Capitola City Council

Agenda Report

Meeting: September 10, 2026

From: City Manager Department

Subject: Update on Additional Improvements at the Park at Rispin Mansion

Recommended Action: Receive an update on progress towards additional improvements at the Park at Rispin Mansion and ongoing efforts to raise funds through an engraved brick program.

Background: The City has advanced the Park at Rispin Mansion as a multi-year project to create a public park and event space on the historic Rispin Mansion property.

On July 28, 2022, the City Council approved plans, specifications, and budget for construction of the Rispin Mansion Park Project and authorized advertising for bids. On March 28, 2024, Council approved a $949,000 contract with Betz Works to complete an amended project scope after the original bid solicitation received no bids.

On August 28, 2025, Council received a project update and provided direction to staff regarding additional hardscaping and landscaping outside the then-current construction scope. At that meeting, Council expressed support for developing a donation-based paver program and directed staff to proceed with a community paver program for dedication. Council also requested that staff reach out to community groups and develop a community fundraising approach for additional park enhancements.

On February 26, 2026, Council approved the updated landscape plan for the Park at Rispin Mansion, directed staff to develop a commemorative paver program, and authorized staff to negotiate a memorandum of understanding with Capitola Cares to coordinate fundraising efforts for additional park elements.

On April 23, 2026, Council authorized the City Manager to execute a memorandum of understanding with Capitola Cares for a fundraising campaign for additional elements at the Park at Rispin Mansion and approved an administrative policy regarding donor recognition at the park. The MOU (Attachment 1) states that Capitola Cares will fundraise to pay for the City's installation of an eight-pillar arbor and rehabilitation of the Park's water fountain. Also on April 23, Council directed staff to implement a community brick program to raise money for a full brick project, which is estimated at $80,000; the sale of about 400 engraved bricks at $200 each would cover that cost.

In addition, the City Council has previously allocated $50,000 for a Rispin Reflecting Pool Project from the Public Art Fund. In July 2026 the City received a grant of $30,000 from the National Endowment for the Arts, bringing the total budget for the public art project to $80,000. A "Call to Artist" for the Rispin Reflecting Pool Project was published with a submission deadline of March 9, 2026. The City received more than 20 applications in response to the Call to Artist.

Discussion: In mid-August, Capitola Cares notified staff that the group had raised sufficient funding, based on initial estimates and an earlier bid, for the arbor. Staff prepared an informal bid package, with bids due September 1. The City received one bid with two different building options (tapered versus non-tapered columns); both cost estimates exceeded the initially assumed budget by at least $40,000. As of September 4, the City has contacted Capitola Cares to determine if enough funding has been raised to pay the updated bid costs. City staff anticipates construction and installation of the arbor can be completed before the end of 2027, if sufficient funds are available within the next 30 days.

Staff continues to promote the engraved brick fundraiser authorized and discussed in prior Council actions. As previously reported to Council, the engraved brick program is intended to fund historically appropriate brick improvements in the walkways around the reflecting pool and sundial areas that are currently finished with decomposed granite. The program was designed with the goal of selling

approximately 400 engraved bricks at a cost of $200 per brick. Currently, staff has reached approximately 15% of the sales goal. Staff is increasing outreach efforts to improve participation in the fundraiser and support completion of the brick program. However, based on current fundraising, staff may recommend a new sales goal of 150 bricks and installing bricks around the reflecting pool, not including additional walkway areas, to remain within budget.

Staff will continue fundraising and project coordination consistent with prior Council direction. If needed, staff may return at a future meeting with additional information regarding fundraising results, implementation timing, or any recommended adjustments to project phasing.

The Art and Cultural Commission has reviewed the initial art applications submitted for the Rispin Reflecting Pool Project. The Commission selected four artists to develop and present concept proposals at the upcoming September 8, 2026, Art and Cultural Commission meeting. Staff expects to return to the City Council with an Art and Cultural Commission recommendation in September or October of this year.

Fiscal Impact: None.

Attachments: None

Alignment with 2025-2029 Strategic Plan Priority: Healthy Families, Community, and Environment

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