

# WESTWOOD PLANNING COMMISSION

Staff Report

Meeting Date: August 4, 2025

Staff Contact: Leslie Herring

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**Presentation:** Receive presentation of proposal from Hunt Midwest & Finkle + Williams for former Westwood View Elementary School site

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## Background/Description of Item

On April 1, 2025, an election was held on whether the City should sell the existing Joe Dennis Park on the corner of 50th & Rainbow Blvd. to enable redevelopment of the site and replacement of the park on the former Westwood View School site. The results were 48% in favor and 52% opposed to the sale of the park. The following week, the City's development partner - Karbank - terminated its purchase agreement with the City, which left the City with no way to fund the purchase of the school site under the current agreement between the City and the School District.

The following table illustrates the process from beginning to end.

Milestone	Date
The School Board approved a Fourth Amendment to the Real Estate Purchase Agreement with the City to demolish the school building.  The Board also expressed a desire to give the City an opportunity to identify a buyer that aligns with the community's best interests.	May 12
The City received the School District's application for demolition of the site.*	May 16
The City Council unanimously approved the Amendment to the Purchase Agreement and directed City staff to develop a process to request proposals from interested partners for a potential assignment of the City's purchase rights.	May 29
<a href="#">Advertise &amp; Issue RFP</a>	June 11
<a href="#">Community Preferences Survey Period</a> (City administered)	June 11 – June 25
Deadline for Requests for Clarification and Questions on RFP	June 18
Posting of <a href="#">Responses to Requests for Clarification and Questions</a> , and Community Survey Results [for incorporation in proposals]	June 25
RFP Response Deadline	July 9
Review of RFP Responses Completed; Shortlisted Respondents Notified; Invitation to Interview with Review Committee	July 16
Interviews Completed; Questions Addressed; Teams Notified	July 25
RFP Review Committee Recommendation Posted (in Planning Commission August 4 <sup>th</sup> meeting packet)	July 31

Public Comment on Recommendation Accepted for Council Consideration on August 14 <sup>th</sup>	July 31 – August 14
Public Presentation by Selected Respondent at Planning Commission meeting	August 4
Formal Recommendation to Governing Body; (staff directed to prepare assignment documents; any changes to proposal/input to be incorporated by September 11 meeting)	August 14
Assignment Action, if any, by City Council	September 11
Due Diligence Period expires	October 31
Closing Deadline	November 28
* Although demolition activities are underway, it will still be likely several weeks before the building is taken down.	

### Request for Proposals (RFP) Review Committee Details

On July 8, 2025, the membership of the five-member RFP Review Committee was finalized. Creation of this ad hoc administratively appointed committee occurred under my authority as City Administrator. On July 9<sup>th</sup>, responses to the RFP were received and routed to the Committee; no responses were received prior to July 9<sup>th</sup>.

The 5-member Committee was comprised of:

**Jeff Harris**  
(City Council President)

**Clay Fulghum**  
(Planning Commission  
Vice-Chair)

**Jay Corazza**  
(Westwood Foundation  
Board Member)

**Holly Wimer**  
(City Councilmember)

**Ann Holliday**  
(Planning Commissioner)

The Committee met on July 11<sup>th</sup> to deliberate on the RFP submissions, select teams for interviews, and to determine details and format for the interviews. Interviews were conducted on July 21 and 22.

Staff support was provided by both me, as City Administrator, and our Financial Advisor, Columbia Capital. Columbia Capital being represented by both Jeff White and Adam Pope during the process.

### RFP Review Committee Consideration of Proposals

Six (6) responses were received and reviewed by the RFP Review Committee. Responses received were submitted by the following team leads:

**Box Dev Co**

**Grata**

**Molzer**

Genesis

**Hunt Midwest**

TriStar

Four (4) teams were invited to interview with the Review Committee. These teams are highlighted above. Ultimately, following interviews and a final cumulative scoring, Hunt Midwest partnered with Finkle + Williams prevailed as the team recommended by the Committee for consideration by the City Council.

The Committee used the following criteria in their evaluation of the teams and proposals:

- ✓ Alignment with City objectives and public interest;
- ✓ Track record of similar projects;
- ✓ Financial feasibility and public benefit;
- ✓ Transparent team structure and experience; and
- ✓ Responsiveness to site and context.

A sampling of the Committee's notes from the review process site several reasons supporting its recommendation of this team to take on the future of this important site in the community:

- "Professionalism"
- "Experienced group"
- "Open"
- "Flexible"
- "Diversity in housing types"
- "Relatively strong financial benefit"
- "Most ready to collaborate with the city and the public"
- "Willingness and ability to adapt to city/community feedback"
- "Best chance to evolve the initial proposal to best meet the various city needs"
- "[They] do not want to build something unpopular with existing residents"
- "Willing to consider different architecture to capture a more 'Westwood' community feel"
- "Hunt Midwest has the financial and organization capacity to give us the \*highest\* confidence the project will be successful"
- "Hunt Midwest had the best range of [housing] price points to attract the widest ranges of residents"
- "Well established, very strong financially, ready to close on school property and move the project along"

## **Planning Commission Presentation**

Hunt Midwest and Finkle + Williams will present their proposal at the August Planning Commission meeting. Responses and reactions to the presentation will be shared with the City Council ahead of its August 14<sup>th</sup> meeting, where they will receive their own presentation from the team, who will make its formal request at that time for assignment of the City's right to purchase the former Westwood View site. Assignment action would take place at the City Council's September 11<sup>th</sup> meeting, if so directed at their August meeting.