

Staff Report

**UTILIZATION OF WINAKOR BEQUEST FOR WESTSIDE PARK
ALONG ONTARIO ROAD**

October 9, 2012

BACKGROUND:

On September 11th members of the Parks and Recreation Commission met with the City Council to discuss how the unrestricted gift of approximately \$1.7 million from Geitel Winakor should be utilized.

Relying upon pre-established decision-making criteria, the Commission formally recommended, **“That City Council approve a resolution to utilize the funds received from this bequest to proceed with the purchase and subsequent development of an approximate 80-acre parcel of park land in west Ames.”**

At this meeting, the City Council questioned if any green open recreational space could be incorporated into the development to accommodate soccer and open play space for neighborhood residents. As a result of this feedback, Staff met with the owners of the property and informed them of the Council’s desire. At this meeting, **the property owners agreed to this request as shown on the attached conceptual Park Master Plan (Attachment A). Therefore, development of seven (7) acres now includes green open recreational space, a parking lot, shelter/restroom, a basketball pad, and play equipment.**

The City Council should note that this recreational open space allotment exceeds any of the existing park system acreage that is currently used for youth and adult soccer, flag football, pick-up activities, etc. As an example, recreational green open space totals 3.75 acres at North River Valley Park, 4.75 at Inis Grove Park, and 2.75 at McCarthy Lee Park.

The City Council should also understand that this recreational open space, as currently planned, would not be developed until residential development occurs to the south. As shown on Attachment B, Sunset Subdivision is being developed to the south and moving north toward the proposed park. Another 30 acre parcel of land (owned by the Huang family) is located between the Sunset Subdivision and the park parcel. The Huang’s anticipates selling their parcel for residential development in the future. **Once this occurs, Wilder Boulevard would be extended north to the south property line of the park to provide the necessary access to this recreational area.**

Owners Intent/Related Stipulations for Selling this Parcel

ITEM 1: Preservation of the Site

The owners want assurance that their land can **never** be developed with residential, industrial, or commercial structures. To accomplish this they intend to sell the land to the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation (INHF). The City would then purchase the parcel from INHF, which will include a Conservation Easement within the deed.

The Conservation Easement will detail “Permitted Uses” and “Prohibited Uses”. **Anticipated stipulations** for this parcel would include:

Permitted Uses:

- Low-impact recreational uses including; picnicking, fishing, bird watching, wildlife viewing, hiking, bicycling, cross-country skiing, open green space to accommodate recreational sport programs such as soccer, flag football, and pick-up sports play and practices, kite flying, etc
- Construction of structures necessary for public access to the site; security lighting, benches, bridges, kiosks, shelters, restrooms, interpretive signs, parking lots / driveways, hard-surfaced trails, playground equipment, and basketball pad
- Utilities
- Restoration of stream corridor for water quality, ecological benefits, erosion control
- Restoration, improvements, replacement or removal of the existing structures including the corn crib and barn
- Agricultural crop productions on existing fields
- Enrollment and participation in Conservation Reserve programs
- Ecological management of native or reconstructed prairie, woodlands

Prohibited Uses:

- Developed recreational activities including; Dog Park, Disc Golf Course, Skate Park, sport field fencing and lighting, swimming pool, equestrian trails, paint ball courses, zip lines, and ropes courses
- Residential, commercial, and industrial development
- Agricultural confinement buildings
- Dumping or mining

Staff Reaction:

The Conservation Easement that will be required between the City and the INHF would be similar to the governance of Ann Munn Heritage Woods. This 40-acre woodland is owned by the City but under restrictions as detailed within a Conservation Easement with the INHF. No issues have arisen related to this agreement. Therefore, staff supports entering into a Conservation Easement

with the INHF which will detail the permitted and prohibited uses of this site as reflected.

ITEM 2: Property maintains a farm-like feel, abundant with prairie and woodland

To accomplish this “feel” the owners want assurance that the City will maintain the prairie, plant native oaks on the upland and **structurally stabilize** the barn and **restore the exteriors of both buildings**. They believe these structures will better assure that when combined with educational resources (interpretative signage, class outings for children, etc.) Iowa’s rich agricultural heritage will be passed along to future generations.

