

OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER
DES MOINES, IOWA

CITY COUNCIL COMMUNICATION 97-482
SEPTEMBER 22, 1997 AGENDA

SUBJECT:	TYPE:	SUBMITTED BY:
GIFT FROM THE LAUREL HILL NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION AND ACQUISITION OF LAND FOR A PARK	◆ RESOLUTION ORDINANCE RECEIVE/FILE	DONALD TRIPP PARK AND RECREATION DIRECTOR

SYNOPSIS —

To accept a gift of \$12,000 from the Laurel Hill Neighborhood Association (LHNA) to combine with \$25,000 from the City, and direct the City Manager to proceed with acquisition of the parcel at 3407 Dean Avenue.

FISCAL IMPACT —

Twenty-five thousand dollars for acquisition, plus an estimate of \$100,000 for future development.

RECOMMENDATION —

Approval.

BACKGROUND —

Since 1993 the City has been discussing the need for a neighborhood park/playground facility in the Laurel Hill neighborhood. Parklands, the City Comprehensive Plan for Parks and Recreation, identified the need for a community park that served the residents of the southeast side of Des Moines. The Plan called for a single park located west of East 30th Street. Since that time, the City has negotiated a Chapter 28E Agreement to provide a public playground at Brooks Elementary School to serve the residents west of East 30th Street. Laurel Hill residents have continued to seek a neighborhood park during this time. By Roll Call No. 97-3108, residents presented a petition to the City Council requesting consideration for a park to be built between East 34th and East 36th Streets from Dean Avenue to Court Avenue. The Park and Recreation Board attempted to honor this request in a manner which would not add to park maintenance responsibilities. Efforts to negotiate use of the Iowa State Fairgrounds property were unsuccessful, and a suggestion to utilize City-owned property next to Laurel Hill Cemetery was decided to be objectionable due to the impact on cemetery visitors. Unable to find a suitable City-owned location, the approved 1996-97 through 2001-02 Capital Improvements Program (CIP) included a project to plan, design, and construct a neighborhood park at a cost of \$20,000 in FY 2001 and \$200,000 in FY 2002.

In 1996, the Park and Recreation Department decided to discontinue the practice of having staff live in a home located at the City Nursery (located on Court Avenue next to Laurel Hill Cemetery). Following an analysis of the condition of the home, an option to raze or move the structure was considered. This one acre site was offered to the neighborhood as a playground site to provide an immediate resolution of this issue. Twenty-five thousand dollars was included in the FY 1997-98 CIP Program, Neighborhood Parks. A meeting was held June 17, 1997, with the Laurel Hill Neighborhood Association. Options to purchase a property at 3407 Dean Avenue or use CIP funds to build a

playground at the Nursery home location were considered. The Association, by a show of hands, agreed to the purchase of a playground, since the asking price for the other property was \$60,000.

Subsequently, the Association learned of a price reduction to \$32,500 and made an offer to purchase, which expires on September 30, 1997. The Park and Recreation Board considered this issue and voted unanimously to recommend that the City attempt to purchase the property at 3407 Dean Avenue with the following stipulations:

1. The site will be investigated for contamination, drainage, and other issues which would preclude park development.
2. The LHNA agrees to provide maintenance support of the property for a minimum of five years (care of plant materials and litter pick-up were mentioned).
3. Any development funding be considered as part of the routine Park and Recreation CIP deliberations.
4. Routine maintenance be provided by Laurel Hill Cemetery staff. Park and Recreation staff to attempt to augment cemetery staff at budget review time.
5. The LHNA will continue fund-raising efforts to assist with capital development.
6. Review remainder of Park and Recreation system and determine if any properties can be sold to eliminate a maintenance responsibility elsewhere.
7. An appraisal will assure City pays no more than fair market value for property.

Attachment

3407 Dean

