

CITY COUNCIL COMMUNICATION 97-475
SEPTEMBER 22, 1997 AGENDA

SUBJECT:	TYPE:	SUBMITTED BY:
ST. AMBROSE CEMETERY ADDITION	◆ RESOLUTION ORDINANCE RECEIVE/FILE	DONALD TRIPP PARK AND RECREATION DIRECTOR

SYNOPSIS —

Resolution not to purchase the property adjacent to St. Ambrose Cemetery at this time.

FISCAL IMPACT —

N/A

RECOMMENDATION —

Disapprove the purchase of the property

BACKGROUND —

At the July 7, 1997 City Council Meeting, Mr. Gerald LaBlanc appeared before the Council to request that the City purchase Lot #864 directly in front of the St. Ambrose section of Woodland Cemetery. Mr. LaBlanc voiced concerns that with development of the new I-235 interchange at Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway (MLK Pkwy), this property might be developed commercially and bring increased traffic, litter, and vandalism to St. Ambrose Cemetery. Mr. LaBlanc further recommended that the City keep the lot mowed to enhance the cemetery entrance.

Staff investigated the current conditions of the property and offers the following information for the Council's consideration:

- 1) The property is divided into six distinct lots, described as lots 1,2,3,4,5, and 6 of Block D, Kuhns Addition (see map attached). The address ranges from 860-864 Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway.
- 2) The property is currently zoned R-3, multi-family residential.
- 3) The property has three separate owners:
 - a) Larry Smith—owns lots 4,5,6 and northern 1/3 of lots 1,2, and 3. Olive Street borders this property on the north.
 - b) Richard E & Annie Hall—own middle 1/3 of lots 1,2, and 3.
 - c) DSM Habitat for Humanity, Inc.—owns southern 1/3 of lots 1,2, and 3. Crocker Street borders this property on the south.

- 4) Owners Smith and Habitat for Humanity have been contacted and are willing to sell their property. A certified letter has not been able to be delivered to the Des Moines address of the Hall's, and no other address or phone number is known.
- 5) The City of Des Moines on behalf of the State of Iowa is purchasing land along MLK Pkwy in the area of the above property to allow for the establishment of a new interchange from I-235 onto MLK Pkwy. The most current design for the I-235 interchange and MLK Pkwy South requires only the purchase of the property owned by DSM Habitat for Humanity, Inc. However, the design could change prior to final adoption by the State of Iowa, and additional land may need to be purchased from the above property. Even so, it is unlikely that Mr. Smith's property in any of the lots will be affected.
- 6) Mr. Smith acknowledges that a site plan for a car wash and/or convenience store has been before the City for some time. According to Mr. Smith, the plan has not passed review by the City's Traffic and Transportation Department because of the uncertainty of the location of the MLK Pkwy corridor. Mr. Smith has therefore listed his property for sale for the amount of \$140,000. The City, acting on behalf of the State of Iowa, has assessed the purchase value of Mr. Smith's property at considerably less, \$1.50 - \$1.96/sq. ft, or \$35,350 - \$46,350 for the approximately 23,650 sq. ft.
- 7) The City of Des Moines has presently made an offer of \$2,000 to DSM Habitat for Humanity, Inc. for its land, fully anticipating that it will be involved in the southerly corridor of MLK Pkwy. Demolition of an abandoned house on the site has significantly lowered the price offered (see Acquisition Plat map attached). While Habitat for Humanity is willing to trade, no agreement has been reached on an outright purchase price. Also, no offer has been made by the City for the Hall property.
- 8) Officials with the Iowa Department of Transportation (IDOT) plan to close Olive Street on the north end of the property to MLK Pkwy when the new I-235 interchange is completed. Also, no future connection will be made by Olive Street with the new Cottage Grove overpass, a part of the new I-235 interchange. This means that the only convenient access to Mr. Smith's property may be from Crocker Street, the present entrance into St. Ambrose Cemetery. If the State purchases the property which belongs to DSM Habitat for Humanity, the State may ultimately determine if any access is to be given to the rest of the property. Even if the owner was given access from Crocker Street, the inconvenience of the access, which may be from north to south only, would not appear conducive for high volume, commercial development.
- 9) IDOT officials also noted that in the most current design for the new section of MLK Pkwy at the St. Ambrose entrance, no provision was made to retain the Crocker Street (St. Ambrose) entrance (see I-235 overlay map attached). Representatives of St. Ambrose Catholic Church, for which Woodland Cemetery's St. Ambrose section once served, have indicated a preference to close the Crocker Street entrance. Park and Recreation maintenance staff agree but recommend that the entrance gate be left intact and an alleyway to Olive Street be made available for use as a maintenance entrance and emergency exit. But, if the City requests, IDOT has confirmed that the entrance could be retained.
- 10) The president for the Woodland Heights Neighborhood Association (WHNA), George Nichols, has stated in a letter dated February 23, 1997, to the IDOT that the most current interchange/MLK Pkwy design is supported by the WHNA.

