

**5.01: Consider Recommendation Confirming Existing Master Parks and Trail Plan Regarding the Sketch Plan of Harvest Estates Located at 15153 Nowthen Blvd NW; Case of N.I.K. Management, Inc.**

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood reviewed the purpose of this case is to confirm the current Master Parks and Trail Plan as it relates to the Sketch Plan for Harvest Estates, a proposed 45-lot detached, single-family subdivision on the former municipal center campus located at 15153 Nowthen Blvd. NW. the topics of confirmation include the following:

Sketch Plan Review is a process outlined in City Code that provides an opportunity for the Planning Commission to review compliance with the Comprehensive Plan as well as Zoning and Subdivision Codes (City Code Chapter 117) before an Applicant spends resources on detailed civil engineering drawings. The Parks and Recreation Commission does not traditionally review Sketch Plans; however, given the significant policy topics, confirmation of direction is warranted before the Applicant proceeds with future review steps. This step is not required by Minnesota Statute Chapter 462; however, it provides for a more proactive and collaborative design approach in an effort to avoid issues at a later date.

Staff attempted to notify all Property Owners within 700 feet of the boundaries of the Subject Property of the Sketch Plan Review via Standard US Mail.

**Observations/Alternatives:**

**Observations:** The City is currently in the process of completing the necessary steps for the required Comprehensive Plan Amendment and Zoning Amendment if the site is to redevelop as proposed.

The proposed 45-lot single-family subdivision appears to comply with all minimum bulk standards of City Code Chapter 117 Article III (Subdivision Standards) and Section 117-111 (R-1 Residential District). A detailed analysis of this review is included in the staff report. The Applicant is required to demonstrate in additional detail compliance with required setbacks for future structures.

The site is still actively being used as Fire Station No. 2. The City Council recently approved the site plan, accepted final plans and specifications, and authorized Staff to advertise for competitive bids for construction of a new Fire Station No. 2 as reviewed by the Planning Commission. In the coming months, the City Council will consider awarding a contract for construction. The redevelopment of the site will need to happen in phases.

**Master Park and Trail Plan**

As the redevelopment of the old municipal center has been discussed over a number of years and has taken a number of forms. A topic that routinely is raised is the potential for a new City Park. The City has routinely responded that it does not plan for a future City Park in this development. The area is well served by existing parks, connected through a series of pedestrian trails. Additionally, the focus of the Parks and Recreation Commission has shifted away from a series of

smaller “pocket” parks to larger community parks with higher quality amenities connected through the City’s pedestrian trail system.

### **Alternatives**

Alternative #1. Confirm the policy direction to not include a City park within the proposed development. This alternative would allow the proposed development to move forward as presented. Park Dedication and Trail Development obligations would be satisfied by cash contribution.

Alternative #2. Amend the policy direction to include a City park within the proposed development. This would require the Applicant to revise the proposed development as presented. The addition of a park in this area would reduce resources available for other future improvements already planned and would add to the City’s ongoing maintenance costs. (The Park and Recreation Commission previously held that, there are adequate parks, recreation, and open spaces available to the proposed development within reasonable distance.) This alternative would reduce or eliminate the cash contribution to the Park Trust Fund to be utilized to enhance the existing, surrounding parks and trail connections.

Funding Source: All costs associated with processing the Application are the responsibility of the Applicant.

The Applicant/Developer shall be responsible for required infrastructure costs and development fees required to serve the development.

This project is subject to a Purchase Agreement between the City and N.I.K. Management, as the Subject Property is currently owned by the City. Infrastructure costs have the potential to impact the net revenue of this project pro-forma.

Over the past years the City has looked at various options for the use of the property. It was decided to have a policy of not constructing pocket parks putting more focus on the community parks and trail connections to existing parks within the City.

Staff recommends that the City confirm the existing Parks and Trail Master Plan and not include a new City Park within the proposed development known as Harvest Estates.

Park dedication is suggested cash in lieu of land for Harvest Estates. Maintain the policy of not constructing pocket parks. Mr. Riverblood indicated the location of the property on a map. There is a great need for park improvements, as noted in the Park Improvement Plan, which reaffirms not constructing any pocket parks. The trail systems and sidewalks in the surrounding neighborhoods are complete. Soltis Park is disconnected from the trail system. The City does own a small parcel that could be used to connect the two cul-de-sacs to Soltis Park.

Chair Bennett stated he does not feel the Commission has changed their mind on the policy of not creating pocket parks and in taking cash in lieu of land to support improvements in other larger parks.

Motion by Commissioner Barr, seconded by Commissioner Fyten, to recommend that the City Council confirm the existing Parks and Trail Master Plan and not include a new City park within the proposed development known as Harvest Estates and reaffirm the Commission Policy.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Vice Chair Bennett, Commissioners Barr, Fyten, Chubb, Mobry and Trappen. Voting No: None. Absent: