Legislation Details (With Text)

File #:	24-1214	**Version:**	1	**Name:**	7/1/24 Resolution for Grant and Parcel Contract for Conservation Easement on the Ehnis Property
Type:	Resolution			**Status:**	Passed
File created:	7/1/2024			**In control:**	City Council
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Title: Resolution to Accept a $257,250.00 Grant and Approve a Parcel Contract with USDA-NRCS for a Conservation Easement on the Ehnis Trust Property in Northfield Township (8 Votes Required)

Sponsors:

Indexes:

Code sections:

Attachments: 1. Ehnis Aerial Map.pdf, 2. Ehnis Protected Map.pdf

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
7/1/2024	1	City Council	Approved	Pass

Resolution to Accept a $257,250.00 Grant and Approve a Parcel Contract with USDA-NRCS for a Conservation Easement on the Ehnis Trust Property in Northfield Township **(8 Votes Required)**
This resolution accepts federal Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) grant funds and obligates the City to purchase a conservation easement on this property through execution of a Parcel Contract with United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). After execution of the Parcel Contract to secure the grant funds, staff will approach the City's conservation partners for contributions to defray the cost of the purchase. Once the contributions are determined, staff will bring a resolution to City Council for final approval of the purchase subject to the terms of the Parcel Contract.

Background
USDA-NRCS ACEP provides matching federal grant funds for up to 50% of the cost of the purchase of agricultural conservation easements on farmland. The City's Greenbelt Program regularly applies for ACEP grants to leverage purchases made with the City's Open Space and Parkland Preservation Millage funds.

On November 6, 2023, the City Council approved a grant application for the purchase of a conservation easement on the Ehnis Trust property in Northfield Township (R-23-407). On May 23, 2024, the City received notice that the ACEP Program awarded the City $257,250.00 to cover up to 49% of the appraised easement purchase price. The Greenbelt Advisory Commission approved a motion recommending acceptance of these grant funds at its June 6, 2024 meeting.

A brief description of the property is as follows:

The farm is approximately 65 acres and located in Northfield Township. It is bordered by three roads for amazing views from the public right-of-way: E Northfield Church Road, Earhart Road, and Pontiac Trail. It's predominantly cropland with a 9-acre patch of woods. The property scored in the 37th

percentile of all Greenbelt applications in the scoring system developed and approved by the Greenbelt Advisory Commission. The protection of this property is a priority for the Greenbelt Program due to the size and quality of the farmland, road frontage, and possibility to leverage federal funds. The purpose of the acquisition of a conservation easement on this property is for open space and agricultural land preservation, consistent with the purposes of Chapter 42 of City Code.

Approval of this resolution is recommended by staff.
Prepared by: Rosie Pahl Donaldson, Land Acquisition Supervisor
Reviewed by: Derek Delacourt, Community Services Area Administrator
Approved by: Milton Dohoney Jr., City Administrator
Whereas, Chapter 42 of City Code establishes the Greenbelt District and enables the City to purchase conservation easements on property within the district;

Whereas, Chapter 42 of City Code authorizes the purchase of conservation easements with Open Space and Parkland Preservation Millage proceeds, of which there are sufficient funds for this purchase;

Whereas, The USDA-NRCS Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) program has matching grant funds available for up to 50% of the purchase price of a conservation easement on eligible agricultural land, not to exceed $5,000.00 per acre;

Whereas, The Greenbelt Advisory Commission’s goal is to leverage the City’s millage funds to protect as much land as possible throughout the 30-year life of the millage; and

Whereas, ACEP has awarded the City a grant, which requires the City to execute a Parcel Contract stating the terms under which the grant funds will be provided;

RESOLVED, That City Council accepts the ACEP grant award of $257,250.00 and approves a Parcel Contract with the USDA-NRCS for the purchase of a conservation easement on the Ehnis Trust property in Northfield Township;

RESOLVED, That the Mayor and City Clerk are authorized and directed to execute the Parcel Contract after approval as to substance by the City Administrator and as to form by the City Attorney; and

RESOLVED, That the City Administrator is authorized to take all appropriate actions to implement this resolution.