

Overview of the Roberts Property Site & Progress to Date



The City of Bristol bought the Roberts property on November 28, 2001 for \$1,265,000 from the Clinton Roberts Foundation. The City of Bristol paid cash to be reimbursed by issuing debt service.

- It is a 45-acre parcel with 25 “prime” acres in the center of the site.
- The difference in elevation is ten feet. This is an important consideration in that there has been run-off and erosion into the Hoppers area. There is a detention pond on-site.
- Trails enter into the Hoppers Birge Pond Nature Preserve
- The area abuts two neighborhoods and is across the street from the Chippens Hill Middle school
- Several permits will eventually be required – an Inland-Wetlands permit due to the watercourse present on the parcel; and a site plan application via the Zoning Commission. For this type of application, it was noted that there is no formula to calculate parking and that it would be determined “as appropriate for the planned activities.” Parking will most likely encompass the demand on an average basis, not peak demand; parking spaces may be spread out throughout the site; a drop-off area may be a consideration. A general rule of thumb is that there are 140-150 spaces per acre of land.
- The eventual proposal will also need to be referred to the Planning Commission per Section 8-24 of the CGS that requires a Planning Commission favorable recommendation when there are “substantial recommendations made to municipal property...”
- Sanitary sewers will need to be considered for the site. From James P. Casey, there could be gravity sewers; from Perkins, there are sewers and could be accessed but would necessitate the use of a pump.
- City Planner Alan Weiner suggested that since there are setback requirements from property lines when laying out parking and buildings, that it would be advantageous to merge the various lots into one in order to have greater flexibility (this was done in spring 2004).

Financial Overview

For long-term planning purposes, Park Superintendent Ed Swicklas has submitted a \$500,000 request to the Mayor's 5 Year Capital Improvement Committee for the development of the Roberts property parcel in Fiscal Year 2006-07.

To date, the following expenditures have been made:

Skate Park Location Feasibility Study (7 sites including Roberts)	\$4,500
Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment	\$3,000
Additional soil testing per the Phase 1 report	\$1,700

The Roberts Property parcel and the adjacent Hoppers Birge Pond Nature Preserve are included in the Parks Improvement Plan that was announced by Mayor Couture in December 2004 for which bonds will be sold to finance 7 park improvement projects across the city.

Once a plan has been defined, components of such plan would also be eligible for LOCIP (Local Capital Improvement) funds. LOCIP funds are derived from state bonding at the state level and is then distributed to municipalities using a formula based on factors such as population and other issues – miles of road, for example. Bristol receives roughly \$500,000 in LOCIP funds each year but they are often targeted to be cuts depending on state budget issues. Park projects are eligible for LOCIP funds.

LOCIP funds can be carried over from year to year. Expenditure reports must be made to the state within 7 years, after that, an extension may be requested or the project must be removed from the list.

Progress to Date

February 2003 – restricting vehicle traffic discussion (signs posted February 2004)

May 2003 – Soap Box Derby at the former compost location (discussed, never pursued)

January 2004 –cemetery land swap discussed

February 2004 – Slo-Pitch to review Park Dept. proposal (in progress)

February 2004 –motion to dissolve lot 8-1 approved by Committee.

May 2004 – Milone & MacBroom contracted to do Phase 1 Environmental Study for Roberts Property

May 2004 – Land Exchange with West Cemetery approved by City Council

July 2004 – Phase I environmental study completed with two minor recommendations

September 2004 – Park Board approves Change order for \$1700 for further testing based on recommendation of Milone & MacBroom

October 2004 – First Public Hearing held to gather public input on proposed use. Over 75 attended the meeting. E-mail addresses were gathered and “Friends of Roberts” group notified of all meetings and updates.

November 2004 – referrals made to West Cemetery and Public Works for maintenance and potential enlargement of temporary parking area. Additional environmental testing done per the recommendation of the Phase I report.

November 2004 - Arial photos taken for topographic surveys

December 2004- Mayor Couture and City Council convene Parks Task Force for a multi-million dollar parks improvement plan. RFP issued for landscape architecture/master plan. The Roberts Property and Hoppers-Birge Pond Nature Preserve are included in the RFP.

January 2005 – Environmental soil testing completed. Report summary states in part *“All detections are lower than the applicable Connecticut Remediation Standard criteria for pollutant mobility, residential exposure, and industrial/commercial exposure. Indicating a low risk for contamination or health effects on the Roberts parcel. Furthermore, pesticides and extractable total petroleum hydrocarbons were not detected.”*

March 2005 - Contract executed with Malone & Macbroom for potential inclusion of Roberts Property into Parks Department Master Plan.

An interview panel comprised of park and city officials interviews firms for parks master planning.

City Councilwoman Ellen Zoppo chairs the Roberts Property Committee. There are nine other members: City Council members Tom Lavigne and Al Myers; Park Superintendent Edward Swicklas, Board of Education Athletic Director John Novakowski, and citizen representatives Christopher Cassin, Kenneth Cockayne, Charles Cyr, Sean Moore, and Nathan Peabody. The committee also includes Board of Finance Commissioner Delores Capers as an ex-officio liaison.

The Roberts Property Committee holds regular monthly meetings on the third Wednesday of each month, at 5:00pm in the first floor conference room of City Hall. The meetings are open to the public.

The next regularly scheduled meeting dates are

- Wednesday, March 16, 2005
- Wednesday, April 20, 2005

- Wednesday, May 18, 2005

If you would like to offer a suggestion or opinion about the Roberts Property's future use, please e-mail City Councilwoman Ellen Zoppo, at robertsproperty@ci.bristol.ct.us. Your e-mail comments will be made part of the public record and circulated to other committee members and elected officials.

Thank you for your interest in the Roberts Property.