



Legislation Text

File #: R-1819-110, **Version:** 1

RESOLUTION R-1819-110: A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NORMAN, OKLAHOMA, FORMALLY IDENTIFYING REAVES PARK AS THE PREFERRED SITE FOR THE NORMAN SENIOR CENTER; DIRECTING STAFF TO PROCEED WITH SELECTION OF A DESIGN FIRM FOR THE SENIOR CENTER; RE-PROGRAMMING \$7.6 MILLION FROM THE NORMAN FORWARD GRIFFIN PARK PROJECT TO THE NORMAN FORWARD SENIOR CENTER PROJECT TO BE USED FOR DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION OF A FREE-STANDING SENIOR CITIZEN CENTER; AND BUDGET APPROPRIATION IN THE AMOUNT OF \$760,000 FROM THE NORMAN FORWARD FUND BALANCE.

BACKGROUND: In 2008, Norman voters were asked to approve two ballot questions that would authorize the issuance of general obligation bonds - one proposed to provide funding for a new public library, and the other proposed to provide funding for the renovation of the City's Municipal Complex, including the renovation of the existing library building into a renovated space for a City development center and the expansion and relocation of the City's Senior Citizen's Center (after the Norman Public Library moved to a new space). The proposition for the renovation of the City Municipal Complex and relocation/expansion of the Senior Citizen's Center was approved by the voters; however, the general obligation bond proposition for the new library failed.

In 2015, Norman voters were asked to approve a quality of life initiative to be funded by a temporary (15-year duration), one-half percent sales tax ("NORMAN FORWARD") which included a number of projects around the community, including a new public library. After Norman seniors expressed a desire to have a new free standing center, as opposed to the site in the existing library building (now projected to be vacated by September 2019), the City began exploring other options. The NORMAN FORWARD proposition was amended to include a senior citizen's center as an authorized project. Voters approved the initiative on October 13, 2015.

The City has explored a number of options for a free standing Senior Citizen Center, including a location at Andrews Park, a location adjacent to the new public library, a location on property adjacent to the Cleveland County YMCA, Ruby Grant Park, Saxon Park, modifications to the existing library building site, Reaves Park, and two locations in the University North Park development. Sites have been vetted by City Council as well as various community groups. The Senior Center Ad Hoc Committee, the Reaves Park Ad Hoc Committee, the Norman Senior Association, and representatives of Medieval Fair have all endorsed locating the new Senior Center in Reaves Park.

In negotiations with the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (ODMHSAS) for the purchase of the Griffin Park Soccer Complex site, it was determined that a long-term (30-year) lease of the site would be preferable to a land purchase. On June 26, 2018, the City entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU; Contract K-1718-136) with the ODMHSAS for the Griffin Park land lease. This MOU was amended on November 27, 2018. The lease/purchase contract with the ODMHSAS has been finalized and executed by both parties.

DISCUSSION: Resolution R-1819-110 would solidify Reaves Park as the site for a free standing Senior Center. It also directs staff to move forward with architectural design firm selection so that the design of the Senior Center can begin. Finally, it re-programs NORMAN FORWARD funds originally allocated for the Griffin Park land purchase to the Senior Center project, and appropriates money achieved from the savings due to the long-term lease of Griffin Park instead of a land purchase. NORMAN FORWARD funding in the amount of \$2,400,000 would remain programmed for the Griffin Park land lease payments, to the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, over the 30-year life of the lease (\$80,000 per year for 30 years).

Funding in the amount of \$7,600,000 would be made available by the Council's resolution in a new NORMAN FORWARD Senior Center project. The Senior Center project is proposed to be paid for on a pay-as-you-go-basis over the next three fiscal years. The Resolution appropriates NORMAN FORWARD Fund balance in fiscal year 2018-2019 for the cost of the engineering/architectural design of the project, in an estimated amount of \$760,000 (account 051-9365-419.62-01; project NFP108). The fiscal year 2019-2020 budget will be proposed for amendment for the second year's funding and the

balance of funding would be included in the fiscal year 2020-2021 budget.

Full funding for the project would be available on this schedule by July 1, 2020 and construction of the Reaves Park Senior Center would proceed on the anticipated schedule, with completion in the summer or fall of 2021.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of Resolution R-1819-110. Staff also recommends appropriation of \$760,000 of NORMAN FORWARD Fund balance (account 051-0000-253.20-00) to the Senior Citizens Center Project, Design (account 051-9365-419.62-01; project NFP0108).