

12-03-18

To: Mark Stockman, Director of Public Works, Rockford, IL

From: Rick Westlake, Member,  
Churchill's Grove Neighborhood Association



Subject: Veterans Memorial Circle Beautification Project

Thank you for meeting with me and others at Veterans Memorial Circle last month to discuss how the City of Rockford and a group of interested Rockford citizens might work together to improve the appearance of the roundabout and Auburn Street from the roundabout to the river.

I am pleased to report that Churchill's Grove Neighborhood Association has approved participation in and leadership of the proposed Veterans Memorial Circle Beautification Project for 2019. A committee named "Friends of Veterans Memorial Circle" (hereafter referred to as "Friends") is currently being formed to spearhead the project. Churchill's Grove Neighborhood Association is registered as a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization which will allow for cash and in-kind contributions to be tax deductible and provide accountability to donors. Other nearby neighborhood associations, North End Commons businesses, and other interested businesses and individuals will also be invited to participate in the project.

As discussed, during our meeting at the Circle, Friends and the city will work together somewhat as follows:

1. Friends and the city will collaborate on landscape design. The city's horticulturist, Taylor Hennelly, will lead this effort.
2. Flowers may be purchased directly from the wholesaler from whom the city purchases flowers.
3. Friends will carefully remove the tall perennial grass clumps in front of the four wing walls and a city contactor will transport them to other areas of the city for reuse. Friends will plant annual flowers in front of the four wing walls.
4. Friends will plant annual flowers in the four "points" of the Circle.
5. Friends will plant annual flowers in the center of the Circle.
6. Friends will plant annual flowers in the 23 beds on Auburn Street (both north and south sides) from the Circle to the river.

7. The city's contractor will provide mulch for topping all flower beds. Friends will install the mulch.
8. The city will review the design of the irrigation system at the Circle and set it up to operate as needed.
9. Anywhere that irrigation is not available (primarily the 23 beds on Auburn Street) Friends will water all flowers as needed (unless the city can assume some or all of this responsibility). Friends will be given access to the water supply line at the Circle.
10. Friends will weed all beds and prune all flowers as needed throughout the season.
11. Friends will maintain "litter patrols" to remove and dispose of litter in between weekly mowing and litter removal by the city contractor.
12. Friends will clean up (remove dead flowers from) all beds at the end of the season.
13. Friends will assume financial responsibility for all committee activities.  
(Note: The city may or may not be able to help pay some of the expenses.)

Attached is a proposed budget for the project, subject to further review and modification by Friends. Note that almost all cash needed for the project is to pay for flowers. Subject to final approval, Friends will submit an initial payment to the city in the amount of \$1,500 on or near March 15<sup>th</sup>. A second payment of approximately \$1,500 will be submitted on or near May 1<sup>st</sup>. Payment amounts and payment dates will be confirmed after actual cost of flowers has been determined and payment dates to the city's supplier have been established.

Following is a tentative timeline for some of the project milestones:

1. February 1<sup>st</sup> – Friends of Veterans Memorial Circle committee to be finalized and more detailed project work commences.
2. March 15<sup>th</sup> – Friends first payment submitted to city.
3. May 1<sup>st</sup> – Friends second payment submitted to city.
4. Saturday, May 11<sup>th</sup> – Work Team Leaders meet at Circle for final planning.
5. Saturday, May 17<sup>th</sup> – Primary work day at the Circle and on Auburn Street.
6. Saturday, May 25<sup>th</sup> – Rain date for primary work day.
7. Sunday, May 26<sup>th</sup> – Re-dedication of Veterans Memorial Circle. (Memorial Day is Monday, May 27<sup>th</sup>.)

This project will further beautify a section of our city, draw neighborhoods and other Rockfordian individuals and businesses together, and make Veterans Memorial Circle more noticeable to passers-by. More importantly, it will be an expression of our community's appreciation for past and present Veterans from our city as was the original plan of city leaders.

Thank you again, Mark, for the interest you have expressed in this project and for helping us make this project a reality. We appreciate you!

Sincerely,

Rick Westlake

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