

RECREATION, LIBRARIES AND AUTHORITIES COMMITTEE

09-0708R

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING PERMIT FOR CONSTRUCTION OF ALPINE COASTER AT SPIRIT MOUNTAIN.

CITY PROPOSAL:

WHEREAS, on October 14, 2009, the city's parks and recreation commission held a public hearing pertaining to the construction of an alpine coaster at the Spirit Mountain recreation area after which voted to recommend a permit for such construction; and

WHEREAS, on November 10, 2009, the city's planning commission held a public hearing pertaining to the construction of an alpine coaster at the Spirit Mountain recreation area after which voted to recommend a permit for such construction.

RESOLVED, that pursuant to the provisions of Laws of Minnesota, 1973, Chapter 327, Section 5(e), the city council of the city of Duluth hereby grants a permit to the Spirit Mountain recreation area authority to construct an alpine coaster facility on the Spirit Mountain recreation area property substantially in conformance with conceptual plans therefore provided to the parks and recreation commission and the planning commission.

Approved:

Approved for presentation to council:

Department Director

Chief Administrative Officer

Approved as to form:

Approved:

Attorney

Auditor

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: This resolution issues a permit to Spirit Mountain recreation area authority authorizing the construction on area property of an alpine coaster facility. If approved, it would be only the fifth such facility located in the United States and the first in the Midwest, albeit there are a significant number of alpine coasters operating in other parts of the world.

Alpine coasters are four-season recreational rides similar in concept to alpine slides but with several differences which create a significantly safer and more family-friendly ride which will provide year-around recreational opportunities at Spirit Mountain, but will be especially beneficial in the non-skiing months. It consists of a track firmly pinned to the ground, which includes a series of twists and turns as it proceeds from the upper areas of the property to the bottom of the hill. Participants ride in cars which are firmly attached to the track and participants, in turn, are required to wear seat belts while using the ride. In addition the speed of the cars is governed to a maximum speed of about 25 MPH. The net result is a thrilling but safe ride for the area's patrons.

Because the track is mounted on structures which rise above ground level, the disturbance of the land is minimalized. In addition, this structure allows the track to be designed so that it miss virtually all environmentally valuable vegetation and any other environmentally sensitive areas. Incidentally, the resulting twists and turns in the track will help to create a more thrilling ride for the users.

The anticipated cost of the facility is expected to be in the vicinity of \$2.3 million which the authority expects to finance through a lease/purchase arrangement with a local lender. It is not anticipated that this funding structure would require any guaranty from the city or the taxpayers.

The special legislation which created Spirit Mountain includes a requirement that, before any construction such as that contemplated can commence, a permit must be obtained from the city council after the parks and recreation commission and the city planning commission have held public hearings on the proposal and they have made their recommendations to the council. Both bodies have held the requisite hearings and both have recommended approval.