**Council Communication**

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| Department:<br>Community Development<br><br>Case/Project No.: N/A | Ordinance No.: N/A<br><br>Resolution No.: 21- | City Council: November 8, 2021 |

**Subject/Title**

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Brownfields Cleanup Grant Application

**Location**

Single site cleanup for the Reliance Battery Factory site located at 813 22nd Avenue

**Background/Discussion**

Background

The Reliance Battery Factory site encompasses 0.93 acres within the 800 block of 22nd Avenue. Constructed in 1925, the building was located in an open area without any adjacent property owners. As the city expanded, the area surrounding the property became residential and the battery factory became a legal, nonconforming use within the neighborhood. The site was used for manufacturing, repairing and reconditioning lead acid batteries and remained in operation until Spring 2020. During its operation, the factory was cited several times for lead contamination which resulted in the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) completing a soil removal project in 1991 to reduce the lead exposure in the neighborhood.

In May 2020, Staff began working with the owner to acquire the property. After extensive testing, it was determined the site was again contaminated with lead with areas up to as much as 30 times standard levels of lead in the soil. Staff determined the best solution for the safety of residents would be to acquire the property, demolish the existing structures and work with EPA to clean up the lead contamination on the site. In October 2020, the City closed on the property as approved in Resolution 20-207. In 2020, staff applied for a FY2021 EPA Brownfield Cleanup Grant; however, the city was not awarded this grant. In Summer of 2021, staff awarded the demolition contract for the structures onsite and expect the demo to be complete by January 2022. Today, staff is requesting to reapply for the Brownfield Cleanup Grant for FY2022 to utilize EPA funding to clean up the lead contamination, if awarded the grant.

Discussion

The EPA has established the Brownfields Cleanup Grant Program and announced funding availability. This Program provides local communities with up to $500,000 to carry out cleanup activities at brownfields sites with a 20% cost share requirement. There is Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding programed to meet this cost share requirement, which has already been allocated.

With a long history of manufacturing lead batteries on the site, there is known contamination and presents a health hazard to Council Bluffs residents. These funds will be utilized for demolition, and cleanup of contamination from years of the manufacturing of lead batteries, which will be required for revitalization and redevelopment of the site.

The City is eligible with a proven track record of successfully implementing funding under the Brownfields Cleanup Grant Program. Since 2005, the City has received three EPA Brownfield Assessment Grants for a total of $1.1 million; two Cleanup Grants for a total of $400,000; and an Area-Wide Planning Grant for $200,000. An additional Brownfield Assessment Grant was awarded in July 2020 with a start date of October 1, 2020 to assess properties in the South End for potential redevelopment including the former Reliance Battery Factory site.

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An informational public hearing on the Grant will be held to inform adjacent property owners and other interested parties about the EPA Brownfields Program Grant Application and the activities contemplated by the grant if awarded.

**Staff Recommendation**

The Community Development Department recommends City Council adopt a resolution authorizing the Mayor to submit an US EPA Brownfields Cleanup Grant application.

**Attachments**

A. Site map
B. Draft US EPA Brownfields Cleanup Grant Application