

Contact: Jean Friedrich

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY PROPOSED PROPERTY PURCHASE

Action Requested: Consider, for the benefit of Iowa State University, approval of the property purchase of 17.2 acres of land located adjacent to the Applied Science Center on the west and the Iowa State University Veenker Memorial Golf course to the east in Ames, Iowa, from the Des Moines YMCA at a cost of \$120,000, subject to approval of the final documents by the Board Office and Attorney General's Office.

(ROLL CALL VOTE)

Executive Summary: Iowa State University requests approval to purchase approximately 17.2 acres of land located in Ames, Iowa, from the Des Moines YMCA. The property is adjacent to the Applied Science Center on the west and the ISU Veenker Memorial Golf course to the east. A map showing the location of the subject property is included as Attachment A.

The Des Moines YMCA received title to this property from the Ames-ISU YMCA when the two YMCA operations were consolidated. This property is known as Lynn Fuhrer Lodge and was constructed at the end of World War I as a memorial and recognition of an ISU student military pilot killed in the war. It is currently in need of renovation and repair. The YMCA is no longer interested in using or owning this property and prefers that the area be maintained as a natural area with limited development in the next few years.

The property contains a lodge that consists of a large open area with a stone fireplace, a small living area, and kitchen, sleeping area, restroom and a basement with a screened porch on the west and open porch on the east. Trails meander through the site and contain some improvements such as wooden pedestrian bridges, wood steps and channels to protect the trails from drainage problems. In several locations, these trails connect with trails on the adjacent University property. Although the trails are in reasonable condition, the wood stairs are deteriorating and the bridges lack handrails. No regular maintenance is occurring on the site.

The University owns 175 acres of woodland in the adjacent area, and if acquired this parcel would connect to existing University property. The University reports that the addition of 17 acres would not significantly impact the University's maintenance or operations.

The Natural Heritage Foundation and the Ames Parks and Recreation program want to see the area generally maintained in its current wooded condition. The University's Division of Student Affairs is interested in potentially developing a student retreat center on the site that could be used by a variety of student organizations. This could involve either renovating the existing lodge or replacing it with a new structure. It is possible some or all of the work could be done by student organizations as service projects or be funded by contributions from the student government or student organizations. The YMCA is supportive of the site being used in this way. The University has agreed to maintain recognition of the original lodge name on the site.

The proposed purchase price is \$120,000. The purchase price is consistent with Board policy for the purchase of property, based on two appraisals.

The purchase would be funded from the Facilities Overhead Use Allowance. If future improvements occur they would be done through private fund raising, student government and organization funding and donated student and community volunteer efforts. Several groups have indicated they would be interested in developing and maintaining trails and pedestrian bridges as various community service projects. The University may cooperate with the City of Ames in seeking funding for outdoor recreation improvements.

Under Board policy, property is to be purchased at no more than the highest appraisal, or not more than 5 percent over the average of two appraisals, whichever is the lower figure. This policy is not intended to limit negotiation for a price lower than the appraised value.

Additional information is available from the Board Office.

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