It seems from the information available that the amount of land needed to complete the I-235/MLK Pkwy interchange has not been fully determined. No date has been set for the final design approval by the IDOT, so it could possibly be different from the one now shown. At its September 22, 1997 meeting,

the City Council will be asked to vote to approve and recommend to the State of Iowa the present design alternative. Final design approval by IDOT is estimated to be in two or three years.

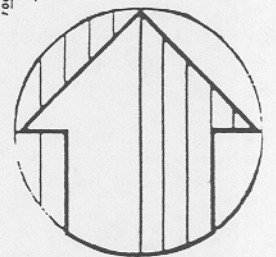
If the City desires to retain Crocker Street as an entrance into St. Ambrose, or close it and maintain the gate and an alleyway for emergency use only, it should request the preferred action and obtain verification in writing from IDOT. The purchase of the DSM Habitat for Humanity, Inc., land will determine the role of the State in allowing access to the remaining property. If limited access via Olive Street is available to the property not utilized in the I-235 interchange/MLK Pkwy, the Crocker Street entrance becomes more significant in determining the future use of the Hall and Smith properties. If the property has low volume access, it lessens the commercial desirability of the property. Once that determination is made, the City would be in a better position to decide if the property were a concern for St. Ambrose Cemetery, and what its value for purchase would be.

At its regular monthly meeting on September 9, 1997, the Park and Recreation Board, by Resolution #97-183, recommended that the property not be purchased at this time.

