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# MAQUOKETA SENTINEL-PRESS

Volume 156, No. 15 ■ 16 pages Plus Supplements ■ Saturday, July 11, 2009 ■ \$1.00 per copy

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- Jackson County
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- Maquoketa School District



MSP photo by Doug Melvold

## Community service project adds trees, mulch to trail

Employees of Black Hills Energy assisted the City of Maquoketa public works crew recently in planting trees along the recreation trail being developed along the Maquoketa River near the city ballpark. The group added mulch, which was produced from the city's yard waste disposal site. The work was a community service project for Black Hills employees. From left are Rich Winger, Chuck Bandy, Tony Hoefelmeyer, Adam Splinter, Pat Hancock, Pat Bailey and Brian Kearney. All are Black Hills Energy workers, except Bailey, who is a city public works employee.

## Pool site makes possible parking lot

By DOUGLAS MELVOLD

Maquoketa city and school representatives have discussed the possibility of the school district acquiring the city's outdoor swimming pool property as a possible parking lot site for Goodenow Field.

City Councilman Neil Morehead reported to the City Council Monday night, July 6, on a proposal that was discussed at a recent meeting of city and school officials.

Under the plan, Morehead said the city would sell to the Maquoketa Community School District all of the city's outdoor pool property at South Eliza and East Summit streets for \$1.

The parcel would include the property that contains the bathhouse, the pump house, both pools and a small parcel that at one time was a city tennis court.

The city and school district would split evenly up to \$60,000, or \$30,000 apiece, the cost of demolishing the bathhouse and pump house, filling in the newer pool, taking any unneeded water and sewer lines out of service and other work to level the site.

Any additional demolition cost would be borne by the school district.

The school district then, within four years, would install a hard-surface parking lot on the property to accommodate events at Goodenow Field.

The lot also could accommodate overflow parking for events at the Maquoketa Community Center and the Maquoketa Middle School.

Morehead called the proposal "a starting point" for further discussions between the city and school district.

The council two weeks ago appointed Morehead, council member Margo Shouse and City

Manager Brian Wagner to meet with two school board members and school Superintendent Kim Huckstadt to discuss whether or not the school board would be interested in acquiring the city's outdoor pool property.

The council never has designated a use for that property once the outdoor pool was closed.

The deteriorating outdoor pool was operated on a part-time basis last summer after the city's new indoor pool opened in the fall of 2007. The council closed the outdoor pool for good after last summer's season ended.

Under the proposal, the city would retain ownership of the lots along East Summit on which the water tower and water well sit, as well as a residential property that fronts on South Main Street and adjoins the pool property to the rear.

Morehead emphasized that the proposed terms were only initial proposals intended for further discussion and that any final terms would have to be agreed on by both the full city council and full school board.

Morehead elaborated on why the city would offer to essentially pay the school district to take the property.

"The thinking there was that legally we believe the property really has a negative value with the two pools and the bathhouse and the pump house on it, so we were willing to propose that we spend up to \$30,000, or half the cost of whatever it is up to \$60,000," for the demolition, Morehead said.

He said the school representatives "seemed interested" and would take the proposal back to the school board for further discussion.

The council Monday agreed to await a response from the school board as to whether or not it wished to proceed further with negotiations.

Mayor Tom Messerli called the concept "a good idea," but objected to spending \$30,000 to divest of a property that he said isn't costing the city anything.

"It's \$30,000 that we could spend somewhere else and it's really costing us nothing now," Messerli said.

He also questioned the wisdom of constructing a paved parking lot that would be needed only four or five nights a year for home football games.

Council members noted that high school soccer matches also are played on Goodenow Field and attract spectators. They also noted that the council recently voted to enforce a parking ban along the south side of East Summit between South Main and South Matteson streets.

Vehicles in the past have been parked bumper to bumper along that street at home football games, which creates congestion and pedestrian hazards.

Councilman Galen Saunders disagreed with Messerli, calling the proposal "a win-win."

"I don't want to see another eyesore in town," Saunders told the council. He noted that the older outdoor pool "sat for how many years as an open pit" until the council had it filled in with dirt.

"I don't want to see that thing (the newer pool) sit there with that old bathhouse and the old pump house and the other old pool for another 10 years.

Saunders argued that the school district "has a good use for that property." He said he doubted that the council would want to spend the full \$60,000 to demolish the structures and likely recoup far less than that amount if it sold the property on the open market.

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