



WILDWOOD

June 20, 2023

The Honorable City Council
City of Wildwood, Missouri
16860 Main Street
Wildwood, Missouri 63040

Re: **Grant Application with Friends of Belleview for Belleview Farms Park (Wards – All)**

Council Members:

BACKGROUND >>> The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) has an annual grant program that is available to communities within St. Louis and Jefferson County, and the City of St. Louis, regarding possible projects intended to foster the native woodlands of these areas, promote improved management of invasives, and create new productive and positive habitats for wildlife as well. Over the years, the City has used these State funds for the removal of ash trees and address invasives in many of its public areas, including roadways, parks, and trails.

In fact, in 2021, the City of Wildwood was awarded a \$25,000.00 grant from the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) to assist in the removal of invasive vegetation, as part of an effort to restore the Belleview Farms property. The grant, in this case, was used for the restoration of the field area that defines the view from the top of the hill, where the dwelling was previously located, or from the roadway that serves as access to the site along its southernmost border. This area is approximately 5.5 acres in size and was a mix of Callery Pear Trees, Bush Honeysuckle, Johnson Grass, and other grasses and wildflowers. Now after two (2) years, it is natives.

Over the last couple of years, the Department of Planning and Parks has not applied for a similar grant, given the Department of Public Works has been using such for ash tree removal and then invasive removals within certain roadways. These efforts were needed and, with regards to the Emerald Ash Borer, and the impact on ash trees, essential to the maintenance of a healthy woodland community in Wildwood. However, the success of the City's program with regards to ash tree removals has been substantial and the program is now almost completed. Now, instead of removals, the replanting of public trees is the priority of this protective process. Certainly, the cause of the needed tree removal remains troubling, but the removals of last of the diseased or dying trees is success onto itself for the City, along with the replanting program of public trees in rights-of-way of it. The replanting process will continue for the foreseeable future to address the hundreds of ash trees that have been removed from City rights-of-way.

GRANT PROPOSAL >>> In recent discussions with the Planning and Parks Committee, the Department of Planning and Parks has sought its members to endorse its application to this grant program for Belleview Farms Park, given it has been almost 2½ years since the last submittal and award. The Department of Public Works noted a potential project along State Route 100 for invasive removal has been considered, but had not made a final determination regarding it. With the State's new fiscal year having started on July 1, 2023, the Committee recognized the opportunity to continue the work at this park site and assist the Friends of Belleview (local residents that have formed a not-for-profit organization to help preserve the park) in their on-going efforts to make the Meramec River Valley a one-of-kind travel destination for all manner of people.

The Committee Members note that, if grant application is successful with this State agency, it would be dedicated to the removal of invasive vegetation, as part of an effort to restore the Belleview Farms property. The Friends of Belleview and many of the other organizations now assisting them, such as the Open Space Council, would like to begin invasive removal on the west side of the access roadway into the park site, which leads up the main hill to the parking area, and then offers access to the scenic overlook to the south. This area is approximately five (5) acres in size. Funds would be used for tools, chemicals, and assistance from a tree service for larger, dead tree removals, and chipping of brush. Again, the Committee is aware of many competing needs relative to this grant process, but believes the progress that has been at this site can be accelerated with a grant award in 2023, through 2024.

It is important to note this grant program does require partial match by the participants and, as was the case of 2021, when the last grant was awarded to the City for this site, the amount that was contributed was approximately eight thousand dollars (\$8,000.00). The Committee would note the budget for this park site in 2023 is fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000.00), so a similar or lesser match by the City can be accommodated under current parameters. Although this park site has not yet been open to the public, the work to restore the property after years of limited care have really begun to show results and the character of it has changed for the better, the health of the forest improved, and steps to accommodate a future trail system in the works.

RECOMMENDATION BY THE COMMITTEE >>> The Committee Members are endorsing the submittal of an application for this grant program to be used in Belleview Farms Park and support the allocation of the funding for this desired product, which would be on a not-to-exceed basis, per its direction in this regard, if the award is successful. If this recommendation is supported by the City Council, the Committee would authorize the Department of Planning and Parks to proceed with the City's application to this grant program.

CONTACT INFORMATION AND NEXT STEPS >>> If any of the City Council Members should have any questions or comments regarding this information before tonight's meeting, please feel free to contact the Department of Planning at (636) 458-0440. A presentation is planned on this item at tonight's Work Session, under 'For Action.' Thank you for your review and action on this matter.

Respectfully submitted,

CITY OF WILDWOOD

Michael Gillani, Chair*

Planning and Parks Committee

Cc: The Honorable James R. Bowlin, Mayor
Thomas Lee, Interim City Administrator
John A. Young, City Attorney
Rick Brown, P.E. and P.T.O.E., Director of Public Works
Melanie Rippetoe, Assistant Director of Planning and Parks
Kristin Naeger, Superintendent of Parks and Recreation
Friends of Belleview – Local Organization

* The Department of Planning and Parks developed this report, in conjunction with the Planning and Parks Committee. Content reflects the Committee's consideration of this subject and not necessarily an individual's position or opinion.

Kristin Naeger

From: Rachel Williams <Rachel.Williams@mdc.mo.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, April 12, 2023 2:23 PM
To: Kristin Naeger
Cc: Stacy Chanski; Jeff Esely; Mark Grueber
Subject: RE: Belleview Farms Follow-Up

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Good afternoon Kristin,

I was notified that we have fully allocated our cost share dollars in the geography Belleview Farms is located (Tier 3) this year. However, I think we are in a good position to apply for funding for the invasive work this next fiscal year (starting mid-July 2023). I received request for additional information on 3 topics. 1 – How much funding does Wildwood have budgeted for the Belleview Farms project? 2 – What is the quote for the work? 3 – Is this the only project Wildwood is looking to apply for funding for (or is there additional hazard tree work)? Depending on the cost of the projects, MDC would likely only be able to support either the invasive species work at Belleview OR a hazard tree project but probably not both.

For next steps, if you could provide me with the answers to the above 3 questions, I can move forward with drafting up a potential project plan so we are all set to apply come July.

If you have any questions between now and then, don't hesitate to reach out!

Thank you for your work!!

Rachel Williams

*Community and Private Land Conservationist
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From: Kristin Naeger <Kristin@cityofwildwood.com>
Sent: Monday, April 3, 2023 2:59 PM
To: Rachel Williams <Rachel.Williams@mdc.mo.gov>
Cc: Stacy Chanski <stacy@cityofwildwood.com>
Subject: Belleview Farms Follow-Up

Hi Rachel –

Just checking in to see if there is any update to our meeting at Belleview Farms regarding grant opportunities?

Please let me know if you need anything additional from us.

Kristin