Attachments



ST. AMBROSE ADDITION

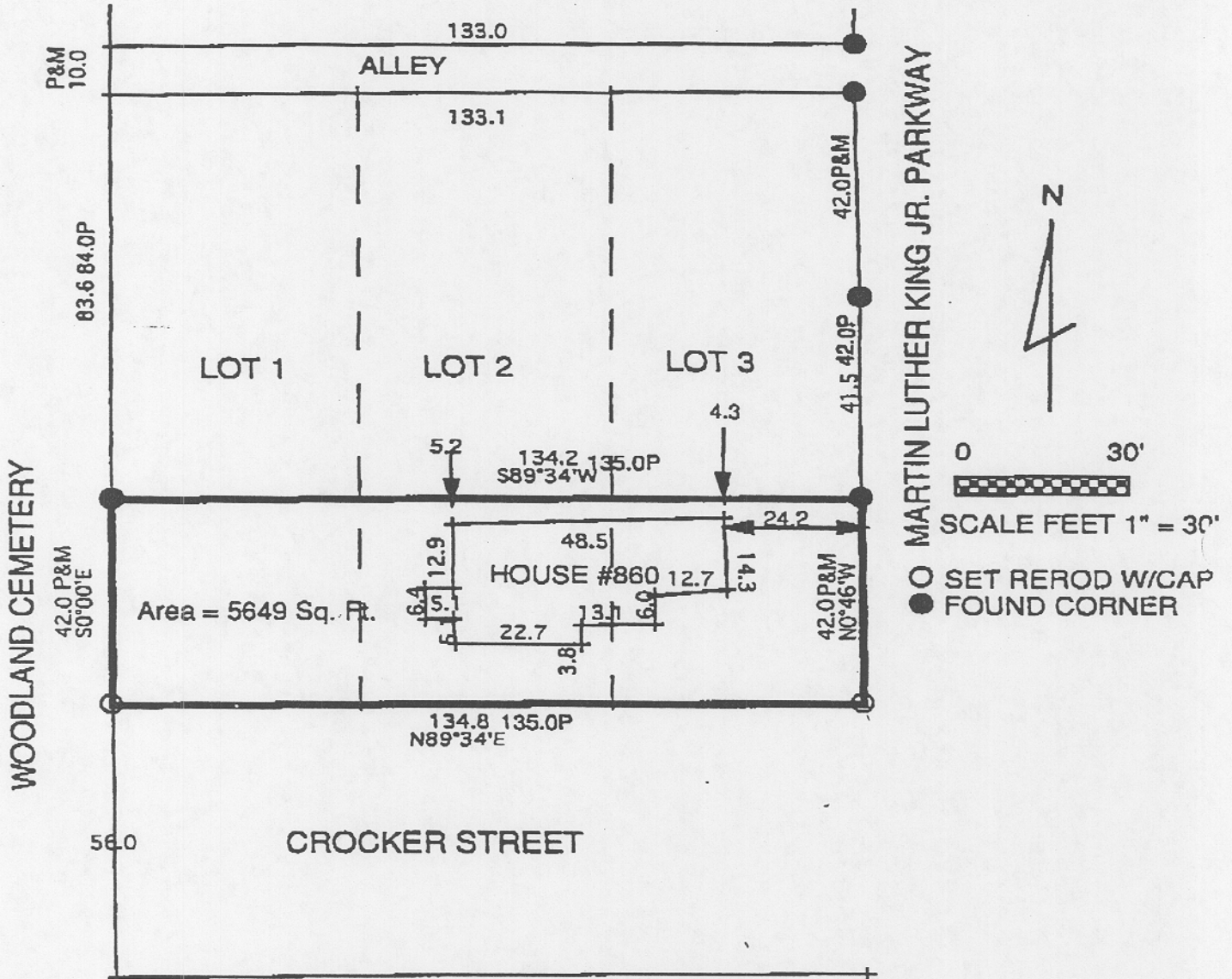


NORTH

ACQUISITION PLAT

PROPERTY ADDRESS: 860 MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. PARKWAY

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: SOUTH 42 FEET OF LOTS 1, 2 AND 3 BLOCK D, KURN'S ADDITION TO DES MOINES ALL NOW IN AND FORMING A PART OF THE CITY OF DES MOINES, POLK COUNTY, IOWA.

