



Brevard County Board of County Commissioners

2725 Judge Fran Jamieson
Way
Viera, FL 32940

Legislation Text

File #: 3233, **Version:** 1

Subject:

Approval, re: TDC Capital Facilities Grant Agreement Extension to with the Merritt Island Wildlife Association (MIWA) to December 31, 2023.

Fiscal Impact:

Original grant award was \$500,000, of which \$55,500.33 has already been reimbursed. This grant reimbursement balance is currently held and available to the MIWA grantee in Tourism's Capital Facility fund 1443.

Dept/Office:

Tourism Development Office

Requested Action:

It is requested that the Board of County Commissioners approve the Tourist Development Council's recommendation to extend grant reimbursement agreement for the Merritt Island Wildlife Refuge capital facilities project grant for two years and three and a half months. The new grant reimbursement deadline will be December 31, 2023.

Summary Explanation and Background:

Tourism Development Tax revenues are restricted to authorized uses as defined by Florida Statute 125.0104, directed by Brevard County Code Chapter I 02, Article III, Local Option Tax Plan. In regards to Capital Facilities funding, the statute states authorized uses of these funds are "to acquire, construct, extend, enlarge, remodel, repair, improve, maintain, operate or promote one or more publicly owned and operated convention centers, sports stadiums, sports arenas, coliseums, or auditoriums within the county; and further include museums, zoological parks, aquariums, fishing piers or nature centers which are publicly owned and operated or owned and operated by not-for-profit organizations and open to the public within the county". According to the ordinance regarding Tourist Tax Budget Plan, 14% of budgeted TDT revenues can be used for tourism-related capital facilities projects.

This TDC capital facilities grant was primarily to build indoor nature exhibits in the new Community Conservation Education Center (CCEC). The TDC grant also funded some outdoor animal shaped play-structures for children. The CCEC is being funded and built by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Contracts have been completed for both the indoor and outdoor exhibits. The outdoor animal shaped play-structures will be built soon and stored until ready for installation. The CCEC construction start has been hindered by the COVID-19 pandemic, US Fish and Wildlife Service funding issues, and wetlands permitting delays with the St John's

Water Management District.

At the July 5, 2018 meeting, the Capital Facilities Committee approved a reimbursement grant to the MIWR for \$500,000. Funding would be via cash reimbursement from available TDC capital facilities fund balance or the most economical funding available to the County and recommended consideration and approval of the Tourism Development Council. The TDC approved this project at their July 25, 2018 meeting. The Board of County Commissioners, in regular session on September 18, 2018, approved the Tourism Community Development Plan Phase II which included the MIWR.

In this agreement, the project was due to commence construction by September 18, 2020 or funding would be withdrawn. Merritt Island Wildlife Association (MIWA) has requested a 1-year extension, with construction commencing by September 18, 2021. The TDC Capital Facilities Committee, at their August 25, 2020 meeting, and the Tourist Development Council, at their August 26, 2020 meeting voted to grant the extension. The Board approved the first one-year extension on September 15, 2021 to extend the timing of the funding to September 18, 2021. Most recently, the TDC Capital Facilities Committee, at their July 8, 2021 meeting, and the Tourist Development Council, at their July 28, 2021 meeting voted unanimously to grant this most recent extension to the Merritt Island Wildlife Association to December 31, 2023.

Clerk to the Board Instructions:

Please return a memo of the Board's action to Tourism Development Office and CAO.