



AGENDA

**Baxter City Council Work Session
August 7, 2018
6:30 p.m.**

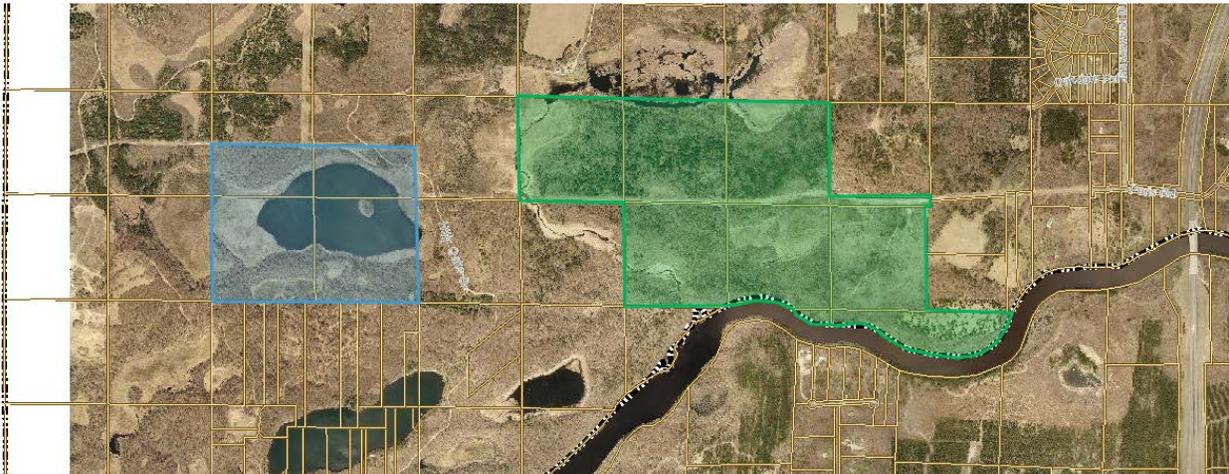
1. Establish a Wellness Program (enclosed in regular packet)
2. Marlow Property Donation

Council Memorandum

To: Mayor and Council
From: Josh Doty, Community Development Director
Date: August 7, 2018 City Council Meeting
Subject: Marlow Property Donation

Background

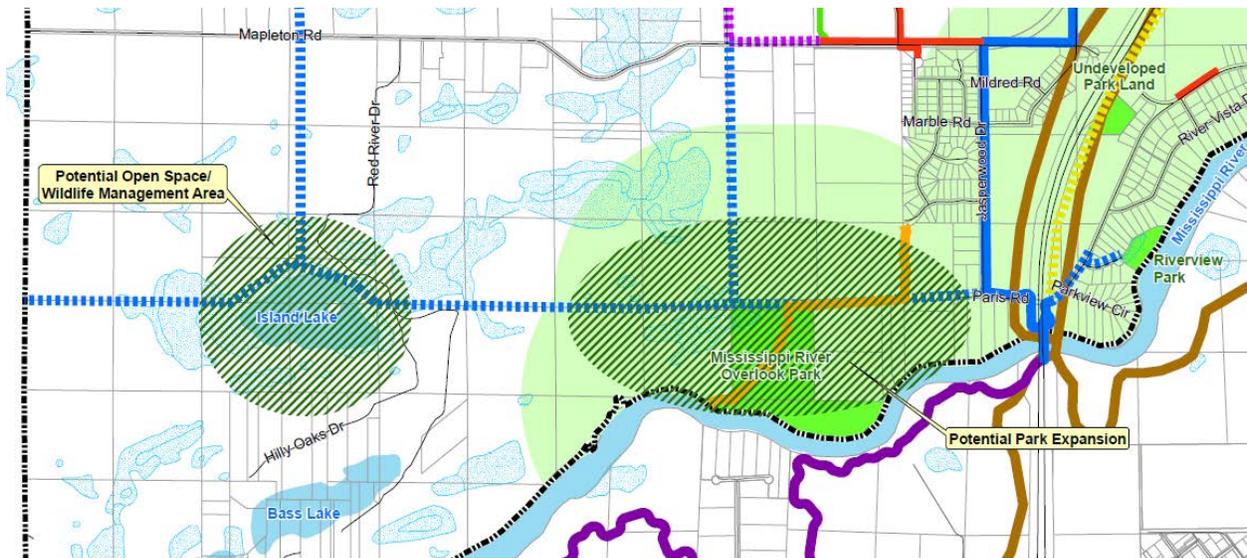
Camp Ripley staff recently contacted City staff about an opportunity to accept a donation of 120 acres of land almost entirely surrounding Island Lake in southwest Baxter. The property is owned by Roy Marlow, who is proposing to donate the land to Camp Ripley, who would then deed the land to the City of Baxter for the conservation of green space. The land would have deed restrictions to preclude development that is incompatible with Camp Ripley's training mission. The terms of donating the property to Camp Ripley first before deeding the land to the City are the terms of the donation by Mr. Marlow. If the City is agreeable, the transaction would need to be completed by December 15, 2018, as there are tax incentives favored by Mr. Marlow if completed before this date. The aerial photo below shows proposed Island Lake Property in blue. The property in green is the Mississippi River Overlook Park property together with the recently awarded LCCMR grant property.



