

School given use of nearby land

Written by Elizabeth Barrett

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Anonymous donor buys property and gives it to school foundation.

A parcel of land within a stone's throw of Gothenburg Public Schools will soon be available to the school district.

Superintendent Mike Teahon said the Gothenburg Public Schools Foundation recently accepted a gift of land by an anonymous donor near the northeast intersection of Avenue I and 12th Street.

The foundation wants to lease the land to the school district which will be considered during the board's monthly meeting June 14.

In the meantime, Teahon said the district has accepted liability for the property.

Although there's been discussion about uses of the land, he said they've been encouraged to collaborate between the entities who own surrounding land—the Gothenburg Baseball Association which has the Legion Field to the north of the property and the City of Gothenburg that owns the four-plex to the east and swimming pool north of the baseball field.

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The district leases a field north of the swimming pool from the city for athletic practices.

Ramona Ollendorf owns property with a rental house and garage on the northeast corner of the land which foundation committee member and District 20 board member Nate Wyatt said the foundation hopes to someday acquire.

“That would enhance the lot’s potential,” Wyatt said.

While collaborating with other non-profit entities about uses of the land, he said he’d like to bring Gothenburg Memorial Hospital into the discussion.

“There are synergies we could accomplish that might benefit everyone,” Wyatt said. “Those are big visions.”

In the meantime, he said the land will probably be turned into green space and used as an auxiliary practice field.

Teahon said they want the lot to be most efficiently used by the community.

A mobile home court on the property, owned by Tim Miller, once occupied the new property the district will lease.

But once the land was sold, the homes were relocated and small buildings demolished and taken away.

Teahon said the district will remove gravel from a driveway, fill in holes, level the property and apply ground cover.

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“We are very excited about the efforts of the foundation and thankful to the people who stepped up and made the donation possible,” he said. “Things like this that happen in Gothenburg make it a good place to live and raise children.”

In the past few years, Teahon said school officials and others have talked about expanded opportunities for youth in the community.

“The new school is fairly landlocked and an individual saw an opportunity to help in that area,” he explained. “Communities will always thrive when they take care of their kids.”

He added that the foundation has become more active in recent years—starting a bi-yearly newsletter and an alumni database and helping with the alumni banquet in May.

“This shows the viability of the foundation and serves as encouragement to others to provide opportunities for Gothenburg school students,” Teahon said.

Foundation committee members who worked on the project include Wyatt, Pam Slack, Rick Zarek, Verlin Janssen and Jerry Wiggins.

For more information about the foundation, call 537-3653 or send an e-mail to swedes@esu10.org.

ebarrett@gothenburgtimes.com 308-537-3636