# HIGHLANDS RECREATION DISTRICT

Neighborhood Meeting on Open Space
Highlands Recreation Center (gym)
1851 Lexington Ave.
**7:00-9:00 pm**
**Tuesday, July 15, 2008**

Notes prepared by Peninsula Conflict Resolution Center (PCRC)

Approximately 25 people attended the first in a series of three meetings to discuss the proposed donation of 90 acres of open space from Chamberlain Development to the Highlands Recreation District (HRD.)

The meeting was facilitated by Shauna Wilson Mora, Manager of Facilitation Programs for the Peninsula Conflict Resolution Center (PCRC.)

HRC Board Member Jim Sell welcomed participants and introduced other HRD Board members and Highlands Community Association (HCA) members present. Jim also introduced Highlands Recreation Center staff and Deputy County Manager, Peggy Jensen.

There was a presentation by HRC Board member Jim Sell on the following information:

- Background and history of the Highlands Recreation District (HRD) and Highlands Community Association (HCA)
- Open space the district holds and maintains.

Deputy County Manager Peggy Jensen provided a presentation including:

- Overview of current proposal from Chamberlain Development
- Status of proposal
- Process for moving forward
- Opportunities for future community input on number of homes and location in proposed Chamberlain Development

There was a Question and Answer Period on the information presented, followed by small group discussions facilitated by four PCRC facilitators.

Three small groups addressed the following questions:

1. How might the Highlands Community benefit from the proposed donation of 90 acres of open space?

2. What are your concerns, if any, about the HRD accepting the open space land?

3. How could your concerns be addressed?

4. If the HRD accepts this donation, how would the community like to see the open space used?
   a) Walking trail from the Highlands to the Crystal Springs Shopping Center?
   *b)* The land devoted to open space without trails
   *c)* Some combination of trails, open space and other possibilities?
   *d)* What use would your family make of the open space?
   *e)* Would you be willing to pay up to $10.00/year to maintain trails and/or fire safety in the open space?

5. With the information you have so far would you recommend the HRD accept the donation of 90 acres?

**Group 1:**

1. ***How might the Highlands Community benefit from the proposed donation of 90 acres of open space?***
   - Nature Study
   - Berry and Mushroom Picking
   - Dog Walking
   - Bud Watching
   - Kite flying
   - Tree forts
   - Rope Swings
   - Zip Lines
   - Pet Cemetery
   - Bottle Hunting
   - Ash Scattering
   - Bug collecting
   - Bee Keeping
   - Open Spaces
   - Trails
   - Exercise Track

2. ***What are your concerns, if any, about the HRD accepting the open space land?***
   - Liability concern with zip lines and tree forts

- Need judgment from fire department
- Details of Insurance Policy
- Judgment's from Sheriff's Dept. relative to kids use and outsiders use (smoking and crime)
- Old barbed wire along property line
- Inmate brush clearing/bane or blessing/possible crime

3. **How could your concerns be addressed?**
    - Field survey to address old barbed wire
    - Written statement from County Legal about potential problems, liabilities

4. ***If the HRD accepts this donation, how would the community like to see the open space used?***
    - Open space (4 people)
    - Trails (2 people)
    - Would be willing to pay up to $10.00/year to maintain trails and/or fire safety in the open space

5. ***With the information you have so far would you recommend the HRD accept the donation of 90 acres?***
    - Don't have enough information (Legal/Sheriff/Fire etc.) to make an intelligent decision. If information is position - YES
    - 5 people in the group voted Yes
    - One hand written letter was submitted suggesting the HRD not accept the 90 acres and instead have the County accept the donation.

