

RCSC approves \$750K purchase of Grand Ave. parcel

By Jeff Grant, Daily News-Sun and yourwestvalley.com | Posted: Friday, May 27, 2016 6:30 am

SUN CITY, Ariz. – The Recreation Centers of Sun City Board of Directors voted Thursday to approve the \$750,000 purchase of a nearly 3.5-acre parcel of land near Grand and 103rd avenues in a move that is likely to open additional space for burgeoning charter clubs within the community.

“We’re delighted. We’ve been looking for property since I was on the board,” said RCSC board treasurer Mike Kennedy.

Property owner Lus International, LLC, of Gilbert, which purchased it about 4.5 years ago, has been looking to unload it since its most recent tenant, China Olive Super Buffet, closed earlier this year. It was the second closure for the restaurant since taking over for Furr’s Cafeteria, which closed in 2012 after 26 years in business.

Funds for the RCSC’s purchase will come from the organization’s capital operating monies.

The tract, which includes a vacant 10,700-square foot building, lies within a commercial corridor featuring a grocery store, several strip malls, gas stations and a convenience store and fast-food restaurants.

No decision has been made on how the site would be used, according to RCSC Marketing and Communication Manager Joelyn Higgins, although it is widely expected the organization will look to fill club-space needs.

“We are always in need of club space. Space is always at a premium,” she said.

“We’d have a lot of clubs get the kind of space they need and that could open space at the (recreation) centers, where we could open room for some clubs or make room for different clubs,” Kennedy added.

The board Thursday approved creation of an ad-hoc long-range planning committee to investigate property uses and make a recommendation to the board. Kennedy said the planning group would likely consist of more than a dozen members.

“We’re looking for a general group of people with all different interests as to what to do with the property, and we’ll follow their advice,” he said.

The price is considered a bargain.

The Maricopa County Assessor’s Office lists the full cash value of the property at \$1.38 million. In 2013, the figure was \$1.1 million.

“They getting heck of deal,” said Randy Kicklighter, owner of Green Street Commercial, the Litchfield Park-based real estate and investment firm that brokered the deal.

“It’s an awesome property; a high visibility location, and there’s room to build on it, and there’s tons of parking.”

Kicklighter said a number of entities had expressed interest in the property prior to the RCSC’s initial inquiry. However, no one had reached the point of a deal when the Recreation Centers came up with an offer.

“They contacted us, looked at it. They sounded pretty serious and made an offer fairly quickly,” he said.

Kennedy said the panel would come up with a recommendation based on the parcel’s best possible use.

The property is now in escrow, and the deal is expected to close as early as May 31.

Lots of Room

Among the clubs that may be considered for the site is the Vintage Vehicles of Sun City, a vehicle restoration and social club. Vehicle restoration has enjoyed dramatic growth throughout the United States, and a large part of that expansion is being driven by members of the Baby Boomer generation, 55-65 year olds who make up an increasing portion of Sun City’s population.

Lee Litzenberger, the club’s secretary, said he was encouraged by the purchase -- not only for the potential it offers the car club but all Sun City organizations looking for space.

“It’s a good move overall for the Rec Centers. There’s no space to put up another couple of buildings up for various purposes. I’m for the club getting the opportunity.”

Earlier this year, the board decided against pursuing a 50,000 square-foot parcel at the edge of South Golf Course for the vehicle club, after owners of nearby condominiums expressed concern over a decline in property values as well as reduced views and increased traffic. At the time, the club said it needed a 9,700 square-foot building, about 1,000 square feet less than the Grand Avenue building. However, acquiring a site with an existing structure would enable the club -- which has said it would pay for a new facility -- to cut its project costs. The club likely would fund renovations, which then would become property of RCSC along with the building itself.

Litzenberger said the Grand Avenue property is large enough to accommodate the vehicle club and other facilities.

Others agreed.



Sun City -- Former China Olive Super Buffet

The former China Olive Super Buffet building on Grand Avenue near 103rd Avenue in Sun City is seen May 5. The Recreation Centers of Sun City board of directors Thursday approved a \$750,000 purchase the property -- including the building -- from its present owner, Lus International, LLC, of Gilbert. (Jeff Grant/Daily News-Sun)

“We could probably put another building on it,” said Kennedy.

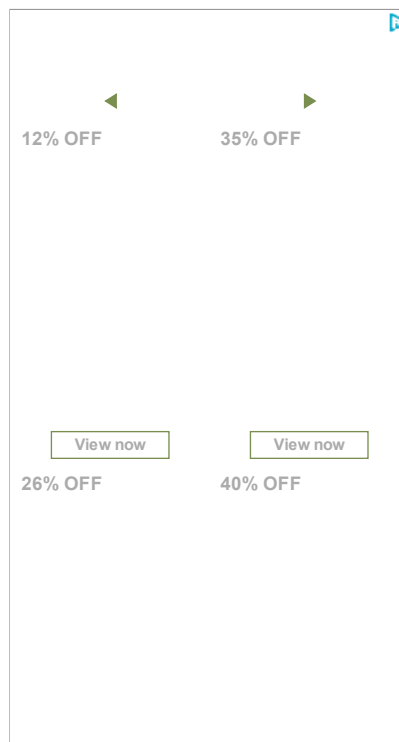
Other clubs need more room, said Janene Geisner, president of Artists by the Lake.

“The Clay Club has 300 members, and they have to share space,” she said.

Following the meeting, the RCSC issued an invitation to residents to apply for the planning committee for the property.

RCSC members in good standing who wish to be considered for the Ad Hoc Long Range Planning Committee should submit or email (boardoffice@suncityaz.org) a letter of interest, including their background and qualifications to the RCSC board office. The office is located at LakeviewCenter, 10626 W. Thunderbird Blvd, Sun City, and is in the corporate office on the lower level.

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