Staff Reaction:

Due to the educational connection that can be made between these two structures and Iowa’s rich agricultural heritage, staff agrees with the owners request to renovate the exteriors of the barn and corn crib.

A structural engineer provided a cursory assessment of the structures. The report states that it would be cost prohibitive to renovate the interior of the buildings to achieve code-required egress and accessibility standards. The cost to address **structural** issues related to the **barn** would total **\$100,000** (the corn crib is structurally sound). To make both buildings **aesthetically pleasing** would cost a total of **\$125,000**.

Staff supports expending \$100,000 (Phase I) to address the structural issues related to the barn. Future efforts (Phase II) should focus on raising private funds and obtain grants related to enhancing the **aesthetic issues** of both structures (\$125,000).

It should be noted, the Conservation Easement Agreement will **allow** for the **demolition of both of these structures** following their “renovated life-cycle” as described above in Phases I and II.

ITEM 3: Maintain 1.6 Acre as Private Property/Annexation of the Land

As shown on Attachment A, the 80 acre parcel is located on the south side of Ontario. The owners want to maintain their house (located immediately adjacent Ontario in the center of the 80 acre parcel) as a private dwelling. Therefore, this 1.6 acres will not be included in this land sale to the City. However, the City will have “Right of First Refusal” upon the owner’s selling this parcel in the future.

In addition, the owners have requested that the City pay **to extend utilities to** (water and sewer) **to their home** (approx. \$20,000).

Staff Response:

The owner’s residence must be annexed into the City per State law because an “island” can not be created. However, the City will have “Right of First Refusal” to purchase this parcel presumably based upon **agricultural land values at that**

time (yet to be finalized with the owners). Therefore, staff supports the extension of utilities to their residence and also the **construction of a 6' wood fence** (\$10,000) around the private property to buffer the park from the residence.

The house is currently on a septic system, and for water quality purposes, it is in the best interest of Clear Creek to eliminate the septic system.

ITEM 4: Naming Rights of the Park:

To honor their parents, who purchased this property in the 1940's, the owners request naming rights of the park and are considering naming it "Ted and Anna Sands Nature Park".

Staff Response:

Staff has no objections to naming this park after the owner's parents. This support is based upon the premise that the City will be purchasing this 80 acre parcel at an "agricultural" value. The official name of the park will be determined prior to the City entering into the Deed of Conservation Easement with the INHF.

Estimated Project Expenses total \$2,601,350

As detailed on Attachment C, the \$1.7 million bequest will not allow for the development of the entire parcel which is estimated to cost approximately \$2.6 million. It should be noted, that the cost estimates listed may vary by 20% (higher or lower) than the actual construction bids received.

It should be remembered, the purchase price for the parcel will be based upon agricultural land values. To determine this value, the INHF contracted Hertz Farm Management (HFM) to complete this formal land appraisal. It is anticipated that the appraisal will be completed by the end of October. In preparing the attached estimated project budget, **City staff** used a land value of \$8,000 per acre.

Staff has prioritized this park development into two phases as follows:

Phase I = \$1,762,600 / Phase II = \$838,750 (to be developed when Wilder Boulevard is extended to the south property line of the park and funding allows)

Anticipated Project Revenues total \$2,601,350

City Funds	\$1,901,350
Grants	\$ 250,000 (REAP / Iowa Barn Foundation)
Private Fund Raising	<u>\$ 450,000</u>
Total Estimated Cost	\$2,601,350

City Council Direction is Requested on the Following Issues

Conservation Easement

Do you support entering into an agreement with the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation with the permitted/prohibited uses (highlighted above) at a purchase price based on an agricultural land value?

Annexation of 1.6 Acre of Private Property

Based on the City receiving the “Right of First Refusal” to purchase this parcel, do you support the City paying the associated costs of installing a fence (\$10,000) and extending utilities (\$20,000) to their home?

Barn and Corn Crib

Do you support addressing the structural issues associated with the barn and to restore the exteriors of both structures in the future as funding allows?

Naming of the Park

Do you support naming the park in honor of the owner’s parents?

