion of the plan enters the planning and construction phases.

Please call the Legacy Regional Community Foundation at (620) 221-7224 or email Executive Director Yazmin Wood at yazmin.legacy@yahoo.com with any questions about the donation process.

Master Plan components and committees

For those interested in donating to only a portion of the Wilson Park Master Plan, rather than the overall fund, the following options are available — please indicate preferred portion(s) on memo line:

Phase 0 — COMPLETE!

- **Train Improvements**

Phase 1 (Challenge Grant) — total fundraising target: \$1 million (including \$500,000 grant)

- **Farm and Art Market** (with parking lot);
- **Restrooms**;
- **Splash Pad or Interactive Pop-Jet Fountain**.

Phase 2

- **Memorial Garden or Peace Garden** — fundraising target: \$366,000;
- **Playground** — fundraising target: \$872,000;
- **Rotunda Improvements** — fundraising target: \$407,000.

Phase 3

- **Events Center** — fundraising target: \$4.5 million.

Phase 4

- **Library Expansion** — fundraising target: \$2 million.

The following committees are in the process of being formed and applications can still be submitted:

- Fundraising Committee
- Peace Garden Design Committee
- Playground Design Committee
- Public Art Advisory Committee
- Splash Pad Design Committee

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To apply for a committee, pick up a Wilson Park Master Plan brochure in the Utility Billing Office at City Hall, located at 118 W. Central Ave., and return it to Public Information Officer Andrew Lawson.

The brochure and accompanying volunteer interest form also can be found online and downloaded or printed at www.arkansascityks.gov/Government/Parks/Master-Plan-Brochure.pdf. Interest in a particular committee also may be submitted by email to Lawson at alawson@arkansascityks.gov.

“We urge people to let us know soon on which committees they would like to serve,” Lawson said.

“These committees will have a lot of creative design control over each element of the Master Plan. You do not have to be a resident of the city to apply — just someone who really loves Wilson Park!”

About the Wilson Park Master Plan

Since the inception of the V.J. Wilkins Foundation, Wilson Park has been identified consistently as a central community gathering point that is crucial to the cultural and artistic life of the Ark City community.

The Wilkins Foundation’s investment in the park began early in 2014. The movie projection equipment, sound system and V.J. Wilkins Memorial Stage at the Wilson Park rotunda all were made possible by a grant received in 2014 from the foundation, in order to promote arts throughout the city.

In 2015, the City of Arkansas City was awarded a \$33,500 grant from the Wilkins Foundation to develop a master plan for Wilson Park and the vacant City-owned lot located just to the north.

The scope of the plan included looking at the potential for a cultural events center and possibly expanding the park into the recently vacated hospital property at Birch Avenue and First Street.

A steering committee of citizens and affiliated representatives was formed to direct the process.

The Wilson Park Master Plan steering committee members were:

- Charles Tweedy III — a former city commissioner and planning commissioner;
- Jill Wineinger — Arkansas City Beautification and Tree Advisory Board chairwoman;
- Pam Crain — Visit Ark City director and tourism specialist;
- Kristi Old and Brittany Carder — former and current Farm and Art Market coordinators;
- Blanche Schmidt — Arkansas City Public Library Board of Trustees vice president;
- Angie Bruce, Richard Hensley and Dr. Nick Rogers — citizens appointed at large.

Also present at most of the meetings were V.J. Wilkins Foundation board members Otis Morrow and Karen Zeller, as well as Hernandez and Lawson.

LK Architecture, of Wichita, was retained by the City to assist with developing the master plan and related materials. The architects who worked on the project were Jeff Best, director of landscape architecture; Aaron Smith, design architect; and William Wells, landscape architect.

The steering committee met four times in 2015 — on Sept. 29, Oct. 14, Nov. 2 and Dec. 7 — to discuss and develop the master plan. The plan was finalized at a meeting June 6, 2016, for presentation to the Wilkins Foundation that July in Denver, Colorado. A rollout planning meeting was March 13, 2017.

The Wilson Park Master Plan was unveiled throughout March and April in 2017 at a variety of community events, including multiple films in the 2017 Outdoor Family Movie Series, Arbor Day, Cowley's Outdoor Market, the county Health and Safety Fair, and a Chamber of Commerce coffee.

In other business Tuesday, the commissioners:

- Recognized Ark City Police Department Officer Madeline Pegorsch's recent graduation from the Kansas Law Enforcement Training Center in Yoder. Police Chief Dan Ward said Pegorsch was elected class president by her peers and finished ninth in her class. She is the second straight ACPD president, after fellow officer Kelsey Horinek in 2016.
- Unanimously approved the Nov. 6 regular meeting minutes as written;
- Unanimously approved a resolution authorizing the City to execute a grant of right-of-way agreement near Chestnut Avenue and G Street with Westar Energy.
- Heard updates from Hernandez regarding the closure of City Hall on Nov. 22-23 for Thanksgiving, the final Fifth Thursday Art and Music Crawl of 2018 on Nov. 29 in downtown Ark City, and an upcoming City Commission study session at noon Nov. 30 in his office.
- Discussed the 2019 employee holiday calendar and the City's recent announcement as one of 20 semifinalists in the Small Business Revolution television show competition.

Mayor Dan Jurkovich was absent from the meeting due to traveling out of town for the holiday.

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