

Conservancy Conversation

Conversation Goal: At work session staff will obtain Council buy in on process for forming conservancy and understanding of policy decision areas that will need further discussion

Successful conservancies:

- Can attract and provide programming for a broad audience that sign up as members/individual donors (regional reach)
- Have guaranteed funding sources (NOT fundraising) for a base level of employees and park maintenance
- Have authority to implement diverse revenue streams (leases, events, sponsorship, fundraising)
- Have a clearly defined brand, set of operational values and target audiences, often which focuses on community engagement, environmental preservation and cultural experiences.
- Have the freedom to fundraise for and program the park without political interference
- Have a diverse board of directors
- Have a clearly defined relationship with the City

Proposed Process:

1. Visit or have video calls with existing conservancies that fit what Clearwater is trying to do (Philly, Memphis, Atlanta etc.)
2. Hire fundraising development firm to do field scan on what funding is available. This is used to determine the financial feasibility of an endowment campaign and/or to set a realistic expectation of what a conservancy could fundraise. (Consider REH, CMA and other entities that are fundraising in this area and how they will impact the new conservancy)
3. Determine direction on policy decision areas
4. Begin a quiet campaign for board members and donors
5. Create conservancy and go public at the conclusion of the quiet campaign with branding and fundraising efforts

Policy Decision Areas:

- Why does Council/staff desire to form a conservancy?
 - Financial support to maintain park?
 - Develop programs?
 - Will Council establish the brand/values for the park?
- Organizational Structure
 - City owns and operates all aspects of park (Current situation at Crestlake Park)
 - City owns, provides base level of funding and leases all or some portions of the park to operating entity (REH/Capital Theater)
 - City owns and outside group helps with some projects/programming (Clearwater Arts Alliance, Jazz Holiday)
 - City owns and leases to operating entity with no additional financial support

- Hybrid – City owns and operates for a short period of time to provide a “runway” before the conservancy takes off to an independent model
- Financial Contribution
 - Will city provide a base level of funding for the operations of the Conservancy?
 - What does the city expect the conservancy to fundraise?
 - Will the city allow the Conservancy to sub-lease, operate businesses etc. to have a variety of revenue sources?
- Park Programming
 - Will the city expect the Conservancy to reserve time for community events or will they have full control of the park’s programming schedule?
 - Will there be a separation between the amphitheater versus the rest of the park?
- Amphitheater Operations