<u>Group 2</u>

1. ***How might the Highlands Community benefit from the proposed donation of 90 acres of open space?***
    - Have Control
    - District would not be liable
    - Natural trail, pre-exist improvement
    - Open space use

2. ***What are your concerns, if any, about the HRD accepting the open space land?***
    - Required Safety of adjacent prospect and stability of space
    - Completion of Chamberlain development
    - Liability
        - Chamberlain disclosure of repair on land
        - land undisturbed
        - land altered

- How can fence be in personal space?
- Invasive plants

3. ***How could your concerns be addressed?***
    - Process for community decision making and how to pay for it
    - An application that is complete with RM rules for public safety and land stability
    - Known liabilities written (Mike Murphy)
    - HRD Board review all
    - Concerns addressed as a contingency to acceptance

4. ***If the HRD accepts this donation, how would the community like to see the open space used?***
    - Hiking trails (reasonable)
    - Pond Re-establishment
    - Nonpermanent deer fence
    - Willing to pay up to $10.00/year to maintain trails and/or fire safety in the open space

5. ***With the information you have so far would you recommend the HRD accept the donation of 90 acres?***
    - If contingencies met- Yes

<u>Group 3</u>

1. ***How might the Highlands Community benefit from the proposed donation of 90 acres of open space?***
    - Keeps land open and in control
    - Co-op garden idea (win)
    - Trail to Long's would be a great alternative
    - Protecting it from development

2. ***What are your concerns, if any, about the HRD accepting the open space land?***
    - Liabilities and hidden costs
    - How is money involved
    - Impact on taxes, how much
    - Fire danger, risks from human use
    - who clears under brush?
    - Do we want to control access to space?
        i. Signage permit needed beyond this point
    - Why HRD? Could county accept the land?
    - Do we want general public to have access?

- What are range of options if county had the land?
- Security concerns – general public

3. ***How could your concerns be addressed?***
    - Research language of contract
    - Call other cities to find out how they have handled similar situations
    - Need legal opinion on liability
    - What are the limits of using the space?
    - Developer should pony-up money for trails, picnic areas
    - Research other HOA's
    - Contact County (Sawyer Camp Trail)
    - Does developer get points for donating the land?
    - Concerns that the County could be sued

4. ***If the HRD accepts this donation, how would the community like to see the open space used?***
    - Co-op gardening and farming
    - Chicken house
    - Grants for sustainable farming
    - Leave it untouched still accessible (concern is liability/landslides)
    - Community should be mindful of risks
    - Would like cleared unpaved trails
    - Fences-children areas to play
    - Critters exploring
    - Willing to pay up to $10.00/year to maintain trails and/or fire safety in the open space? However would the cost go up?

5. ***With the information you have so far would you recommend the HRD accept the donation of 90 acres?***
    - Yes we want to maintain the open space designation
    - Yes for our protection
    - Yes more research needed, get as much money out of the developer as possible
    - No rather face future risk, then potential liability
    - No I don't know enough, need more info

Each of the Groups did a brief report out on their discussion.

**Group 1**

***Benefits***

- Open space

- Trails

*Concerns*

- Liability
- Fire Control

*Solutions*

- Learn more from county about liability concerns

*Use*

- Nature Study
- Bird Watching

*Recommendation*

- Yes if there is enough information

**Group 2**

*Benefits*

- District would have control
- District would not be liable

*Concerns*

- Safety, Stability, Liability

*Solutions*

- Contingencies in negotiations to address above

*Use*

- Pond Re-establishment
- Non-permanent deer fence

*Recommendation*

- Yes, if contingencies are met

**Group 3**

*Benefits*

- We'd be in control
- Protected

*Concerns*

- Hidden Costs
- Liability

*Solutions*

- Research Concerns. Look into other cities, HOA's
- Developer "Pony up" money to go along with land

*Use*

- Keep untouched
- Trails
- Co-op sustainable farming adjacent to Recreation Center

*Recommendation*

- 3 Yes - contingent on above
- 2 No - concerned about liability risk; like idea of County owning it

**Summary/Next Steps**
There will be two more meetings covering the same information with the same format; July 31 and August 7. PCRC will prepare the notes from the meetings and submit the notes to the County and to the HRD.

The meeting concluded at 9:00 PM.