



To: Park Board

Agenda Item #: VII.E.

From: Ann Kattreh
Parks & Recreation Director

Action
Discussion
Information

Date: October 6, 2014

Subject: Minneapolis Waterworks Site – 40th & France

Action Requested:

No action requested by staff.

Information / Background:

The site is located on the west side of France Avenue near its intersection with W. 40th Street [see attached map]. The parcel is 14.3 acres in size. The north 1/3 of the property is located in the City of St. Louis Park and the southern 2/3 is located in the City of Edina. While the property is owned by the City of Minneapolis, neither site is within the corporate limits of the City of Minneapolis.

The property was purchased in the 1920s by the City of Minneapolis to serve as a future asset for the Minneapolis municipal water utility. Other than a pump station located near France Avenue, there are no other buildings on the site. The City of St. Louis Park manages a small portion of the Minikahda Vista Park (the infield portion of the ball field) on the far NW corner of the site through a lease agreement with the City of Minneapolis. The City of Edina has no current formal use of any portion of the site.

In 2006 staff from St. Louis Park and Edina approached the City of Minneapolis about using the site as an off-leash dog park. At that time, Minneapolis was not interested in selling or leasing the property to either city. Despite the fact that the dog park proposal did not go forward in 2006, the site has been used as an unofficial off-leash dog park, along with other unsupervised activities, ever since.

The City of Minneapolis first approached City staff from St. Louis Park and Edina in September of 2013 to advise that the property was being declared to be "excess land" and was to be sold by the City of Minneapolis. Because the land was located in St. Louis Park and Edina, Minneapolis city officials wanted to discuss the possibility of a bilateral sale of the pro rata share of the site to each city instead of putting the land on the market for possible sale and subsequent private development, most likely as new residential sites.

Development Potential and Property Value

The zoning for the site in Edina is R-1. It is guided as low density residential in our Comprehensive Guide Plan. The zoning and guiding in the St. Louis Park portion are similar to our designations. The City of Minneapolis shared two concept plans for subdividing the site into a total of 27 single-family parcels. Approximately seven of those single family residential lots were in St. Louis Park and 20 were in Edina.

Edina city staff's analysis of the development potential of the site differs substantially from the view offered by Minneapolis city staff. Given the flood plain, steep slopes, and median lot size requirements of our City Code, Edina city staff estimates a total of ten developable lots in the Edina portion of the site. Based on the R1 zoning district minimum lot area of 9,000 square feet in St. Louis Park, St. Louis Park staff estimates a development potential of approximately four dwelling units per acre could be achieved on an unimpeded site. The concept plans show fewer lots because part of the land is within the floodplain. City staff has told Minneapolis staff on multiple occasions that staff's interest would not be in developing the property for residential homes, but rather to maintain a park for the residents of all three communities with possible storm water management amenities. Determining the value of the property has been a sticking point in discussions between staff of Edina, St. Louis Park and Minneapolis. The City Council has had no formal discussions about this issue to date.

Staff have scheduled a Closed Session in advance of the City Council's October 7 Work Session in order to discuss the possible purchase of real estate owned by the City of Minneapolis at 40th & France . The Mayors of St. Louis Park and Edina received a letter from the Mayor of Minneapolis requesting a decision on purchasing the property be communicated to them no later than November 14, 2014 and that a real estate closing occur before the end of the year. The purpose of the Closed Session is to provide City Council with relevant background information about the site, discuss proposed uses for the site and discuss possible strategies to move forward.

Attachment:
Site Diagram



MiniKahda Vista Park - SLP

Minneapolis, MN 55410

Waterworks Property - Mpls., Owns 15 Acres

Weber Park

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