

To: Mayor and City Council
From: Keith Abraham, Parks and Recreation Director
Date: May 5, 2023
Subject: Existing Buildings on the Sands-McDorman Property

BACKGROUND:

Staff has been working with the owners of the Sands-McDorman property (5658 Ontario Street) to purchase approximately 50 acres for the purpose of developing the land into a Community Park. This property is a diverse site that features a portion of Clear Creek, 12-acre prairie, 20 acres of upland crop fields, 12 acres of brome pasture, and a 4-acre building site with the homestead and deteriorating farm buildings. City Council inquired about what was going to happen to the buildings and whether there is a potential reuse for some of them.

BUILDING EVALUATION:

The site contains five buildings as shown on the map below:



Parks and Recreation staff and Assistant Building Official Scott McCambridge visited the site to tour the buildings and perform a visual inspection. Scott's assessment of each of the buildings is as follows.

#1 House:

Overall, the house is in good shape for the age of the structure. To change the use of this building from residential to commercial or business use would require some modifications such as accessible entrances, bathrooms, parking and perhaps even some structural reinforcement. Consultation with an architect is recommended to determine the feasibility of reusing this structure for anything other than residential uses.



#2 Garage:

This building seems structurally sound from visual inspection. The foundation and roof system are in average shape for the age of the building. The roof should be replaced, and some tuckpointing/brick work would need to be done to make the structure weather tight. With those improvements, the building could then be used for storage.



#3 Milk House:

This structure is in good shape for the age of the building. It does need some ceiling joist repair/replacement on the top floor, a new roof, tuckpointing/brick work, and new windows to seal the building against the elements. This building could be used as storage, similar to the garage.



#4 Large Barn:

This building is structurally unsafe due to several factors. It is substantially leaning to the west and the interior load bearing elements are not properly supported. The foundation of this structure is in bad condition as well. It is recommended that this building not be used for storage or occupancy in its current condition. However, there is some value in the old lumber.



#5 Small Barn / Corn Crib:

The foundation of the building is below average with some noticeable cracking under the load bearing walls. The roof structure seems inadequate due to rotting wood members. This building should not be used in its current condition but has value in the lumber, same as the Large Barn.



STAFF COMMENTS:

The visual inspection indicates the garage and milk house could be used for storage after improvements are made. Further inspection of the house by an architect would need to be performed to determine what needs to be done to make the house compliant for commercial use.

However, even if there is some value in making improvements and utilizing these buildings, it should be considered whether there is a need to utilize them and whether they are in the right locations. Based on the topography of the site, amenities for active recreation (i.e., fields, courts, open space for play, etc.) will be constructed on the southern portion of the property. If storage space is needed, it will be needed near these active recreation spaces. Except at Moore Memorial Park, the City's community parks currently do not have storage buildings in them, as the need for such storage is very minimal. Even if the house was made compliant, staff does not view this as a functional building for City use and the repairs may be cost prohibitive.

Staff would recommend: 1) soliciting buyers for the barn wood, as there is value in the lumber, and 2) demolishing the remaining buildings once the purchase of the property is complete.

