
From: Jim Zaorski
Sent: Friday, June 7, 2024 5:49 PM
To: City Council; , City Manager; Marchant, John; Andrews, Arn
Subject: Proposed Purchase of Additional Plot in ML

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First, I want to express my gratitude to Kimbra and staff for continuing to look for solutions to the City's park shortage North of the Central Expressway.

Second, at the risk of appearing like I'm looking a gift horse in the mouth, I'd like to express my concerns with the proposed transaction.

The Original Thompson Plot

I originally became aware of the now City owned parcel on Thompson before it was listed. At first I was interested in buying the property myself to develop it into a three house compound for me and my two children. A closer examination of the lot revealed that it was not suitable for my needs.

At that time, I mentioned the property to Alison and Ellen at the Harvest Festival in Heritage Park in October of 2022.

As I understand it, they both brought this property to the attention of Kimbra who worked quickly with staff to secure the property despite competing commercial interest.

From my perspective, the location of the property off the street (it is a flagpole lot) and its central location made it a good candidate for a dog run.

At the time the MVWSD was using the fear of dogs as a reason to exclude residents from what the District now calls "MVWSD- Monta Loma School Field".

As I saw it then, it seemed possible that if the City could remove dogs, and dog bites from the MVWSD's safety concerns, then an arrangement might have been reached within the constructs of a new JUA. Unfortunately, and not from lack of effort, this never occurred, and to this date the land has remained undeveloped for the last two years.

Additional Adjacents Plots

While I am grateful that the City continues to look for ways to meet the recreational needs of its residents, I am concerned about the cost and potential efficacy of acquiring property plot by plot adjacent to the Thompson plot.

Specifically;

First- When the MVWSD annexed Monta Loma Park the neighborhood lost access to an area that it had used for nearly 60 years for unstructured play, community gatherings, walking (especially by seniors, and organized sports

play. Fortunately for the Community, the tot playground has remained available throughout the day and is still heavily used by the small children of the neighborhood.

Lost in the last four years has been use of Monta Loma Park for walking, free play, picnics, community events. The spectre of fencing, as well as the saber rattling between the City and the District, has for the last four years has resulted in a situation where most residents simply do not know how and when Monta Loma Park can be used. Thus the park is being used far less than before, even during non-school hours.

Second- While I am grateful that the City is acquiring property, I question whether the property being acquired will effectively substitute for the land that has been lost in any reasonable timeframe?

(Can we really build a contiguous property of 1 acre or more by piecing together lots?)

Third- The cost of piecing together property is expensive and in my view of limited present value. If a 5,000 square foot lot costs in excess of \$2M. This would mean that just the raw property, not counting demolition and development expenses, would cost \$16M/acre. This is well above even the current price of MV property.

Finally, I would look at the time frame to find a solution that a piecemeal approach would entail as a drawback to pursuing such a strategy.. In my view, the relative stability of property in the neighborhood, the number of transactions done off market, and the speed of those that are done on market, makes it hard for me to conceive of how a piecemeal solution could be effectively implemented within a generation., thus leaving the current generation without a solution. (No one knows this situation of neighborhood school aged children needing a place to play better than KImbra.)

Note that the development of a small Thompson site into another micro park will not address any of the needs of the Monta Loma Community. A tot lot and a play structure are currently located at Monta Loma Park, and at Thaddeus Park.

I am writing the above not without gratitude for the efforts staff are making.

Sincerely,

Jim

PS- Please find below my views on addressing the Parks situation posted this week to IImagine MVParks, with apologies for its hasty production but the deadline was rapidly approaching.

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1JmbuUQp3O1e1EPg7MxT6Sa8-oxpvnLKmJTd_sxuno1c/edit?usp=sharing

From: William Lambert
Sent: Monday, June 10, 2024 5:43 PM
To: City Council
Subject: Comments for Agenda Item 4.7 - Meeting Jun-11-2024
Attachments: Comments Agenda Item 4.7 - Concil Meeting Jun-11-2024.docx

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City Council,
Please refer to my attached letter.
Bill

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Mountain View City Council Meeting – June 11, 2024

Agenda Item 4.7 - 2231 West Middlefield Rad (APN: 147-17-097) Acquisition of Real Property

Mayor Showalter and City Council Members:

Although I appreciate the city's interest in purchasing single family residences to convert to park space, this approach will never result in the acquisition of the amount of park space that is actually needed. First, the city continues to misrepresent the amount of park space. Property owned by the MVWSD is not city park space and although it can be used at certain times, under the Joint Use Agreement, the MVWSD can withdraw from the agreement for no reason and restrict public use with a one year notice. The Thompson Planning Area does not have 2.56 acres of parks and opens space per 1,000 residents. The first step toward solving a problem is to recognize that there is a problem. Scattering city-owned micro-parks throughout the city will not resolve the need recreational parks and open space for everyone. Perhaps, a small residential lot can serve as an unsafe dog area, or can be used as a toddler play area, but such small parcels cannot serve as sports fields, walking and rest areas, versatile recreation areas, or even help much with our canopy and sustainability goals. What is needed are large 3-4 acre park areas located within walking distance of all residences and businesses in Mountain View. To accomplish this requires planning and significant financial resources. If the city can propose spending \$300M on a police station and nearly the same amount of taxpayer money on Caltrain underpasses, the city also has the capacity to finance the acquisition of significantly more walkable city owned park and open space in Mountain View. We have been promised that the Park and Open Space Strategic Plan Update will provide a framework for acquiring and funding future parks and open space.

Bill Lambert
Mountain View Resident
Monta Loma Neighborhood