



Catherine E. Pugh
Mayor

PLANNING COMMISSION

Wilbur E. "Bill" Cunningham, Chairman

STAFF REPORT



Thomas J. Stosur
Director

July 27, 2017

REQUESTS: Closing Wilcox Street and Several Alleys In Block 1184, Ambrose Kennedy Park

RECOMMENDATION: Approval

STAFF: Craig Minor

PLANNING DISTRICT: Eastern

PETITIONER: Baltimore Housing (DHCD)

OWNER: The Mayor and City Council

SITE/GENERAL AREA

Site Conditions: The streets and alleys proposed to be closed are adjacent to properties that are owned by the Mayor and City Council, as well as, privately owned properties which are currently undergoing acquisition.

General Area: The streets proposed to be closed are located in the Johnston Square neighborhood in East Baltimore. This area is a residential neighborhood comprised of mostly rowhomes with a few multi-family buildings. The site is located along the E. Chase St. and Harford Road intersection.

HISTORY

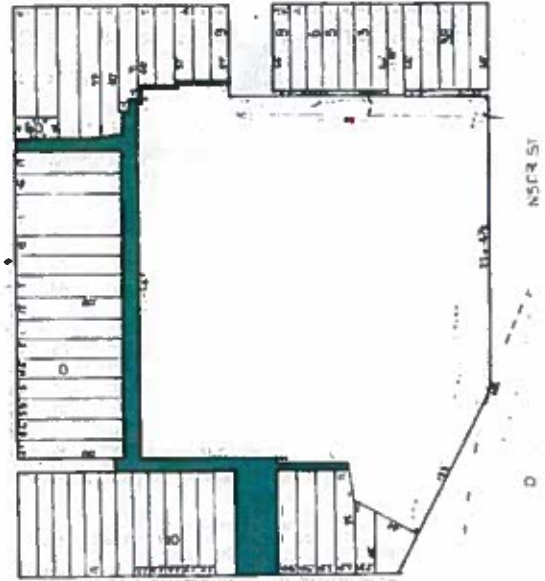
No prior history for this site.

ANALYSIS

Proposal: The Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) has requested the Department of Transportation to close: 1.) Wilcox Street and 2.) Several alleys near Ambrose Kennedy Park as indicated on the plat below.

DHCD is acquiring all of the abutting properties in this area. The purpose of the closings is to help facilitate land assembly for park expansion. The rights-of-way will be consolidated with the abutting parcels and the existing park. There are utilities that need to be closed and any utilities not abandoned will be relocated under a Developers Agreement.

The proposed street closings are part of a broader vision to revitalize Johnston Square and improve the Ambrose Kennedy Park. In addition, the park expansion is part of a park land replacement strategy from the reuse of a portion of McKim Park, at 1200 East Baltimore Street, in Jonestown for a new Ronald McDonald House. McKim park improvements utilized federal Land Water Conservation Funds. By virtue of redeveloping a portion of the park, the value of the funds lost must be replaced. The expansion to Ambrose Kennedy Park is part of an effort to make up for the value loss of the Land Water Conservation funds at McKim Park. This particular street closing action would help pave the way for this expansion. The applicant will work with the Department of Transportation to continue with the formal process of closing the street.



This action has been referred to the Planning Commission for review as an extension of the Master Plan review authority assigned by the City Charter, Art. VII, §§72 and 74. Given that the streets proposed for closure are soon to be, surrounded by Mayor and City Council properties, staff recommends that the Planning Commission find that there is no further need for public use of the street and alleys and can be closed.

Community Notification: The following entities have been notified of this action: The Rebuild Johnston Square Organization, Baltimore City Recreation and Parks, Baltimore Housing, City Councilman Robert Stokes and the following abutting property owners: Lucco LLC, Gwendolyn C Burke, Masoud Moradi, Lenora Venable and Harry Venable, Robert Holmes, Wilson Guyton and Tracy Guyton, McKinley Faulcon, Jr., Nam Kim Jong, Cephus Murrell, Mary Gaskin and the Housing Authority of Baltimore City.

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