

TO: TOWN COUNCIL

FROM: TOWN MANAGER 

RE: HERITAGE PARK SUBDIVISION PLANNING

ISSUE

The Heritage Park Subdivision was acquired by the Town in 2009 for the purpose of turning around a troubled project to benefit the Town. Staff seeks clarification as to how the Council wishes to proceed to decide what to do, if anything, with the Subdivision.

RECOMMENDATION

Discuss and give direction.

CEQA

There are no CEQA issues at this time though there could be due to changes the Town may make in the subdivision and to address environmental findings that are over ten years old.

MONEY

Costs are unknown at present because it depends on how the Town plans to develop the site. The 2010/11 budget provided \$5,000 for planning purposes. None has been spent.

DISCUSSION

At the August meeting Council indicated that planning for the Heritage Park Subdivision site should start with a scoping meeting in October. In October Council decided to hold over discussion until January when the new Council would be seated and there would be continuity for two years. At that meeting Tate Abdon of Black Bear Outdoors suggested that the site or a portion be used for paintball games.

Since the Heritage Park Subdivision was purchased by the Town, Staff has gotten conflicting messages from the Council as to how the Subdivision should be planned and what should be done.

- What kind of meetings should there be? Should a consultant be hired?
- Should there be some public education (planning, fiscal, etc) ahead of a meeting?
- All the land should be a park. Some of the land should be a park.
- All the land should be developed? Some of the land should be developed?
- Who is doing the meetings? Will there be more special meeting?
- Is there going to be a survey of the people in the area? Survey the community? Survey before a meeting? Survey during a meeting? Survey after a meeting?

So the question is: What, if anything, should Staff or whoever be doing regards planning Heritage Park Subdivision? Following are some ideas, no priority, for your consideration.

- Hire a consultant to conduct meetings and do surveys to develop a plan for the Subdivision. Cost: over \$100,000
- Have the Planning Commission or PROSC or both hold a couple of workshops to develop information to submit to Council for a decision. Cost: under \$500
- Have the Council hold a couple of workshops to develop information and make a decision. Cost: under \$500
- Have all three (Council, Planning Commission, PROSC) hold a couple of workshops to develop information that Council can use to make a decision. Cost: under \$500
- Develop a community survey that can be mailed. Or develop a community survey that can be mailed and done on the internet. This of course begs a question: Who should develop the survey questions? Council would ultimately approve the questions. Cost: under \$2,000
- Council makes the initial decision to, for instance, have staff evaluate four options for the 13.7 acre site of which is 4.97 open space/pond acres is Corps jurisdiction land and .94 acres is open space berm:
 1. Subdivision as approved: 40 lots with 0 acres park
 2. Subdivision as planned in a 2009 idea: 29 lots with about 1 acre park
 3. Subdivision cut in half: 20 lots with about 3 acre park
 4. No subdivision: 0 lots with 7.79 acre park

The cost of an analysis would primarily involve staff research time with possibly some consultant assistance. Should be under \$1,000 but staff can check before embarking on a study. The study would seek to identify the cost to develop and maintain whatever public lands result.

A money question that Council Members have asked concerns funds that may be available to build a park, any park on the subdivision, and whether it would be easier to build the park as part of a subdivision. Current Town finances and the economy do not support building a park, combination park and development, or to build a subdivision as presently approved or some modified subdivision.

Another money question is maintaining whatever gets built. Maintenance costs (personnel, utilities, materials etc) are costs that go on year to year and affect the General Fund of the Town that is currently in deficit. Figure \$5,000 to \$10,000 per acre per year to maintain a park. Lower cost is less things to maintain, higher cost is more things (such as fields, play equipment, bathrooms etc) to maintain. Unless the Town has identified the maintenance dollars it wouldn't be prudent to build more facilities to maintain. Being on the hook for the downtown park once it is done is enough of an unfunded liability for now.

Finally, Council may wish to consider, especially given the current economy, that there is no pressing need to do anything with site other than to maintain it for weed control and safety. That type of very basic maintenance would typically run less than \$2,000 per year. In 2009 and 2010 the Town did some tree plantings on the berm and that will require some maintenance over several years while the trees get established. That should fall within the \$2,000/year estimate. The Town did get some estimates last year for goat grazing to keep down weeds and berry bushes and that cost can run \$8,000 plus.