



COBURG CITY COUNCIL ACTION/ISSUE ITEM

Topic: Park Land Swap

Meeting Date: October 12, 2021

Staff Contact: Anne Heath, City Administrator

682-7871, anne.heath@ci.coburg.or.us

REQUESTED COUNCIL ACTION

Information Only

POLICIES OR CITY COUNCIL GOAL(S)

- **Livability, Health, and Vitality**
 - **Strategic Planning**
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BACKGROUND

For several years there has been a discussion regarding the property abutting Pavilion Park. This is the property between the park and the old City Hall. While this property has been utilized as parkland, it is actually privately owned by the Shepard Investment Group LLC.

When the City conducted the build-out scenario and this land was looked at, it was apparent that development could happen on this lot that might not be in the best interest of the community, and would reduce the available open space for pavilion park. The City Administrator began a conversation with the Shepard Family regarding the property at the request of the Mayor.

PROPERTY SWAP PROPOSAL

The Shepard Family owns most of the properties south of City Hall to Chiefs Restaurant. However, they have limited parking for these buildings. At one time they leased spaces from the City. However, they decided to not lease them, and their employees began parking on the street or available parking around their building and in the downtown. They have an interest in owning the parking lots behind their buildings.

The City does not use the parking to the south of the grassy area behind City Hall. The Police Department does have a building in the area, and they do park cars in some of the parking spaces. This area would need to be condensed. The Police have plans for disbursement of some of the cars, and the building could be either moved or reconstructed. This would reduce

the parking available to the City to the south and directly behind the Shepard Family properties. While this would not likely affect the daily operations of City Hall, on court days, and events at City Hall, it could limit the parking. However, the City has recently opened up down town parking spaces at the IOOF building and there could be signage pointing visitors to this parking area in the event that overflow was needed.

The City has also discussed with the property owner to the north of City Hall the possibility of creating downtown parking for City Hall and visitors along the tree line. No concrete plan has been developed or agreed upon at this time. However, the City Administrator will be meeting with the property owner in the near future.

The City had an appraisal conducted on both properties and the Shepard property is significantly more valuable than the parking area as reflected in the attached appraisal. However, the family is willing to consider the swap and donate the difference in value for the property. Their only stipulation is that they would like their late daughter considered in the naming of the park. Their daughter grew up in this area, attended the charter school, local high school, and the entire family has ties to this community.

In September, 2021 the City Administrator developed a proposal, and the Mayor provided a letter to the Shepard family proposing a possible land swap and requesting that they donate the difference in land values.

HISTORY OF SHEPARD FAMILY IN THE COMMUNITY

The Shepard family has a long history in Coburg, owns many local properties, and was actually instrumental in making the land available for public land in Pavilion Park which now sits on property that was owned by the family. Chuck Shepard actually designed and built the Pavilion with the thought that it would become a concert venue. The family has a heart for this community and very much wants to see this land set aside as parkland.

NEXT STEPS

With Council direction, staff will move forward to legally swap the property ownership and ensure that this portion of pavilion park remains public lands and available for the use of the community and visitors for years to come.

This will be a lot line adjustment which must be approved, as well as a donation to the City. Once the planning and legal documentation was completed, the Council would review and vote on the land swap and accept the donation to the City. There will also be some planning and land use steps that will need to be taken

The Park and Tree Committee is considering a redesign of the park in order to create a public plaza. This would create more outdoor seating, activities, and enhanced venue space, and a beautiful central park that is useful and pleasant for both citizens and visitors. The subject property would be crucial to fully redevelop the park.

RECOMMENDATION AND ALTERNATIVES

The alternatives are:

1. Do nothing. The land remains with the Shepard Trust who can sell it and/or develop it according to the current City Development Code.
2. Purchase the property. The City could make an offer on the property and purchase it out right. However, at this time, the City does not have the funds to do so.

BUDGET / FINANCIAL IMPACT

The land swap would have a small financial impact on the City for legal and possibly escrow fees. The City has already paid for an appraisal for the two properties which is contained in this packet.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

1. Public comment would be available on the night the City Council approved a land-swap agreement.
2. There may be requirements for notification of disbursing of Public Property. This needs to be researched by legal for this kind of transaction.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Appraisal Report for both properties
 - B. Engineer drawing of lot line adjustment
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