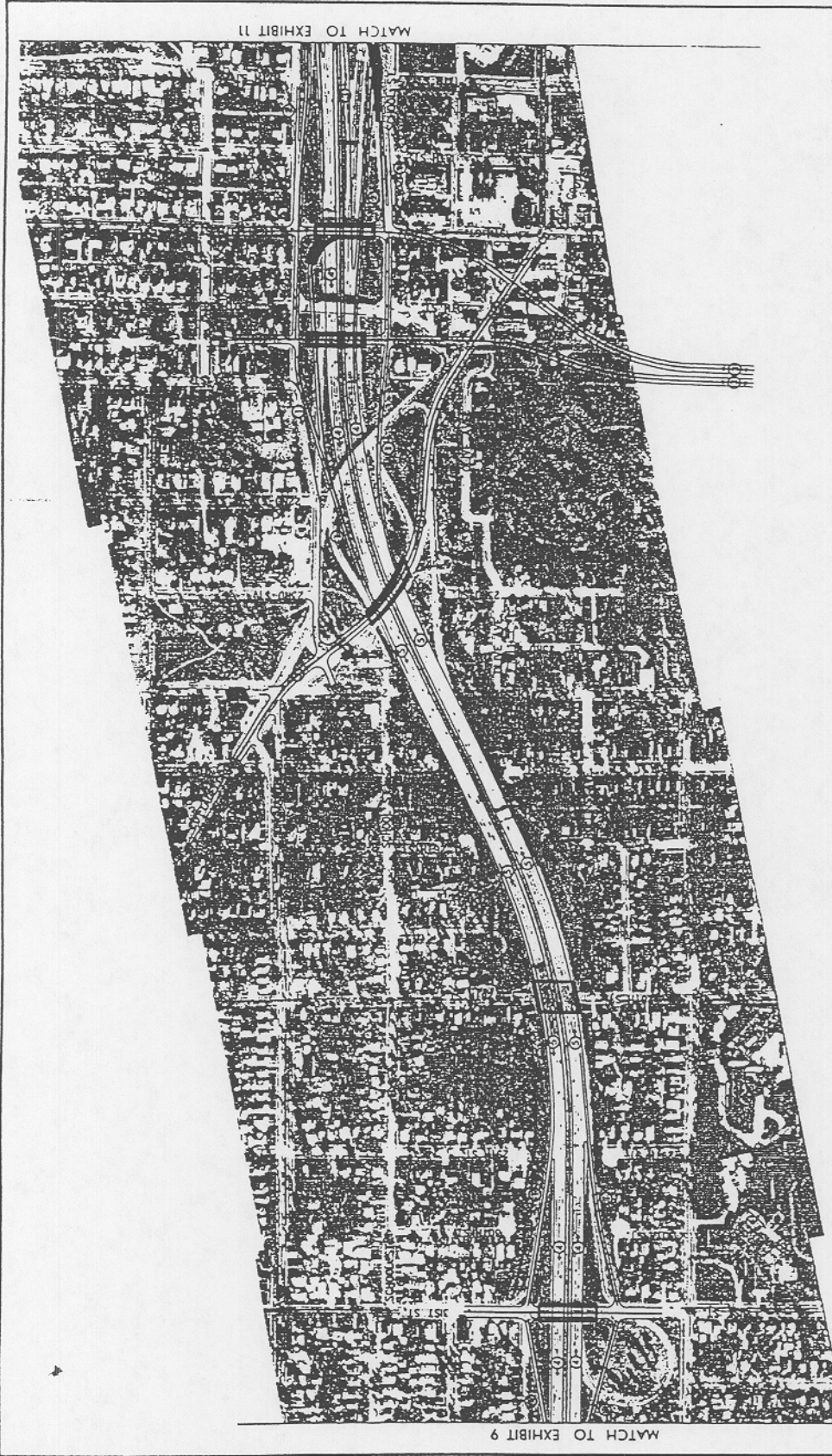


I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS LAND SURVEYING DOCUMENT WAS PREPARED BY ME OR UNDER MY DIRECT PERSONAL SUPERVISION AND THAT I AM A DULY REGISTERED LAND SURVEYOR UNDER THE LAWS OF THE STATE OF IOWA. MY REGISTRATION EXPIRES DECEMBER 31, 1996.

Michael M. Klapp Nov. 20 1995
 MICHAEL M. KLAPP, L.S. IOWA REG. NO. 4821

ST. AMBROSE CEMETERY ADDITION

I-235 AND MARTIN LUTHER KING PARKWAY



WILBUR SMITH ASSOCIATES
ENGINEERS PLANNERS ECONOMISTS
in Association with
Dorland Jones & Partners
Snyder & Associates



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF
TRANSPORTATION
IADOT
STATE OF IOWA

PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

