



ITEM NO.: 11j
MEETING DATE: February 18, 2009

AGENDA SUMMARY REPORT

SUBJECT: UPDATE ON OBSERVATORY PARK AND ADOPTION OF RESOLUTION APPROVING AN APPLICATION FOR LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND COMPETITIVE GRANT PROGRAM FOR OBSERVATORY PARK DEVELOPMENT.

Background:

The Observatory property is approximately three acres with frontages facing Luce Street and Observatory Avenue. The property is both historic and special in that only five such International Latitude Observatory sites exist around the world. The other four sites are located in Maryland, Italy, Japan, and Russia. Ukiah's original Observatory was built on this site in 1899 with the existing buildings constructed in 1948. The historical residence and three small outbuildings, comprising approximately one acre, are concentrated on the south side of the property facing Observatory Avenue. The remaining property extends north to Luce Street and is marked by a large specimen Oak tree with substantial open space extending back to the structures. The Department of Interior granted the property to the City of Ukiah for the purpose of developing a public park; yet it maintains sight easements on the northern portion of the property. While now owned by the City transfer or sale of the property is not allowed under the property grant.

The property's extensive size has provided an excellent opportunity to create an expansive green space in a developed residential area that is surrounded by single family dwellings and a number of high density apartment complexes. A site map has been included as Attachment #1 and the landscape plan as Attachment #2.

Fiscal Impact:

Budgeted FY 08/09 New Appropriation Not Applicable Budget Amendment Required

<u>Amount Budgeted</u>	<u>Source of Funds (title and #)</u>	<u>Account Number</u>	<u>Addtl. Appropriation Requested</u>
\$100,000	Park Development, Observatory	140-6050-800-000	N/A

Recommended Action(s): Receive update on Observatory Park and adopt the resolution authorizing the application to the Land and Water Conservation Fund for the Observatory Park Development Project.

Alternative Council Option(s): Receive update and determine the application to the Land and Water Conservation Fund for Observatory Park is inappropriate at this time and do not move to adopt the resolution.

- Citizens advised: None
- Requested by: None
- Prepared by: Maya Simerson, Community Services
- Coordinated with: Sage Sangiacomo, Director of Community/ General Services
- Attachments:
 1. Site Map
 2. Landscape Plan
 3. Resolution Approving Application for Grant Funds

Approved: _____
Jane Chambers, City Manager

The City is currently working with the Friends of the Observatory led by Marin Bradley and Judy Pruden to begin restoration of the historical structures including the Observatory building, office, equipment shed, and instrument sighting shed. Friends of the Observatory are planning to complete the restoration of the historic buildings with volunteer labor. While these building will offer very little options for use other than historical display, the main house could be renovated in such a way to accommodate active use. Recent repairs to the main building include a new roof, gutters, windows and exterior paint, making it both safe from the elements and preserved for future use.

Discussion:

The Observatory Park site is a viable project for receiving a grant award due to its location, historical element, and readiness to proceed in development. Staff has actively pursued grant opportunities to fund the development of Observatory Park.

