



## City Council

### Approval of Proposed Donation of a 3.19-Acre Parcel of Land for Use as Undeveloped Open Space

**Agenda Date:** 8/11/2015  
**Agenda Item Number:** 4.G  
**File Number:** 15-0758

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**Type:** decision   **Version:** 1   **Status:** Passed

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#### **Title**

Approval of Proposed Donation of a 3.19-Acre Parcel of Land for Use as Undeveloped Open Space

#### **Recommended Action**

##### **Committee Recommendation:**

At their meeting on February 5, 2015, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee (PRAC) voted unanimously to accept the proposed land donation of the former Zabel's Rhododendron Garden, if offered by Dr. Angela Bowen. The PRAC Letter of Recommendation to City Council is attached.

##### **City Manager Recommendation:**

Move to approve the recommendation of PRAC that Council accept the parcel donation as undeveloped open space.

#### **Report**

##### **Issue:**

Determine whether to accept or reject the proposed land donation by Dr. Angela Bowen.

##### **Staff Contact:**

Dave Okerlund, Program & Planning Supervisor, Parks, Arts & Recreation Department (360) 570-5855.

##### **Presenter(s):**

None (Consent Calendar Item)

#### **Background and Analysis:**

The proposed property donation is 3.19 acres in size, and is located at 1500 Springwood Drive, in northeast Olympia. The parcel is roughly square, is flat, and the vegetation consists of native trees and understory augmented by apple and oak trees for wildlife and 250 varieties of rhododendron. Other than chain-link perimeter fencing, the only site improvements consist of a meandering gravel pathway, a 10' x 10' wooden tool storage building and a simple irrigation system. The Thurston County Assessor has placed the current value of the property at \$161,750.

The Angela J. Bowen Conservancy Foundation purchased the property in 2007. Dr. Bowen's vision

was for the land to serve as a “wildlife and nature preserve that will be available in the future for botanical research and educational tours for children.” Dr. Bowen feels strongly about urban wildlife, and creating wildlife corridors in the city. She has requested that the City continue to “maintain the property as a natural lot and/or as a rhododendron garden consistent with its historical use.”

During the public process for the 2016 Park Plan, land acquisition, particularly open space and natural areas, was one of the most dominant themes. This parcel, if accepted by the City, will help meet this need.

The impact to the Department’s maintenance staff of accepting this donation as park open space will be minimal and would consist primarily of hazard tree removal, noxious weed control and potential transient encampment monitoring and enforcement if needed.

A title report for this property and has been reviewed by the City Attorney and the legal description for the parcel has been reviewed by the City Surveyor. The Quit Claim Deed was prepared by the City Attorney and has been reviewed and approved by the Attorney for the Angela J. Bowen Conservancy Foundation. The Quit Claim Deed for the property, executed by Dr. Bowen is attached.

**Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):**

This property has a history of bringing joy to the lives of many Olympians. The property was originally owned by Mr. & Mrs. Zabel. For 27 years, the Zabel’s opened this property, their backyard rhododendron garden, for public tours when the flowers were in bloom.

**Options:**

1. Recommend that Council accept the parcel donation as a undeveloped open space.
2. Recommend that Council reject the parcel donation as undeveloped open space.

**Financial Impact:**

The operating budget could be impacted if removal of hazardous trees, noxious weeds or homeless encampments from this parcel is required in the future.