



Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission

MEMORANDUM

To: Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission
From: Robert L. Tetens, Director
Date: August 13, 2013
Re: DF Land Development Property, 54 acres – Ann Arbor Township

Background

In December 2009, a parcel of property located in Ann Arbor Township was nominated for consideration by the Washtenaw County Natural Areas Preservation Program (NAPP). The 54 acre parcel is owned by DF Land Development, LLC. The Natural Areas Technical Advisory Committee's site visit in Fall 2009 identified a number of significant natural features. The property is almost entirely wooded, with areas of mature oaks, maples and other hardwoods. The central woodlot is of especially high quality with an open understory and an absence of invasive plant species. The western boundary of the property is loosely defined by Kirk's Brook, a tributary to Fleming Creek that flows south and east, eventually entering the University of Michigan Matthaei Botanical Gardens. The most significant characteristic of the property is the steep slopes that are present throughout. From a central highpoint or plateau the property slopes to both the east and west with a change in elevation of approximately 50 feet.

Subsequent to the site visits, the Natural Areas Technical Advisory Committee (NATAC) discussed the value of preserving the DF Land Development Property. The location of the property is significant, as it is immediately west of Marshall Nature Area, an 87 acre property owned by the City of Ann Arbor. NATAC also remarked on the close proximity of the DF Land Development Property to other protected land, namely the Commission's Goodrich Preserve and the University of Michigan Horner-McLaughlin Woods. Connecting these properties would be of significant value to the public, offering the opportunity for an extensive trail system.

Based upon the characteristics of the site and the opportunities noted above, preservation of the DF Land Development Property is a high priority – especially if it can be acquired through a partnership or other collaborative approach. As part of this approach, an application requesting acquisition funds was submitted to the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund. The Commission received notice in December 2011 that the application had been selected for award and a project agreement was executed in August 2012.

Along with the MNRTF grant funds, other partnerships and collaboration have been secured. The property owner has elected to participate in the protection of this property through a reduction in sales price. Ann Arbor Charter Township has also joined in this partnership with a pledge of \$150,000 toward the cost of acquisition. The resulting acquisition partnership is illustrated below:

Appraised value of DF Land Development Property	\$3,250,000
Price reduction from property owner	\$1,083,000
MNRTF Acquisition Grant Funds	\$1,088,220
<i>NAPP contribution</i>	<i>\$928,780</i>
Ann Arbor Charter Township contribution	\$150,000
Final net price for DF Land Development	\$2,167,000

Discussion

As required, the following due diligence investigations have been conducted:

- A Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment prepared by Mannik & Smith Group, Inc., found no evidence of recognized environmental concerns.
- A boundary survey was prepared, including legal description and sealed survey drawing.
- An appraisal, prepared by Bur Valuation Group, identified a value of \$3,250,000.

Recommendation

Based upon the review by the Natural Areas Technical Advisory Committee and staff, along with the support and contributions of other organizations, it is my recommendation the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission authorize purchase of the DF Land Development Property (Ann Arbor Township) at a net price of \$2,167,000.

Attachments