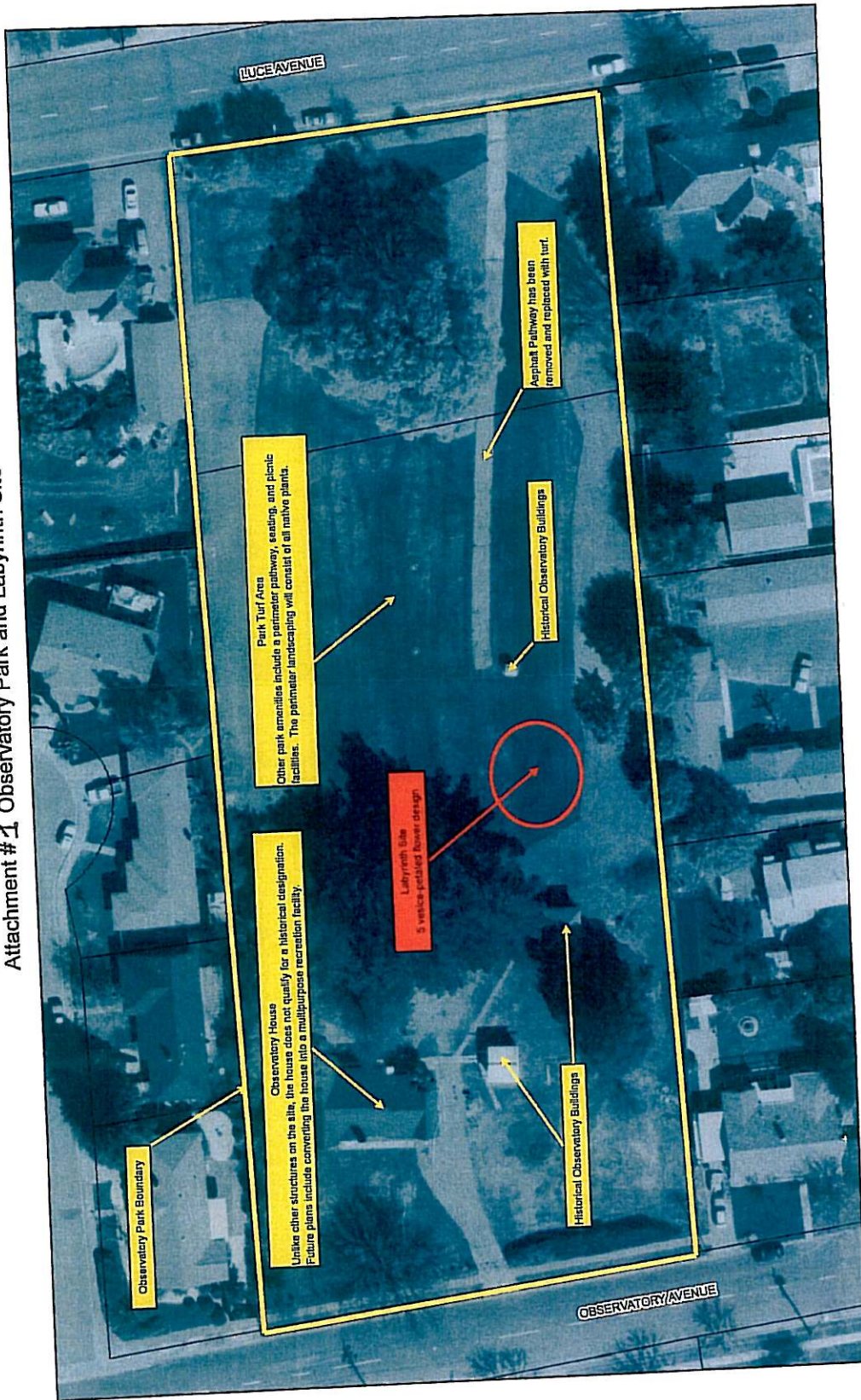
In January of 2009 the Land & Water Conservation Fund (administered nationally by the National Park Service) provided funds to federal agencies, the fifty states, and six territories by opening a new round of funding for acquisition and development of outdoor public recreation opportunities. This grant application is due on March 2, 2009 and while it is a highly competitive program staff is confident the Observatory Park Development Project holds great potential for securing an award.

In order to comply with all required criteria in the application process Council will need to authorize a resolution stating the intent to move forward with this project. With Council's approval of the resolution the professional services of CEC, Inc. will be retained by the City for the preparation of this grant application. Outside services from an experienced and successful design group will further increase our chances at securing funding- likewise due to the tight turnaround their technical assistance will be necessary. The cost of these services will not exceed \$3,000 and will be funded from the existing monies in the Park Development budget; this is not a General Fund expense.

If this project is awarded the funds that are received will enhance the amount of money the City budgeted in the Park Development fund for this project by \$50,000. The remaining funds no longer required for the development of Observatory Park could therefore be transferred to other active projects such as the Skate Park, the City Municipal Pool Renovation or other projects as needed.

