University Heights lot on Ashurst Road will be developed into rain garden

Thursday, Sep 23, 2010

The city has accepted a $10,000 grant from the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District to develop a rain yard at 2603 Ashurst Road into a rain garden.

City Council voted, 6-1, Monday to authorize Mayor Susan Infeld to enter into an agreement with the sewer district to accept the grant.

Service Director Chris Vild said the grant for the garden because water was runoff from the city-owned property that the residents and neighbors. Installing a rain garden will address those concerns by managing stormwater runoff, he said.

"The service director and I met with neighbors at Ashurst Road and get paid from them on which development should be," Vild said. "They were in favor of a garden, with plants and flowers."

"Green space can increase the property values of the homes around (this property)," he said.

Councilman Frank Consolo cast the dissenting vote.

"We have no report or recommendation as to both options for the property, such as putting it up for sale," Consolo said. "We were on short notice, one-night deal, and I don’t believe we represented the entire city (interests)."

Vild said he was not aware of anyone who wanted to purchase the property and maintained that because of its development it will be a community garden.

"I believe the grant will improve the character of the neighborhood," he said.

The city took ownership of the long-neglected property in May 2009 after council accepted a quit claim deed from Catherine Maultz, the previous owner.

The house had fallen into disrepair, and council voted to have it torn down, since it was a safety hazard and a public nuisance. It was demolished last fall.

In May, a group of Ashurst Road neighbors suggested to council to convert the property into a "park." Infeld said she believes the $10,000 grant will cover most of the additional cost to the city.

"This sounds like a very exciting effort to me," Vice Mayor Frankie Vild said with the plan, which must be approved by the sewer district, he said.

"This is an opportunity to put it back on the market," she said. "I have no reason to not accept an income-producing property.

Although the grant application indicated the project could cost as much as $20,000, Infeld said she believes the $10,000 grant will cover most of it.

"The only cost to this city will be a little bit of grass seed and the work effort of service department employees for planting," she said.

"Installing a rain garden will address those concerns by managing stormwater runoff, he said.

Vild said he budgeted $10,000 for labor, materials and equipment, but he expects the service department will be able to provide most at no additional cost to the city.

"The neighborhood has expressed an interest in participating and helping to maintain it," he said.

A design for the rain garden still needs to be developed, Vild said. A consultant, once hired, will discuss with them on what this development should be, Vild said. They were in favor of a garden, with plants and flowers.

"Green space can increase the property values of the homes around (this property)," he said.

Contact Wittenberg at
(216) 986-5896 or swittenberg@cleveland.com