



**PUBLIC NOTICE
AGENDA**

**Agenda for the January 12, 2021 Special Board Meeting
Virtual Meeting using the Zoom platform**

- I. **Call to Order – 7:00 p.m.**
Roll Call

- II. **Proposed conveyance of land parcel at/adjacent to Muir Park, 1001 Oak Street in Prospect Heights, IL, to Lexington Homes in exchange for other property of substantially equal or greater value. (70 ILCS 1205 Sec. 10-7-b. Sale, lease, or exchange of realty).**

- III. **Public Comment**
Public comment is limited to three minutes OR emailed to ecastil@phparks.org by 4:30 p.m. on the day of the meeting to be read at the meeting.

- IV. **Adjournment**

Our mission is to enhance the quality of life for all residents of the District through the development and maintenance of park lands and facilities utilizing available resources, as well as to promote community involvement through a variety of recreation programs, educational opportunities and special events.



January 12, 2021

To: Board of Commissioners

From: Christina Ferraro, Executive Director

Re: Proposed conveyance of land parcel at/adjacent to Muir Park, 1001 Oak Street, to Lexington Homes in exchange for other property of substantially equal or greater value.

BACKGROUND

The Prospect Heights Park District acquired Muir Park, 1001 Oak Avenue in Prospect Heights, in 1990. In 1998, the Park District received grant funds to enhance the open space with a ballfield, walking path and landscaping. The grant was amortized after twenty years and the grant obligations were fulfilled. This 4.5 acre park is adjacent to the Jolly Fun House Playschool West & JFH Educational Academy West, (JFH) property. The Park District has an easement agreement with JFH to access the park and use JFH parking lot.

In 2016, the JFH owners decided to close their business and sell the 5.22 acres. The administrators at both Prospect Heights Park District and School District 23 met to discuss acquiring the property for joint use. The purchase and renovation/rebuild was cost prohibitive for both entities and further discussions to acquire the property ceased.

In 2019, Lexington Homes LLC entered into a contract with the JFH owners to purchase the 5.22 acres. Lexington then presented a proposal to the Prospect Heights Park District to swap nearly one-acre of Muir Park to build a detention basin for the proposed housing development on the adjacent property. The proposal includes \$500,000 for the land swap and \$200,000 for park improvements. If the Park Board of Commissioners decline the offer to swap land, Lexington has an alternate plan with less units. In order to negotiate with Lexington, the Park District has reviewed several plans for the revitalization of Muir Park for the sake of conceptualizing the foot print and the cost to develop. Should the land swap be approved, a community meeting will be scheduled to receive resident feedback about a final park plan.

In November 2020, after several meetings with the City's Plan Commission/Zoning Board of Appeals (PZBA), the City Council of Prospect Heights accepted the PZBA recommendations and approved the rezoning of the property from single-family homes to multi-unit dwellings. Also approved were preliminary plans and engineering as well as preliminary plat for the subdivision which includes 69 two or three bedroom townhouses with two-car garages. Outside of the townhomes garages, the plan indicates 44 parking spaces for guests of the townhome owners and an additional 26 parking spaces for park district users and/or guests of the townhome owners. Lexington's alternate plan without the land swap is eight less townhouses and less parking.

In December 2020, the City Council approved resolutions to begin the TIF process regardless of the number of units in the development. The proposed TIF

redevelopment area is the 5 acre JFH, 4.5 acre Muir Park, and a strip of homes along Drake Terrace and Drake Avenue, for storm water and sidewalk improvements. The current Park District master plan includes preserving green space, increasing connectivity of paths and renovating existing parks. Accepting the land swap is an opportunity for Muir Park to be renovated again after twenty-two years without additional cost to the Park District or its residents. The park will continue to be 4.5 acres as the land swap is an equal exchange of property.

Meanwhile, numerous neighbors surrounding the parcel oppose the development due to the potential impact to the well-water supply, the removal of existing trees, increased traffic, density and access to Muir Park. They attended meetings and submitted letters voicing their opposition to both the City Council and Park District Board of Commissioners.

SUMMARY

Lexington Homes plans to build 69 units with the land swap or 61 units without. If the Park Board votes yes to the land swap, consideration will be made to the terms and conditions of Lexington's offer. If the Park Board votes no to the land swap, negotiations regarding the easement agreement are required so users and park staff can access the site.