

**WILLMAR PLANNING COMMISSION
CITY OF WILLMAR, MN
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2020**

MINUTES

1. The Willmar Planning Commission met on Wednesday, December 16, 2020, at 7:00 p.m. virtually via GoTo Meeting.

**** Members Present:** Christina Nelson, Steve Gardner, Cletus Frank, Jonathan Marchand, Jeff Kimpling, Rolf Standfuss, and Terry Sieck.

**** Members Absent:** Khalif Ahmed Bashir and Stephanie Carlson

**** Others Present:** Sarah Swedburg – Planner and Rob Baumgarn – Director of Parks and Recreation Department

2. MINUTES: Minutes of the December 2, 2020 meeting was approved as presented.

3. LAND TRANSFER AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY AND WILLMAR SCHOOL DISTRICT: Staff presented the scope of the Land Transfer Agreement between the Willmar Public School District and City of Willmar. The City will be assuming ownership of a portion of property by the High School for development of more athletic fields as a Local Option Sales Tax Project (2701 30th St NE). Additionally, the City will be assuming ownership of existing park land East of the former Lincoln School building (511 Julii St SE); this property has been maintained by the City for some time & assists the City in continued master park planning.

The Planning Commission reviewed and discussed Staff comments (Attachment A).

If funding were to become available, additional parking may be built on the future athletic fields site by the High School, but no parking is planned at this time. The School will be retaining the varsity softball field for physical education purposes. The Commission discussed the Zoning Ordinance “Joint Parking Facility” standards & access easement agreements that would be required of other private developers. The Parks & Rec department and the School have discussed parking numerous times & were planning for the existing school parking lots to be utilized at this time.

The area between Lincoln School and the park land of interest is still in the City’s ownership as Right of Way. Parking for this park exists south, across Minnesota Ave SW. No other changes with this site are planned at this time.

Some Commissioners inquired about the location of the storm water/additional parking area – is there any advantage to the Invest in Willmar Team consider locating these items near Lake Marley?

Motion by Mr. Frank, seconded by Mr. Kimpling to approve the Joint Parking Facility and forward recommendation to City Council for approval of the Land Transfer Agreement, contingent upon inclusion of joint parking & access easement agreements with the School District.

Motion carried.

4. There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting adjourned at 7:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Sarah Swedburg
Planner

PLANNING COMMISSION – DECEMBER 16, 2020

STAFF COMMENTS

1. LAND TRANSFER AGREEMENT (CITY/SCHOOL DISTRICT):

- As part of the local option sales tax recreation field projects, the City and Public School District are pursuing a transfer of land from the School District to the City for the development of athletic fields at the current High School location – 2701 30th St NE (see map included in packet – legal description in development).
- Additionally, the School District is looking to transfer park land to the City that the City has maintained for some time behind the former Lincoln School described as: Lots 1-7, excluding the Easterly 18.8 feet of Lot 7, Block 1, Ferring's Third Addition to the City of Willmar, Minnesota AND Lot 1 & 2, excluding the North 1/100 feet, Block 1, Welch's Addition to the City of Willmar (511 Julii St SE).
- Both properties are zoned G (Government).
- Both properties will continue to be used for public park/recreational facilities.
- City and School District use of these facilities will be covered under existing facility use agreements overseen by the Parks & Rec department.
- A portion of the Local Option Sales Tax funding has been designated to fund the design and construction of new athletic fields on the property located by the High School. The final scope of the project is yet to be determined by the City, but the project is currently expected to consist, at minimum, of the following components:
 - Four softball/youth baseball Fields with
 - Dugouts
 - All fields fenced in
 - 220-foot distance to the outfield fence
 - Irrigation for all four fields.
 - One or Two regulation sized multipurpose turf fields
 - Lines for soccer, football and possibly Lacrosse
- The athletic fields property by the High School will not include parking. A joint parking facilities provision will be included in the Land Transfer Agreement. These parking spaces are within 300 feet of the fields and times of use should not substantially conflict with the use of the School's parking lot.

RECOMMENDATION: Approve the Joint Parking Facility to be included in the Land Transfer Agreement between the City of Willmar and Willmar Public School District. Recommend approval of the Land Transfer and forward to the City Council for review.