

PRESS RELEASE

GREENWOOD COMMISSIONERS OF PUBLIC WORKS

Within the last few days, there has been much discussion about the Greenwood Commissioners of Public Works (the “CPW”) and the potential for a park on the Grace Street Water Plant Property. The purpose of this Release is to set forth the facts concerning the CPW’s efforts over the last 7 years to have a portion of this property developed as a park.

Let us state very clearly up front that we, as a public body, are very much in favor of parks and have supported the development of a park at this site. Since 2000, we have continuously favored the development of a substantial portion of the Grace Street Water Plant Property as a public park. In 2000 we formally offered to convey a major portion of the property (including the ponds, the spring and the retired water plant building) to the City of Greenwood to be developed and used as a public park. The plan was to divide the property in such a way as to provide commercial development along the bypass, upscale residential units along Merrywood Drive and the remaining 30+ acres as a park. Even though this plan was not accepted, it remained on the table for a number of years. This plan would have provided a large park area for the public, would have increased the tax base for the City and the County and would have provided funds for the benefit of the customers of the CPW to help offset potential utility rate increases. This plan included a park-sensitive design which would have mandated that there be no “big box” type store and included building design and landscaping which would enhance the beauty of the entire area.

The original proposal and two modifications prepared by a professional design firm from Charleston were not accepted. In May 2000 the CPW sent a letter to City Council offering to donate 44 acres to the City with the stipulations that the donated property must become a park within 5 years and that the CPW would be fully protected from future liability in connection with the donated property by an indemnification clause. If the property ever ceased to be used as a park, it would be returned to the CPW. These precautions were taken to protect the CPW and its customers. The CPW has felt all along that if it donated property with an estimated value of \$4,000,000 to \$5,000,000, it and its customers should at least be protected from all future liability in connection with such property.

This offer remained on the table but was never accepted. In November 2006 the CPW Board sent a second letter to City Council reaffirming its original offer from 2000. About that same time, the CPW offered to work with a local developer to trade property to obtain a 54 acre site in town for use as a park. CPW believed this offer was very much in the public interest as it would have provided a 54 acre park and allowed a return on investment for the CPW's customers from a sale of the Grace Street Water Plant Property. This offer, likewise, was not accepted.

Another option became available when Lander University purchased property on Montague Avenue (the old Roses shopping center) for the purpose of developing a recreational center for its athletic program, its students and the public. The CPW offered to make a significant contribution to assist in funding a joint venture between the Parks Commission and Lander to enlarge this site to include a park area that would have worked in conjunction with the walking trails planned for the Lander site. These trails

would have tied into the “rails to trails” project at the rear of the Lander site providing substantial opportunities for recreational use. The CPW’s offer to assist in this way was not accepted.

The November 2006 offer from the CPW to City Council contained the same stipulations as in the original 2000 offer and requested that the CPW be given a response within 90 days. At the end of that 90 day period, no response had been received; however, at the request of the Parks Commission, the CPW granted an additional 30 days. During this time the CPW received a Resolution by County Council to accept the property subject to certain conditions which both the City and the CPW determined were inappropriate. The CPW and the City worked cooperatively to modify the Resolution to include terms that the City and the CPW would find acceptable. The revised Resolution was sent in May 2007 and there has been no written response since that time.

In its motion authorizing the General Manager of the CPW to develop plans for the sale of the Grace Street Water Plant Property, the Commissioners specifically directed that such a plan would require that areas of the property be set aside for green space and walking trails. The Commissioners have also discussed the potential of selling the property to a developer with the stipulation that the developer would be required to donate the portion of the property on which the ponds are located to the Parks Commission or to the County for park purposes.

The Commissioners continue to be in favor of the development of a portion of the Grace Street Water Plant Property as a park, but they are committed to proceeding in a way that is in the best interest of the CPW’s customers.

July 18, 2007