



WILDWOOD®

January 15, 2019

The Honorable City Council
City of Wildwood, Missouri
16860 Main Street
Wildwood, Missouri 63040

Re: **Town Center Park Development – Initial Steps (Ward Eight)**

Council Members:

Background >>> The City of Wildwood has offered a number of its most popular, and well attended, recreational events in the Town Center Area, since the completion of the major mixed-use development by KP Properties in 2005. This development included two (2) phases, of which Phase 1 was constructed with a number of new buildings, including the Walgreen's, the commercial building, where Starbucks is located, and the former City Hall site, now HOV. The second phase did not see the level of development as Phase 1. Therefore, many of the proposed lots remained vacant and were used by the City for many of its major recreational events and monthly Summer concert series. These locations were not owned by the City, but had been either leased from the owner or allowed to be used by the same. The use of these many lots lasted for an extended number of years.

However, more recently, development in the Town Center Area has increased in intensity and led to many of the past locations the City had used for these events no longer being available for these purposes. This situation started with the development of the Stonecrest Senior Center and now with the Prime (another mixed-use project). The development of these Downtown District designated properties is a positive for the community, as a whole, but did have these unanticipated consequences for Wildwood's recreation events. These consequences were a loss of traditional locations for its events and new areas having to be found and then obtaining authorization for use. However, this process is time-consuming and not always successful, while, certainly, confusing to residents.

To this end, the City Council began a search for a location for its events, as well as needed green space in the Town Center Area, which, with development absorbing useable sites, had become a greater priority. This search focused on the Town Center Area and the property options that existed in this special location of the City. This review process considered a number of properties, including a range of sizes and locations. Additionally, the search included all zoning districts and Town Center Land Use Designations, thereby assuring the location that might be chosen for consideration was the best option for the City and its use by its residents. This initial search process did not result in a property that met all of the characteristics the City had identified through discussions by the Planning and Parks Committee and the City Council over the course of it.

Unexpectedly, an opportunity presented itself to the City when it became aware that two (2) properties located immediately to the west of the City Hall site were available for potential purchase. One (1) property was being offered by the heirs of the previous owners, while the other was to be sold by St. Louis County

for back property taxes. The City negotiated the sale of the property with the heirs of the previous owners and was able to purchase the site that was sold at the tax sale from the top bidder thereafter. With these purchases, the City was able to acquire the two (2) sites that were located to the west of City Hall that formed a six (6) acre parcel of ground for use. This six (6) acre parcel of ground is now the focus of the City in terms of green space in the Town Center Area.

Current Conditions >>> The property was purchased in 2018 and has a number of intrinsic characteristics associated with it. These characteristics are the beginning points of direction for the future use of the property. These characteristics include the following items:

1. The overall site (two (2) properties) is served by Crestview Drive, a private street that serves a total twelve (12) properties. This private roadway is one (1) lane in width, lacks formal stormwater facilities, and is in generally fair condition.
2. The City-owned properties are almost perfect rectangles in terms of their shapes.
3. The City-owned properties each had a single family dwelling upon it. These dwellings have been removed by the City and the land area, where they were located, restored.
4. The sites increase in elevation from Crestview Drive to the south, but level off thereafter to the southernmost edges of them.
5. The City-owned properties are primarily grass areas and turf, but also have locations of existing woodlands, which are primarily situated around their perimeters and where the former dwellings were located.
6. The City-owned lots also have areas of invasive species that have grown on the sites over the last few years, when the properties had not been maintained to the degree as others in their vicinities.
7. The City-owned properties adjoin other residential properties on the three (3) sides, while the eastern boundary of the tract of land is Wildwood City Hall site.
8. The City-owned properties are designated Downtown District under the Town Center Plan's Regulating Plan. This land use designation is the most intense allowed in the Town Center Area, but does allow for public green space activities.
9. The tract of land is served by all utilities, including public sanitary sewer service and high-speed internet.
10. The soil structures of these properties has not been studied, but is expected to have better than average depths, composition, and fertility, given they are at the top of a ridge line defining the Missouri and Meramec River Watersheds.
11. The Parks Action Plan Update Committee considered these two (2) properties and created a new goal and recommendations regarding them, which are attached to this Memorandum for review by the Council Members.

This assessment is very general in nature and would be the subject of more detailed analysis in the future.

Studying the Sites >>> As part of the discussion of the 2019 Fiscal Year Capital Improvements Program, the City Council wanted to expedite the review and development of plans for the use of the City's newest green space area. To this end, the City Council set aside in this budget funds to undertake the initial assessment of the property and began the development of the needed planning and concept designs for the purposes of its future use. Although several discussions have been held about the property's future use, which have included a Village Green, a splash pad area, a neighborhood park, and others, no direction has been set. However, before any formal action can be undertaken, the Committee had supported the need to undertake