In 2015, the City Council reviewed the Island Lake property and other properties as part of a request from the Department of Natural Resources, DNR for a potential Wildlife Management Area, WMA. However, although there was city support stated for a WMA on the Island Lake property and a preserve WMA on the Rice Lake Property on Mapleton Road, concerns were raised regarding the expectation that the City needed to agree up front to allow the potential for

numerous WMA's in a much larger circular geographic area of land in Southwest Baxter, as determined by the DNR. Consequently, an agreement was not reached.

The City's Comprehensive Plan was also updated in 2015. The plan specifically recognizes the Island Lake area as a "Potential Open Space/Wildlife Management Area" (see parks plan below). Staff also notes the proposed east/west trail corridor between the Mississippi River Bridge and the west boundary of the City through the MOP and Island Lake areas. This specific corridor is also a potential east/west corridor of the Camp Ripley Veterans State Trail, which is also recognized in the Comprehensive Plan.



City Council Consideration

Staff's recommendation is for the City Council to have discussions as needed to decide if accepting the land from Camp Ripley through Mr. Marlow is something the City Council would support in this area of Baxter. Staff has reviewed the request offers the following points to aid in the City Council's discussion as follows:

- The City has established a conservation overlay boundary in this area of Baxter, due to the unique habitat in this area of the City.
- The Parks and Trails Plan in the Comprehensive Plan identifies a "Potential Open Space/Wildlife Management Area" around Island Lake.
- Accepting the land would help facilitate the ultimate construction of an east west trail corridor through this area of the City of Baxter.
- The east/west trail corridor could also be considered for a potential location of the Camp Ripley State Veterans Trail.
- The City's Future Land Use Plan in the Comprehensive Plan identifies this property as "Rural Residential".

- The property donation as open space supports the goals Sentinel Landscape and Army Compatible Use Boundary (ACUB) programs of Camp Ripley. Specifically, Island Lake is within the 3-mile ACUB boundary. The ACUB boundary is indicated on the Future Land Use plan and the Rural Residential designation and location was in part, located to help support ACUB goals
- Utilities for Sewer and Water service are not envisioned to this area in the City's 20-year Comprehensive Plan. Unlike the previous WMA request, the City may be able to locate future utilities if not objected by the Camp Ripley mission. Staff notes that utilities have not been studied yet for this area because the land is planned to be rural or a potential open space.
- The City's Long Range Transportation Plan (attached) does not include a study of future roads needed in Southwest Baxter. Staff notes that a future roadway plans should be considered for how road corridors might be impacted by potential open space in the City. Staff also notes that the City is not aware of any formalized access or public access to the Island Lake Property.
- The Comprehensive Plan states that the City will develop safe snowmobile/ATV trail routes. ATV advocates specifically identified this powerline corridor as an area of interest for a trail. There are numerous other trail advocates that may want to use the trail corridor. The City should consider potential trail user groups and how that fits with the potential open space.
- The City must weigh the benefits of accepting zero up front land costs to provide a city open space around a 120-acre lake property with the following:
 - 1) loss in tax base for the City;
 - 2) Accepting land ownership responsibilities for 120 acres for open space together with 260 acres of open space in the MOP park/LCCMR area; and
 - 3) Short and long-term costs associated with managing the forested land, costs of providing any improvements related to the property over time, and ultimate maintenance costs associated with being the public open space land owner.