

REPORT OF GENERAL MANAGER

NO. 03-118

DATE April 2, 2003

C.D. \_\_\_\_\_

BOARD OF RECREATION AND PARK COMMISSIONERS

SUBJECT: 5707 LEXINGTON AVENUE - AUTHORIZATION TO ACQUIRE ONE (1) PROPERTY PARCEL FOR DEVELOPMENT OF A POCKET PARK

J. Combs \_\_\_\_\_  
A. Corrales \_\_\_\_\_  
J. Duggan \_\_\_\_\_  
J. Kolb \_\_\_\_\_

H. Fujita \_\_\_\_\_  
\*B. Lukehart DEL  
L. Barth \_\_\_\_\_

  
General Manager

Approved \_\_\_\_\_

Disapproved \_\_\_\_\_

Withdrawn \_\_\_\_\_

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Board:

1. Adopt the draft resolution authorizing the acquisition and dedication of a 0.34 acre vacant land parcel located at 5707 Lexington Avenue, for development of a pocket park;
2. Authorize the Director of Finance to expedite the processing of an invoice to CDD for \$496,500.00 of CDBG funds and \$207,295.00 of Proposition 12 funds in two checks, payable to Chicago Title Insurance Company, for deposit into Escrow Account #31057838; and,
3. Authorize the Board Secretary to execute the escrow instructions and grant deed for the subject property acquisition.

SUMMARY:

On April 3, 2002, the Board approved Report No. 02-137 which preliminarily approved the acquisition of one property parcel located at 5707 Lexington Avenue in the Hollywood area for development of a pocket park. The Board also authorized staff to request the Department of General Services (DGS) to negotiate the acquisition, which is funded with \$300,000.00 of Proposition 12 and \$500,000.00 of Community Development Block Grant monies.

An appraisal, prepared by Gordon Stewart (State Certified Real Estate Appraiser), estimated the value of the property at \$600,000.00 as of September 6, 2002. A purchase offer of \$600,000.00, presented by DGS, was rejected by the owner, who countered with an offer to sell for \$750,000.00.

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In February, Department staff met with staff from DGS, the Thirteenth District Council Office, and City Attorney's Office to discuss acquisition options, including the City's powers of eminent domain. Based on estimates of probable compensation, legal fees, and court costs associated with eminent domain, the City Attorney opined that it would be less costly to purchase the Lexington property for \$700,000.00 than to acquire it by condemnation. A purchase offer of \$700,000.00 was presented to the property owner and has been accepted.

The creation of a pocket park at 5707 Lexington Avenue has been a priority for the surrounding community for several years. Residents within this community have organized as the Santa Monica/Western Residents Association and have partnered with their City Council Representative and several municipal departments to address issues of concern to their neighborhoods, including the lack of park space. The purchase of this vacant parcel would be the first step toward developing a much needed park and recreational opportunities within this densely populated community where open space is at a premium.

The proposed property acquisition is exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Article VII, Section 1, Classes 3(6) and 16 of the CEQA City Guidelines. A Notice of Exemption has been filed with the Los Angeles City and County Clerks.

The Griffith/Metro Region Superintendent concurs with the recommendations set forth in this report. Councilmember Eric Garcetti supports the acquisition of 5707 Lexington Avenue for development of a pocket park.

Report prepared by Drew Tolliffe, Real Estate and Asset Management Division.