

ITEM # 29
DATE 11-20-07

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: GREENBRIAR PARK IMPROVEMENTS

BACKGROUND:

Greenbriar Park is a seven and one-half acre, triangle-shaped parcel that is located north of South 16th Street, east of the Vet Med bike path, and west of the Ames Christian School. It is part of the municipal park system currently utilized as a BMX bicycle course and for temporary construction debris and snow storage.

The City of Ames acquired this parcel in 1969 under condemnation from the Zenor Trust to extend South 16th Street. At that time, the parcel came under the jurisdiction of the Park Commission. Included within the Purchase Agreement was the stipulation that if the City of Ames failed to use the property for a municipal purpose and decided to dispose of the property, the Zenor Trust had the opportunity to purchase that parcel. This stipulation expired on January 1, 1990.

The north part of the park has very poor drainage and continually holds stagnant water. During heavy rain events, excessive stormwater flows over this part of the park into Coldwater Golf Links. This causes flooding and damage to the golf course, which has resulted in closures of several days for clean-up and repairs. Extensive stormwater management improvements are needed on the north end of the site to help alleviate these problems. Debris clean-up, site grading, topsoil addition, seeding and mulching are needed on the remainder of the site to return it to green space. With the park's location adjacent to South 16th Street, construction of a path along the street through the limits of the park (south side) will be needed to complete the shared use path system in this area.

Randall Corporation, owners of Coldwater Golf Links, approached City staff with a proposal to transfer Greenbriar Park to Randall Corporation in exchange for designated future right-of-way for the Grand Avenue Extension project and completion of all the improvements noted, above.

The condition of the land within Greenbriar Park is poor due to the fill material on the site and the salts from the snow storage over the years. The value of this land could be **as low as \$6,600** based on adjacent agricultural land value and in consideration of the poor quality of the soils. In comparison, agricultural land was recently acquired for the Southeast 16th Street Improvements project at \$0.22 per square foot; however, this is high quality agricultural land located in an area of high development potential. If this value were applied to Greenbriar Park, the value could be **as high as \$73,000**.

In contrast to these dollar values of Greenbriar Park, a comparison of the estimated costs and values for the items that Randall Corporation would undertake in the proposal are shown on the following page.

Randall Corporation

Grand Ave. Extension right-of-way	\$ 35,000
South 16 th Shared Use Path	\$ 38,000
Stormwater management improvements	\$100,000
Re-establish green space	<u>\$ 50,000</u>
Total	\$223,000

If the park were to be transferred to Randall Corporation, property taxes would be assessed based on the use made of the land by Randall Corporation. Although property adjacent to Greenbriar Park is used for agricultural purposes, it is zoned as residential high density. Zoning would have to be changed as Council deems appropriate, since the park area is currently zoned Government/Airport. The draft Government Lands Study shows the park property as suitable for low density residential uses. That designation could be changed to agricultural or greenbelt uses if Council desires. Randall Corporation has expressed interest in allowing the Ames Christian School to utilize the improved space for recreational purposes.

If Council does not choose to consider this agreement, the noted improvements (estimated at \$188,000) and the purchase of the Grand Avenue right-of-way (\$35,000) will need to be programmed through the City of Ames Capital Improvements Plan process.

Should City Council decide to move forward and consider this land transfer, the Parks and Recreation Commission will need to review the proposal and make a recommendation to Council. Commissioners would need to assess the impact this proposal would have on the residents of the area and the overall park system.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Refer this proposal to the Parks and Recreation Commission for further consideration and recommendation back to Council.
2. Direct staff to evaluate and program the noted Grand Avenue right-of-way acquisition and improvements to Greenbriar Park through the Capital Improvement Plan process.

MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

The acquisition of **right-of-way for the future Grand Avenue Extension** will be necessary for that project to take place. **Stormwater management improvements** are needed at Greenbriar Park to mitigate public health and safety liability as well as to minimize impacts on adjacent private property. **Construction of a shared use path** along South 16th Street adjacent to Greenbriar Park is necessary to connect this path to the Vet Med path (through the abandoned railway). The **current condition of Greenbriar Park** does not present an attractive, welcoming image for the park system. The Randall Corporation proposal appears to address these items to the financial benefit of the City. However, the Parks and Recreation Commission may desire to retain this parcel to satisfy future recreational needs.

Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council adopt Alternative No. 1, thereby referring this proposal to the Parks and Recreation Commission for further consideration and recommendation back to Council.