



City of Columbia

701 East Broadway, Columbia, Missouri 65201

Department Source: Parks and Recreation

To: City Council

From: City Manager & Staff

Council Meeting Date: March 7, 2016

Re: Acquisition of Two Parcels Located in The Gates Subdivision

Executive Summary

The Department of Parks & Recreation is requesting approval to acquire two parcels located in The Gates subdivision near High Point Lane and Route K. These parcels are owned by Michael Tompkins, et al. Staff negotiated a selling price of \$360,000 for the 60.81 acres of Parcel A. Additionally, Mr. Tompkins is willing to donate 5 acres of Parcel B to provide a neighborhood connection to the future park. The parcels are undeveloped and will be used to preserve natural areas; protect the Little Bonne Femme Creek; provide access for the future Little Bonne Femme Trail; and pending neighborhood involvement, provide small neighborhood park amenities, such as a playground, walking trails, and a small shelter. This acquisition does not impact any earlier agreements associated with the previous developments. Funding is from the 2010 Park Sales Tax park acquisition account.

Discussion

Park staff first became aware of the availability of this property in early 2013 during Columbia Public School District's site selection process for their new southwest elementary school. One of the tracts considered included a portion of the land that now represents The Gates subdivision. During this period, the potential for a combined school/park proposal was in the works. Ultimately, the school district selected property located at the corner of Scott Boulevard and Route KK for their school, which has been named Beulah Ralph Elementary School, and the possible land acquisition proposal was withdrawn.

In an email dated February 8, 2014, developer Mike Tompkins contacted Parks & Recreation Director Mike Griggs about the purchase of land for a natural area in his new subdivision called The Gates. Ongoing negotiations from that first email to now eventually led to a tentative agreement to purchase 60.81 acres for \$360,000 and accept a donation of approximately 5 acres. Staff has requested that Mr. Tompkins submit the property for platting; and during the platting process, easement for the future widening of High Point Lane accounts for approximately 5 acres. This explains why the platted acreage is shown as 54.76 acres.

The property was appraised by Moore & Shryock on May 13, 2015; and as shown on the attached appraisal, was valued at \$460,000 for the 60 acres and \$17,000 for the 5 acres.

The parcels are undeveloped and will be primarily used as land preservation, with a small area that in the future could be developed into a small neighborhood park. The property includes a portion of the Little Bonne Femme Creek and will provide future access for the



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development of the Little Bonne Femme Trail as shown in the department's 2013 Trails Master Plan. There is a small area that pending input from the future neighborhood residents could provide small neighborhood park amenities, such as a playground, walking trails, and a small shelter. If desired, funding for these amenities would likely come from a future park sales tax ballot issue and is not included as part of this Council action.

Working with the Greenbelt Land Trust (GLT) and other community partners, the Parks and Recreation Department collaborated on a plan for land preservation in Columbia and Boone County. This plan, called *Our Natural Legacy: A Plan for Columbia and Boone County* (ONL Plan) describes its mission to chart "a course for ensuring that our natural legacy continues to enhance the environmental, social, and economic well-being of our county. Purely voluntary in nature, it draws its implementation possibilities from the power of collaboration, an example of how the private sector and government at various levels can get behind an ambitious vision, pool resources around a concept, and achieve things for people and the nature that surrounds us in way that could never be achieved by organizations and individuals acting alone."

The GLT is responsible for organizing and coordinating the implementation phase of the ONL; and as part of the annual agreement GLT staff identifies, evaluates and assigns scores to potential properties. The scoring matrix focuses on key land and preservation attributes, including watershed buffer, public access, zoning, property costs, development pressure, historic preservation, strategic plan area, size, quality of habitat, scenic value, existing landscape, at-risk species, recreational facilities, and location.

Two properties located in The Gates subdivision were selected for scoring. As shown on the attached scoring plan, the two properties scored 37 points out of a total of 65 points and ranked in the top five of high priority land acquisition for natural preservation.

Funding is from the 2010 Park Sales Tax. Due to economic concerns regarding revenue predictions for the 2015 Park Sales Tax, staff has adopted the policy of delaying park acquisition until the end of the ballot cycle. The 2010 Park Sales Tax officially ends March 31, 2016 and the 2015 Park Sales Tax revenue begins to collect starting April 1, 2016. This allows the department to make sure that the identified projects from the 2015 Park Sales Tax ballot are completed; and if the sales tax does not generate the revenue as predicted, it primarily impacts the amount of funds that are available for land acquisition. Following the acquisition of this property and other obligations, there will be a balance of approximately \$940,000 in the park land acquisition accounts for remaining high priority properties per Council direction.



Fiscal Impact

Short-Term Impact: The proposed purchase price for this property is \$360,000. Funding set aside for land acquisition from the 2010 Park Sales ballot issue is available to cover the cost of this acquisition. Since the land is primarily a natural area, there will be no development costs at this time.

Long-Term Impact: This land is purchased primarily for natural land preservation so on-going maintenance will be minimal, probably at less than \$1,000 per year. Staff anticipates that when S. High Point Lane is improved, there will be a need to develop sidewalks which will come with additional maintenance costs.

Vision & Strategic Plan Impact

Vision Impacts:

Primary Impact: Parks, Recreation & Greenways, Secondary Impact: Environment, Tertiary Impact: Development

Strategic Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Infrastructure, Secondary Impact: Not Applicable, Tertiary Impact: Not Applicable

Comprehensive Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Environmental Management, Secondary Impact: Land Use & Growth Management, Tertiary Impact: Mobility, Connectivity, and Accessibility

Legislative History

Date	Action
11/02/2015	Ordinance: Agreement with the Greenbelt Land Trust of Mid-Missouri for the implementation phase of the Our Natural Legacy Plan. https://www.gocolumbiamo.com/Council/Commissions/downloadfile.php?id=19484

Suggested Council Action

If the Council concurs that the acquisition of the described park land is appropriate, the ordinance authorizing the land acquisition to proceed should be approved.