



City of Blaine Anoka County, Minnesota

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Legislation Details (With Text)

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ITEM: 5.4

Lexington Park Athletic Facility (Finn Farm) Update

In August of 2011 staff presented a conceptual athletic use park plan for a 30 acre portion of the Finn Farm owned by Paxmar Development. The City Council and Park Board consensus at the time was to move forward with the developer on the project. As part of the negotiation process staff and Paxmar have agreed that the 38 acres owned by Paxmar that is further south along Lexington Avenue and next to the Woodland Development would be a better fit in terms of what the developer would prefer to sell for park use and what the city might need in terms of suitable area to program the various uses to meet the recreation needs of the community. The physical site is also preferred due to good soils, more open area and less vegetation

The 38 acres, because of its larger area would allow the City to build a combination athletic facility and neighborhood park with:

- Neighborhood scaled park with picnic shelter and playground.
- Significant opportunity for pedestrian trails through the park connecting back to Woodland Development (Parkway).
- Full basketball court.
- Tennis Courts (4, Lighted)
- 3-4 fields for youth baseball, and youth and adult softball.
- 5-multi-use fields (FB/SOC/LAX)
- Parking areas for 250-300 cars.
- Lighted fields would significantly increase field use and should be built and lit early in

the development process to establish presence prior to homes being built.

- Direct right-in/right-out access onto north bound Lexington Avenue
- Landscaping features for aesthetics and buffering neighboring future residential (Woodland Development).

While there are specific financial details yet to be worked out between the City and Paxmar, the basic budget components of acquisition and development can be summarized as follows:

Purchase Price: Paxmar has tentatively agreed to a combination of cash and park dedication credits totaling \$2.3 million. Staff is suggesting an \$800,000 cash payment in 2012 and the remaining \$1.5 million as park dedication credit against future development. Paxmar's development of the balance of their property is estimated to yield close to \$2 million.

Park Development Cost: While firm engineering estimates have not been completed, initial dollar estimates for completion of the park and facilities is in the \$1.5-2 million range. This number is well beyond the current financial ability of the Park Fund and development would need to be either delayed until sufficient park dedication has been collected or another source of funding is identified. A possible alternative funding source is the City's Capital improvement Fund (CIF). The fund was established by ordinance in 1995 as a means to fund capital projects that are of city-wide benefit. The fund has a current spendable balance of roughly \$1.7 million. CIF funds could either be spent outright for the project or be structured as a loan and repaid to the CIF.

Staff did meet with Woodand Development to review and discuss the proposed athletic park on this parcel. Given that Woodland will be developing townhome sites immediately adjacent to the proposed park boundaries their input and reaction to the plan was very important. Their initial reaction was of support as they agreed that the proposed park facility would be an asset in many ways. They were concerned about placement of field lights and appreciated the approach the City was suggesting. We agreed to communicate and work closely on the facility design and buffer treatments as the plan moved forward.

Potential schedule for this park could be:

Acquisition: Mid 2012

Design and Bid: Late 2012 thru early 2013

Project Construction: summer 2013 thru summer 2014

Use of Fields: September 2014

Information and discussion.

