Memo



To:

Mayor and City Commissioners

Via:

Russ Blackburn, City Manager

From:

Fred Murry, Assistant City Manager

Date:

November 30, 2007

Subject:

Available Land for Senior Center

As you are aware, the City Manager and General Manager for GRU received an inquiry from Commissioner Jack Donovan about land City-owned land that could be considered for a potential senior center proposed by a local group called the Community Coalition for Older Adults (CCOA) CCOA includes representatives from Alachua County, the Alachua County Library District, Mid-Florida Area Agency on Aging, Shands Healthcare, and the United Way, as well as a host of other groups The group's plan is to eventually pursue a grant from the State's Department of Elder Affairs to establish a senior center in Gainesville. Commissioner Donovan has suggested one way the City might help is to identify a site that could be made available for this purpose.

On October 18th a community forum was held on creating a senior center and was co-sponsored by CCOA, Alachua County, Senior Times Magazine, and several other local groups. One of the outcomes of the forum was a desire to move forward with planning for a senior center. With that in mind representatives for Community Redevelopment, Block Grant and Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs staff met to discuss any potential City-owned land that could be considered for this purpose. The intent was to develop a list of potential sites for consideration, include the pros and cons for each site and use this list for discussion purposes only. From there we would request guidance from the City Commission on how to proceed. Listed below are City-owned sites that have been considered (see the attached map):

Fred Cone Park/Eastside Recreation Center - 2841 East University Avenue

25 acre tract of land includes the Eastside Recreation Center, a baseball/softball field, 1 soccer field, 1 multipurpose field, 2 outdoor basketball courts, and a playground. Eastside Recreation Center was made possible through an EDI-Special Project Grant from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development and funding from the Gainesville City Commission, the Alachua County Board of County Commissioners and the Greater Gainesville Park and Development Group, Inc. The Master Site Plan contains a developed track and football field.

Pros: There is adequate space for an addition to the existing building or a separate building. There appears to be sufficient room for additional parking for a senior center. The park is located a mile or so east of the intersection of Waldo Road. There would be opportunity to expand programming during non-use hours for the Recreation Division as well as other departmental and City use. This location is on a bus route

Cons: There may be restrictions for new development not included in the approved Master Plan There also could be concerns from adjacent neighborhoods if programming extended to night use.

Northeast Complex/Citizens Field – 1028 NE 14th Street

32 acre tract of land that includes swimming pool, MLK Multipurpose Center, NE Complex A Administration building, a proposed modular skate park, Citizens Stadium and open fields that are used for soccer, football and overflow parking for the scheduled football games and activities held at Citizens Stadium

Pros: There is adequate space for an addition to the existing building or a separate building. There appears to be sufficient room for additional parking for a senior center. The property is located near the intersection of Waldo Road and NE 8th Avenue. There would be opportunity to expand programming during non-use hours for the Recreation Division as well as other departmental and City use.

Cons: There could be concerns from surrounding neighborhoods if programming extended to night use. This location is not on a direct bus route but is close to those on NE 8th Avenue

Northside Park - 5701 NW 34th Street

This 47 area tract of land includes a disc golf course, picnic area, playground, racquet ball courts, restrooms and lighted tennis courts. There is parking but it is not paved. There are also deed restrictions to this property but the proposed used would allow the center to be constructed as long as it is used for park and recreational purposes.

Pros: There is adequate space for an additional building. Currently there are no indoor facilities or programming being conducted from this location, so the addition of a senior center facility would address that need. This property is located off of two main corridors and in on an RTS bus route.

Cons: There could be concerns from surrounding neighborhoods if programming extended to night use. A portion of this property lies within the Hogtown Creek Watershed basin.

Other Parks and Properties Considered

The City has several parks in the suggested area that were considered but not recommended to pursue for several reasons. The following were discussed and dismissed:

- Northeast Park 400 NE 16th Avenue
 This 22 acre tract of land is close to maximum build out Furthermore, the surrounding neighborhoods have voiced their concerns about any additional improvements to the park.
- Lynch Park 500 Block of South Main Street
 This park is just over an acre of land, has existing deed restrictions and would not accommodate parking needed for a senior center.
- TB McPherson Park 1717 SE 15th Street
 This 15 acre tract of land is located off SE 15th Street. The property is too far out for a central location.
- Depot Park 201 SE Depot Avenue
 This 35 acre tract of land is currently under development. Depot Park was considered but later eliminated because the site is undergoing a feasibility study by the City and CRA for a 50,000 square foot museum proposed by an interested party.

As mentioned before, the intent was to develop a list of potential sites for consideration, include the pros and cons for each site and use this list for discussion purposes only. It is recommended that this issue be referred to the Community Development Committee for further discussion.

Please let us know if you have any questions or need additional information

Xc: Paul Folkers, Assistant City Manager Steve Phillips, Director, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs Jim Hencin, Block Grant Manager Anthony Lyons, Community Development Manager



