
To: Planning and Zoning Commission
From: Ben Landhauser, Senior Planner
CC: Brad Deets, Andy Kass, Matt Jermier
Date: December 16, 2014
Re: Review of a Site Plan and Elevations for Planned Improvements to Grant Park (605 SE Driftwood Lane) and Windfield Park (114 Windfield Parkway)
Attach:

- Site Plan For Grant Park
- Site Plan and Elevations for Windfield Park
- Staff Comment Letter

BACKGROUND

Staff has been working with the City Council over the past 18+ months on identifying opportunities to improve the City's park system. As part of the process a staff committee was assembled to identify the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for improvements to the existing parks as well as identify strategies for development of future parks. The committee completed an analysis of the existing parks within the community and identified a prioritized list of existing parks that would be best to have improvements made over a 5 year timeframe. As part of that list the committee also identified what types of improvements would need to be made that would both enhance the parks to a level equivalent to the City's neighboring communities as well as meet key criteria for diversifying the amenities found throughout the park system as a whole. Two of the parks that were identified as key starting assets to begin the process of updating existing parks were Grant Park and Winfield Park.

Genus Landscape Architects was hired to design the two parks based upon the criteria identified by the staff committee as well as feedback from the neighborhoods. To date the Parks Department, in coordination with the Park Board, have held two public open houses with residents in the defined service areas associated with Grant Park and Windfield Park respectively. An open house for the Grant Park neighborhood was held on Tuesday, November 18, 2014. The open house for the Windfield Park neighborhood was held on Thursday, November 20, 2014. The purpose of both open houses was to present a concept of each park to the residents, receive feedback, and allow for participation in selecting a key component of the park that was preferred over another. The site plans provided for review and proposed recommendation of approval are the result of all input from staff, Council, and neighborhoods meetings. Both projects are planned to go out for bid as one project in January 2015. The project would be started around April 1, 2014 with targeted completion in August 2015.

GRANT PARK

As the Commission may recall, the existing improvements to Grant Park were made in two phases. The initial improvements which included dedication of the property, paving of parking stalls along SE Driftwood Lane, and the playground and swing set installations were completed by the developer of the Grant Park 2 plat under the previous parkland dedication provisions. The construction of the shelter/restroom was completed as part of the development of Grant Park 3. To date the improvements made were done primarily under the negotiated terms of the previous parkland dedication ordinance and the installations, particularly of the swing set and playground are not in line with the desired direction of the Council for park improvements.

With this in mind, a new set playground equipment and 2 different swing sets are proposed to replace the existing pieces. As part of the installation, the playground space will be expanded to provide for the necessary safe zones related

to the redefined play spaces. Additionally, a half-court basketball court will be installed east of the shelter/restroom building and enhanced landscaping provided throughout the park. There are no planned or needed improvements to the shelter/restroom facility based upon the size of the park.

WINDFIELD PARK

Windfield Park is proposed to have a complete overhaul of park improvements. The existing park has a disconnected series of play structures and shelters that make it difficult to fully utilize the 4 acres of parkland available. Improvements to the park have taken place over a series of years since the park ground was originally dedicated as part of Windfield Plat 1. Windfield Park has continued to see a rise in shelter rentals and general park users over the past several years with the paving and connection of the adjoining Raccoon River Valley Trail to Windfield Park.

The proposed improvements to the park include: defined play structures within a singular play space which address age-specific and physical ability needs, a new shelter with restroom, second connection to the Raccoon River Valley Trail, full court basketball court, a repositioned and new backstop for softball/baseball, and some flexible areas for future enhancements.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

At this time, staff would recommend approval of the improvements to both Grant Park and Windfield Park.