The resolution is included as Attachment #3 for review.

Attachment # 1 Observatory Park and Labyrinth Site



☆) ☆) Ukiah Observatory (☆ (☆



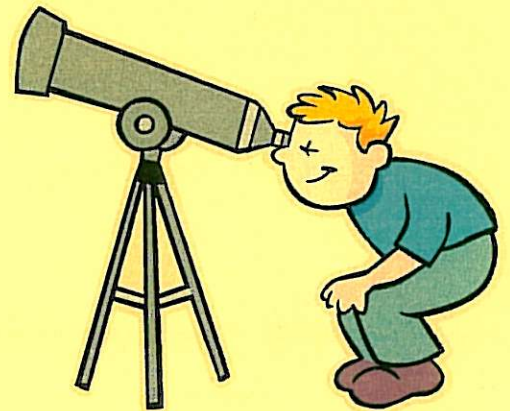
Historic Status

- The Ukiah Observatory is Nationally recognized as Historic Site # 1991001936.
- The Ukiah Observatory will be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places and evaluated for National Historic Landmark Designation.

International Latitude Observatory

The International Latitude Observatories were a system of (originally) six observatories located near the parallel of 39° 08' north latitude. They were used to measure the variation in latitude that occurs as a result of the wobble of the Earth on its polar axis. The original six observatories were located in:

- Gaithersburg, Maryland
- Cincinnati, Ohio
- Ukiah, California
- Mizusawa, Japan
- Tschardjui, Russia
- Carloforte, Italy



History

The International Polar Motion Service program was created by the United States Coast and Geodetic Survey in 1899 to study the precession, or "wobble" of the Earth's axis, and its effect on measures of latitude. Six separate observatories were created. The alignment of all six stations along the parallel helped the observatories to perform uniform data analysis. Twelve groups of stars were studied in the program, each group containing six pairs of stars. Each night, each station observed two of the star groups along a preset schedule and later compared the data against the measurements taken by the sister stations.

Economic difficulties and war caused the closing of some of the original stations. The stations continued to function until advances in computer technology and satellite observations rendered them obsolete in 1982. The data collected by the observatories over the years still has use to scientists, and had been applied to studies of polar motion, physical properties of the Earth, climatology and satellite tracking and navigation.

Resolution No. _____

**RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF UKIAH
APPROVING THE APPLICATION FOR LAND
AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND
OBSERVATORY PARK TRAIL PROJECT**

WHEREAS, the Congress under Public Law 88-578 has authorized the establishment of a federal Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant-In-Aid program, providing Matching funds to the State of California and its political subdivisions for acquiring lands and developing Facilities for public outdoor recreation purposes; and

WHEREAS, the California Department of Parks and Recreation is responsible for administration of the program in the State, setting up necessary rules and procedures governing Applications by local agencies under the program; and

WHEREAS, said adopted procedures established by the State Department of Parks and Recreation require the Applicant to certify by resolution the approval of Applications and the availability of eligible Matching funds prior to submission of said Applications to the State; and

WHEREAS, the proposed Observatory Park Trail Project is consistent with the most recent *California Outdoor Recreation Plan (CORP)*; and

WHEREAS, the Project must be compatible with the land use plans of those jurisdictions immediately surrounding Project;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council hereby:

1. Approves the filing of an Application for Land and Water Conservation Fund assistance; and
2. Certifies that said agency has Matching funds from eligible source(s) and can finance 100 percent of the Project, which up to half may be reimbursed; and
3. Certifies that the Project is compatible with the land use plans of those jurisdictions immediately surrounding the Project; and
4. Appoints the City Manager as agent of the Applicant to conduct all negotiations and execute and submit all documents, including, but not limited to, Applications, contracts, amendments, payment requests, and compliance with all applicable current state and federal laws which may be necessary for the completion of the aforementioned Project.

Approved and Adopted on the 18th day of February, 2009.

I, the undersigned, hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was duly adopted by the City Council following a roll call vote:

Ayes
Noes
Absent

(Clerk)