

Press Clippings - July 18, 2023

– Daily Herald –

Looking for land: Elgin U-46 interested in two sites for potential schools

July 18, 2023

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Elgin Area School District U-46 is exploring the possibility of buying 5.4 to 5.9 acres at the former Sherman Hospital in Elgin. *Daily Herald file photo, 2019*

Elgin Area School District U-46 officials are eyeing two Elgin properties as potential school sites.

School board members Monday night approved issuing two nonbinding letters of intent to purchase about 5.4 to 5.9 acres at the old Sherman Hospital site, 901 Center St., and 12.4 acres of undeveloped land at 2604 Rohrsen Road adjacent to **Hilltop Elementary School**.

In April, voters approved a U-46 request to borrow \$179 million to help rebuild five elementary schools, two of which date back to the 1800s.

The letters of intent are not offers to buy. Rather, they indicate an interest in the land and allow up to 120 days for the district to inspect the property to determine if it will meet its needs. In May, the district approved a letter of intent for the entire former Sherman Hospital site, totaling 14 acres.

On Monday, district officials said the second letter of intent for the Sherman property focused on a subdivided parcel totaling 5.4 to 5.9 acres south of Slade Avenue that includes two large parking lots.

The hospital property is near **McKinley Elementary School**, one of the two schools that date back to the 1800s and is targeted for a rebuild. The property also is near two middle schools that **school board President Sue Kerr** has said are "very limited on land."

The district is in the process of switching to full middle schools. Currently, sixth-graders are at the elementary schools, while seventh- and eighth-graders are in the middle schools. The district eventually plans to move all sixth-graders to the middle schools.

The Rohrsen Road property is not on a busy road, district officials said.

– Chicago Tribune –

U-46 board OKs signing letters of intent to buy land parcels near old Sherman Hospital and Hilltop school

July 18, 2023

By Mike Danahey - The Courier-News

Two months after it approved a letter of intent to buy the former Sherman Hospital campus in Elgin, the **District U-46 School Board** entered into similar agreements for the former parking lots across the street from the hospital and open land adjacent to **Hilltop Elementary School** on Elgin's far east side.

The board's votes on both sites — 5.7 acres in former parking lot property and 12.4 acres of undeveloped land at 2604 Rohrsen Road — were approved unanimously Monday night.

Letters of intent do not bind the district to buying any of the sites but provide time for officials to do due diligence in examining them for possible negotiations and purchase.

Ann Williams, U-46's deputy superintendent of operations, told the board the sites could be used for new buildings. Because it is undeveloped, the Rohrsen Road property would require engineering and wetlands surveys to be done as part of their due diligence, she said.

The meeting agenda provided online to the public did not include any details about the letters of intent. During the meeting, no mention was made of who owns the properties in question, how much they might cost to buy or what buildings would be located on them if purchased.

Despite the lack of detail and limited discussion prior to the votes, **board member Dawn Martin and board President Sue Kerr** thanked staff for looking into options where new facilities could be built.

In May, the U-46 board agreed to enter into a letter of intent to buy the former Sherman Hospital campus on the 900 block of Center Street. At the time, Williams said those 14 acres of land could be used for a future middle or elementary school or a pre-K center.

No discussion on the Sherman site has occurred in public meetings since then. Elected boards are allowed to discuss the purchase of property in closed sessions under state law.

The letters of intent come in the wake of voters approving a referendum in April to issue \$179 million in school building bonds so the district can move ahead with its masters facilities plan — estimated to cost \$310 million to \$380 million — that calls for the replacement of some outdated school buildings.

In other news, technical problems showing the school board meeting live online Monday night meant the public had to watch via Zoom or attend in person in order to observe the proceedings.

U-46 Communications and Media Relations Coordinator Tara Burghart said the district was having issues with live streaming the meeting to YouTube as it typically does.

Meetings also are archived for viewing later on YouTube. As of early Tuesday afternoon, the video recording of the meeting had not been posted to the site.