



Legislation Details (With Text)

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Title: Resolution Authorizing Support of The Forge Greensboro Capital Improvements Matching Grant in an Amount Not to Exceed \$50,000 for Purchase of CNC Router and Laser Machines

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Resolution Authorizing Support of The Forge Greensboro Capital Improvements Matching Grant in an Amount Not to Exceed \$50,000 for Purchase of CNC Router and Laser Machines

Department: Executive
Council District: 1

Public Hearing: November 14, 2017
Advertising Date/By: November 2, 2017

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PURPOSE:

The City of Greensboro has been requested by the Forge Greensboro to consider a matching grant in the amount of \$50,000 for purchase of two CNC machines (Computer Numeric Control) machines, a Router and Laser Engraver, which will be used in workforce development, skills training and small business development opportunities.

BACKGROUND:

The Forge Greensboro is a 501(c)3 nonprofit community makerspace founded in 2013. It is a place where like-minded people, especially those interested in hands on skills and technology, gather to work on projects while sharing ideas, equipment, tools, and knowledge. As the largest community makerspace in the Southeast, students, entrepreneurs, artisans, trade professionals, tinkerers, and hobbyists enjoy the space, community, and resources of Forge Greensboro.

The Forge started primarily as a hobbyist space four years ago. However, in the past two years, there has been a substantial activity in entrepreneurship and skills development. In a recent survey of Forge members, 48%

identified as entrepreneurs, and 21.5% identified as skilled trades professionals. Currently, there are 20 small businesses operating out of the Forge, and frequent requests for classes and programs around trade skills development come from local nonprofits and area public and private schools. This trend has led the Forge Board of Directors to choose a more defined role for the organization as related to economic and workforce development.

Forge Ahead is the organization's first major capital campaign. This campaign's goal is to raise \$200,000 over the course of a year. The funds will be used to develop resources and programs to support a growing entrepreneurial membership, further develop mentoring, and education in the trades. Forge Greensboro is requesting that the City of Greensboro provide a \$50,000 matching grant for the purchase of a CNC (Computer Numeric Control) Router and Laser Engraver.

These two pieces of capital equipment will strengthen current programs and provide for programs in development. Both are used in modern manufacturing, design, fabrication, and art industry applications. These two machines have been identified as having the most potential to impact local makers. Engineers, furniture makers, inventors, designers, entrepreneurs, STEM students, robotics clubs, and artists would benefit. Currently, very few have even limited access to comparable machines.

Upon acquiring these pieces of capital equipment, Forge Greensboro would lead the entire Southeast region in low barrier access to industrial manufacturing tools. In addition, many employers in our region are currently looking for employees who have skills and experience in operating the specific CNC machines the Forge Greensboro wants to purchase. The Forge Greensboro will serve as an ideal venue for offering access to and training on the use of this type of equipment.

BUDGET IMPACT:

\$50,000.00 matching grant will be funded with the FY 17/18 Economic Development fund balance, to be paid upon verification of at least \$50,000 raised by the Forge Greensboro in their capital campaign, Forge Ahead.

RECOMMENDATION / ACTION REQUESTED:

City staff recommends a matching grant and performance agreement between the City of Greensboro and the Forge Greensboro be approved in an amount not to exceed \$50,000.00 to be paid when \$50,000 is raised and verified, from the 'Forge Ahead' capital campaign. The matching grant will be used to purchase two CNC machines, a Router and Laser Engraver.

