



CITY COUNCIL MEMORANDUM

FROM: The Office of the City Manager **DATE:** August 22, 2022
SUBJECT: Approve Resolution No. 2022-037 authorizing and endorsing the application for the 2023 “Our Town” grant program by the National Endowment for the Arts for the Wishing Spot project at Linda Spurlock Park
PRESENTER: Adrien Pekurney, Director of Parks and Recreation

SUMMARY:

Staff will be applying for a federal grant through the National Endowment for the Arts' (NEA) "Our Town" program to supplement funding for art and place-making projects associated with parks and open spaces. This resolution is proposed because the grant application requires proof of support by the governing body.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

Grant Program Description (described by the NEA):

Through “Our Town”, subject to the availability of funding and application selection, the National Endowment for the Arts will provide a limited number of grants ranging from \$25,000 to \$200,000 for creative place-making projects that contribute toward the livability of communities and help transform them into lively, beautiful, and sustainable places with the arts at their core. “Our Town” grants will invest in creative and innovative projects in which communities, together with both their local city and community partners seek to:

- Improve their community's quality of life.
- Encourage greater creative activity.
- Foster stronger community identity and a sense of place.
- Revitalize underserved populations or areas within a community.

Partnership:

A partnership with a non-profit organization that actively advances the arts or inclusive community engagement and connection is required for the grant. Social Transportation for Seniors (STS) is a non-profit organization providing rides for any NRH senior 62 and older to social venues in the North Richland Hills area. Operating out of the NRH Senior Center, the mission at Social Transportation for Seniors is reconnecting seniors to the community and taking them out of isolation. STS targets isolated seniors within our community with a goal to re-engage them in order for them to enjoy maximum independence and dignity while providing access to a full range of activities that contribute to an individual's quality of life.



A partnership with the City of North Richland Hills and STS on this grant project would include consultation on the planning and design of the artwork for the public space in which this project would be displayed, with an emphasis on capturing the life stories and wisdom of our senior community.

Project:

“The Wishing Spot” is a proposed collaborative art project between the City of North Richland Hills, Social Transportation for Seniors with emphasis on continued efforts of community engagement and ongoing education of community services and resources. The concept includes four core categories: Merging Art with Nature, a Meditation Maze, The Wishing Spot Help Station, and Partnership Programming.

1. *Merging Art with Nature* with a new public art installation that reflects love-themed artwork, like a heart, that becomes a “recognizable spot” in the southern and long established portion of the North Richland Hills community.

2. Within the spot, a *Meditation Maze* would be created and serve as a unique park amenity that encourages reflection and contemplative activity, slowing the pace for the park user to enjoy the natural surrounding with intentional movement, and includes at the center of the maze, the wishing spot to make a wish. Making wishes is a universally known activity enjoyed by all ages, like throwing pennies in a fountain or blowing out candles on a birthday cake, and creates opportunities for individual and shared group memories.

3. Recognizing not everyone has the means for web-based or electronic communication, the *Wishing Spot Help Station* serves as a unique installation where people are encouraged to drop a handwritten note for assistance, if needed. The Help Station is designed so that people who are in need of connection to community services can discreetly write down their problem, include their contact information, and drop their notes through the slot in the station. The notes would be collected weekly and distributed to the appropriate City department or community resource agency. The design of the Help Station will be light and whimsical but will be secure enough that the messages are kept safe until they can be collected. Signage would be placed adjacent to the Help Station with contact information for community resources and helpful services.

4. The combination of the three above installations provides new opportunities for *programming and community engagement in small groups* and provides activities for all ages and stages of life encouraging social connection.

The final design is contingent upon the selection of the application and amount of funding awarded. If the grant application is selected and funds are awarded, the City’s portion of the matching grant will come from the Art in Public Spaces Donation Fund.



RECOMMENDATION:

Approve Resolution No. 2022-037 authorizing and endorsing the application for the 2023 "Our Town" grant program by the National Endowment for the Arts for the Wishing Spot project at Linda Spurlock Park.