Phase II

Is it acceptable that development of the southwest open green recreational area/related amenities **not** occur until Wilder Boulevard is extended to the park’s south property line in the future?

Identified “Next Steps” to Acquiring this Parcel

- Review the Hertz Farm Management appraisal and determine the land purchase price based upon agricultural land value. This step could include obtaining a second formal land appraisal should City Council so desire.
- Finalize the Project Budget - based on the updated purchase price of the land
- Finalize the “Right of First Refusal” legal document for the 1.6 acre private property parcel
- Complete the land survey, platting, and parcel legal descriptions
- Annex the parcels (Private Property and City Park)
- Purchase the land and enter into a Deed of Conservation Easement with the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation

The goal of this public park and land conservation project is to protect and enhance the wildlife habitat, open space and water quality of Clear Creek, while providing the opportunity to preserve the historic Iowa farm character, encourage environmental education and allow for simple and leisurely recreational opportunities.



CONCEPTUAL MASTER PLAN



PROPOSED LANDCOVER LEGEND

	RESTORED WOODLAND		PRAIRIE AREA (EXISTING CRP)		RESTORED PRAIRIE		RESTORED SEEP OR WETLAND		RESTORED RIPARIAN AREA
	PAVED TRAIL (interior 0.4 mile) (perimeter 1.3 miles)								
	CRUSHED ROCK TRAIL (1.0 mile)								
	MOWN TRAIL (.25 mile)								



1 inch = 200 feet

Ontario Street

Future Park

Huang 30-acre Parcel

Sunset Ridge
Subdivision

Future Wilder Ave

Wilder Ave

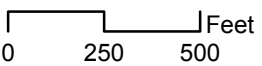
Lincoln Way



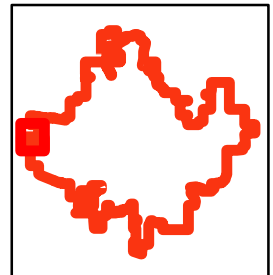
Legend



Ames City Boundary



Location Map



Attachment C

ESTIMATED PROJECT BUDGET \$2,601,350

PHASE I = \$1,762,600

	Cost Estimates
INHF Annual Monitoring of Deed Easement	\$ 20,000 (perpetual monitoring – one time fee)
Purchase property (80 acres)	\$640,000 (based on \$8,000 per/acre estimate)
Site Survey	\$ 5,000
Legal	\$ 10,000 (Closing costs, platting, etc)
Internal Walking Trails (rock)	\$ 25,000
*Utilities	
Park Development	\$ 40,000
House – Private	\$ 20,000
House – Fence	\$ 10,000
*Shelter House/Restroom	\$185,000
*Natural Play Ground	\$ 25,000
*Prairie / Savanna / Gully Restoration	\$ 25,000 (ISU classes – Volunteer Labor)
*Parking Lot #1 (24 spots)	\$ 36,000 (\$1,500/spot)
*Internal Asphalt Trail / Bridge	\$100,000
*Pedestrian / Heavy Equip Bridge #1	\$125,000
*Pedestrian Bridge #2	\$ 75,000
*Barn: Structural Stabilization	\$100,000
*Perimeter Paved Trail and 2 Bridges	\$225,000 (REAP grant submitted August 2013)
Construction Budget Estimate	\$1,666,000
A&E (*5%)	\$ 48,300
Contingency (*5%)	<u>\$ 48,300</u>
Project Budget Estimate	\$1,762,600

PHASE II = \$838,750 (Wilder Blvd is completed to the south park property line)

*Earthwork / Turf established	\$ 50,000
*Park Entry Drive	\$ 100,000
*Utility Extension	\$ 100,000
*Parking Lot #2 (75 spots)	\$112,500
*Shelter / Restroom #2	\$225,000
*Traditional Play Structure	\$ 50,000
*Barn & Corn Crib: Exterior Restoration	<u>\$125,000</u> (Grant / Private Fund raising)
Construction Budget Estimate	\$762,500
A&E (*5%)	\$ 38,125
Contingency (*5%)	<u>\$ 38,125</u>
Project Budget Estimate	\$838,750