



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2022-087: To declare a public necessity for and to authorize the acquisition of the parcels of real property owned by the Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority and known as 400 East 15th Street, 426 East 15th Street, and 1421 Dinwiddie Avenue for the purpose of maintaining such properties as public greenspace and for playground and recreational uses.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: March 21, 2022

PETITIONER

Christopher E. Frelke, Director of Parks, Recreation & Community Facilities

LOCATION

400, 426, 600, 602, 604, 606, 608, 610, and 660 East 15th Street, and 1421 Dinwiddie Avenue.

PURPOSE

To authorize the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) on behalf of the City of Richmond, to accept the transfer of real property from the Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority (RRHA) at 400 E. 15th Street (Parcel ID No. S0000226001), 426, 600, 602, 604, 606, 608, 610, and 660 E. 15th Street (Parcel ID No. S0000226012) and 1421 Dinwiddie Ave (Parcel ID No. S0000229019). This ordinance would also authorize the CAO to accept deed and title to such property for the purpose of maintaining such property as public green space, playground and for recreational uses.

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

The Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority (RRHA) wishes to convey underused parcels to the City of Richmond for the use of outdoor recreation. The parcels to be transferred were originally within the Blackwell HOPE VI Revitalization Program. The parcels were not developed during this program and are currently vacant. Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority (RRHA) requested review of their proposal to transfer these vacant parcels to the City of Richmond by (HUD). The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development has reviewed the title and survey documentation for the lots and have determined that no Deeds of Trust or Declaration of Restrictive Covenants are recorded on the parcels. HUD also reviewed documentation certifying that no funds associated with the Housing Act of 1937 have been used in the purchase or maintenance of the parcels. Therefore, HUD has determined that RRHA may proceed to transfer the ownership of these parcels to the City of Richmond's Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities for the purposes of creating a permanent park.

The subject properties are designated as Residential in the Richmond 300 Master Plan, and is adjacent to the Charlie Sydnor Playground which is designated as Public Open Space.

Staff finds that the proposed use of public open space is a desirable use to serve surrounding residential areas and to improve the quality of life for nearby residents by providing great and high quality access to recreational activities and green space. The proposal is especially timely, as the

existing industrial area south of the subject property has been designated as Industrial Mixed-Use in the Richmond 300 Master Plan, which calls for a gradual transition from industrial use to mixed commercial and residential use. Staff has already received several applications for rezoning in that industrial neighborhood and expects the number of residents in the area to increase in the near future.

Staff finds that the appropriate due diligence has been completed to ensure proper transfer of the subject property from RRHA to City of Richmond ownership in compliance with all appropriate regulations and requirements, and that the proposed future use as public open space will be an important asset to the neighborhood and an improvement to quality of life for adjacent residents.

Therefore staff recommends approval of the ordinance.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Site Description

The subject properties are currently vacant and lightly vegetated and consist of a total of 105,048 sq. ft. or 2.4 acres. The property is located in the Blackwell neighborhood and is bound by East 15th Street to the east, Maury Street to the north, and Dinwiddie Avenue to the south.

Proposed Use of the Property

The subject property is intended to be utilized as Public Open Space.

Master Plan

The City's Richmond 300 Master Plan designates a future land use for the subject property as Residential, which is defined as "Neighborhood consisting primarily of single-family houses on large- or medium-sized lots more homogeneous in nature." The future development style includes Houses on medium-sized and large-sized lots in a largely auto-dependent environment. Homes are setback from the street. Future developments continue and/or introduce a gridded street pattern to increase connectivity. Future single-family housing, accessory dwelling units, duplexes, and small multi-family residential buildings are built to a scale and design that is consistent with existing buildings

Intensity: Buildings are generally one to three stories. Lot sizes generally range up to 5,000 to 20,000+ sq. ft. Residential density of 2 to 10 housing units per acre.

Primary Uses: Single-family houses, accessory dwelling units, and open space.

Secondary Uses: Duplexes and small multi-family buildings (typically 3-10 units), institutional, and cultural. Secondary uses may be found along major streets.

Zoning

The current zoning for the subject properties is R-7 Single and Two-Family Urban Residential. Recreational facilities owned or operated by any governmental agency are a permitted principle use.

Surrounding Area

Surrounding and nearby properties are primarily zoned R-7 (Single and Two-Family Urban Residential). A mix of residential and institutional land uses are present to the north, west, and south.

Properties to the southeast are currently zoned M-1 Light Industrial, although staff expects properties in that section of the neighborhood to be rezoned in the future, in compliance with Richmond 300 Master Plan recommendations.

Public Outreach

The community was engaged in 2019 to create the Blackwell Playground Master Plan which is adjacent to the subject properties. During that process, the possibility of expanding the site if the opportunity became available was discussed and included the subject properties.

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