

WASILLA CITY COUNCIL ACTION MEMORANDUM

*Pulled from agenda
5/18/00
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CM No. 00-23

SUBJECT: Newcomb Park Improvements

REQUESTED BY: Administration

PREPARED BY: Administration

DATE: April 28, 2000

FOR AGENDA OF: May 8, 2000

SUMMARY: DOT is continuing progress on the Parks Highway upgrade that will eventually reach Wasilla city limits. Our understanding is that part of the five-lane upgrade project will impact the existing green space and parking lot (which is owned by DOT) at Newcomb Wasilla Lake Park.

The parking lot is already overcrowded on busy summer days. If DOT chooses to follow the plan to take part of their property for the upgrade project and/or for their Crusey St. intersection upgrade project, then we will find ourselves in even more of a bind than we are today as we attempt to accommodate park users' vehicles.

Some of you will remember that I brought forward to Council a proposal to acquire the one remaining available lot on the west end of Wasilla Lake that is adjacent to our park property for park improvements a couple of years ago. I had envisioned also possibly housing Parks and Rec personnel at the site. The proposal did not pass at that time.

Since then, the problem I sought to resolve has not only *not* gone away, but the problem has grown. I would ask that you support my efforts to explore options to acquire the last available parcel before there are no more options to consider.

The assessed value of the parcel on Wasilla Lake (Lakeshore B/1 L/16 & 17) totals \$94,000. Included on the land is a vacant, unfinished structure that costs the city a substantial amount of taxpayers' money to "police". We are forced to repeatedly respond to the many complaints we receive about the abandoned building attracting vandals and housing year 'round under-age drinking parties. At this time it would not be my intent to invest money to finish the structure for city use, because not only would it be cost-prohibitive to invest in a building in the state that this one is in, but also our capital projects plan does not support taking on any more new buildings at this time. (You have budgeted money to acquire land for a future city shop, which will accommodate Parks and Recreation.) My intent is to exclusively utilize the land.

Please consider this idea again, Council. And please consider it in the context of the recent requests we've briefly discussed regarding taking on any more new parks, new projects, new departments and new employees. The city has a limited amount of money (roughly \$500,000 for capital projects) and a seemingly unlimited list of needs... and though the perception by many non-residents is that we are flush with cash, I encourage you to thoughtfully prioritize funds to take care of our existing needs before taking on many new ones.

I'll jump off my soap box now as I remind you that every dollar we save out of our operating budget can go to our capital budget, which is where the public generally sees the most benefit from their money that they entrust us to spend.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Council consideration of acquisition of Lakeshore property for park improvements.

FISCAL IMPACT: ___ No X Yes, amount requested: eventually, at least \$94,000

MAYOR REVIEW/COMMENT:



Reviewed by: SARAH PALIN, Mayor