

To: Brian O'Connell-City Development Dept.  
Cc: Alderman Greg Holding  
Alderman Michael Shields  
Mayor Gary Becker  
From: Frank Tingle-Member City of Racine Planning Commission  
Date: 29MAY2007

Subject: Request Denial of Item 07-0613-Communications regarding Jones Park

I regret I am unable to attend the 30MAY2007 meeting of the Planning Commission. Please enter this into the official record as a Voice in Opposition.

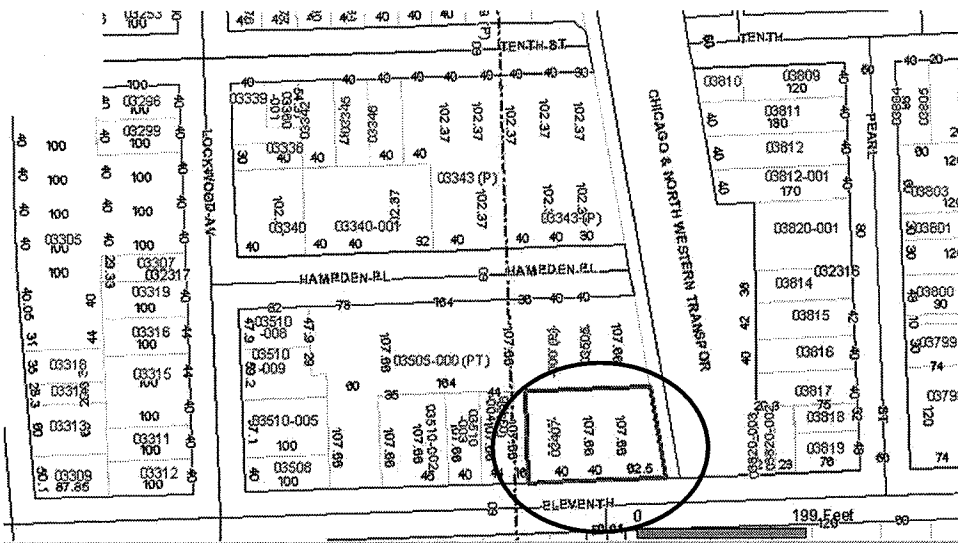
### Current Neighborhood Conditions

This property has been a City Park since it was donated to the City in 1949. It is directly across from the City Traffic Department Repair Facility and abuts the UP rail line. The park is in a much neglected area of the City, with at least 4 sub-standard housing units within one block of the park. There appear to be no City Parks within the boundaries of the neighborhood (bounded by the UP rail line and Memorial Drive.)

### Vacant Lots

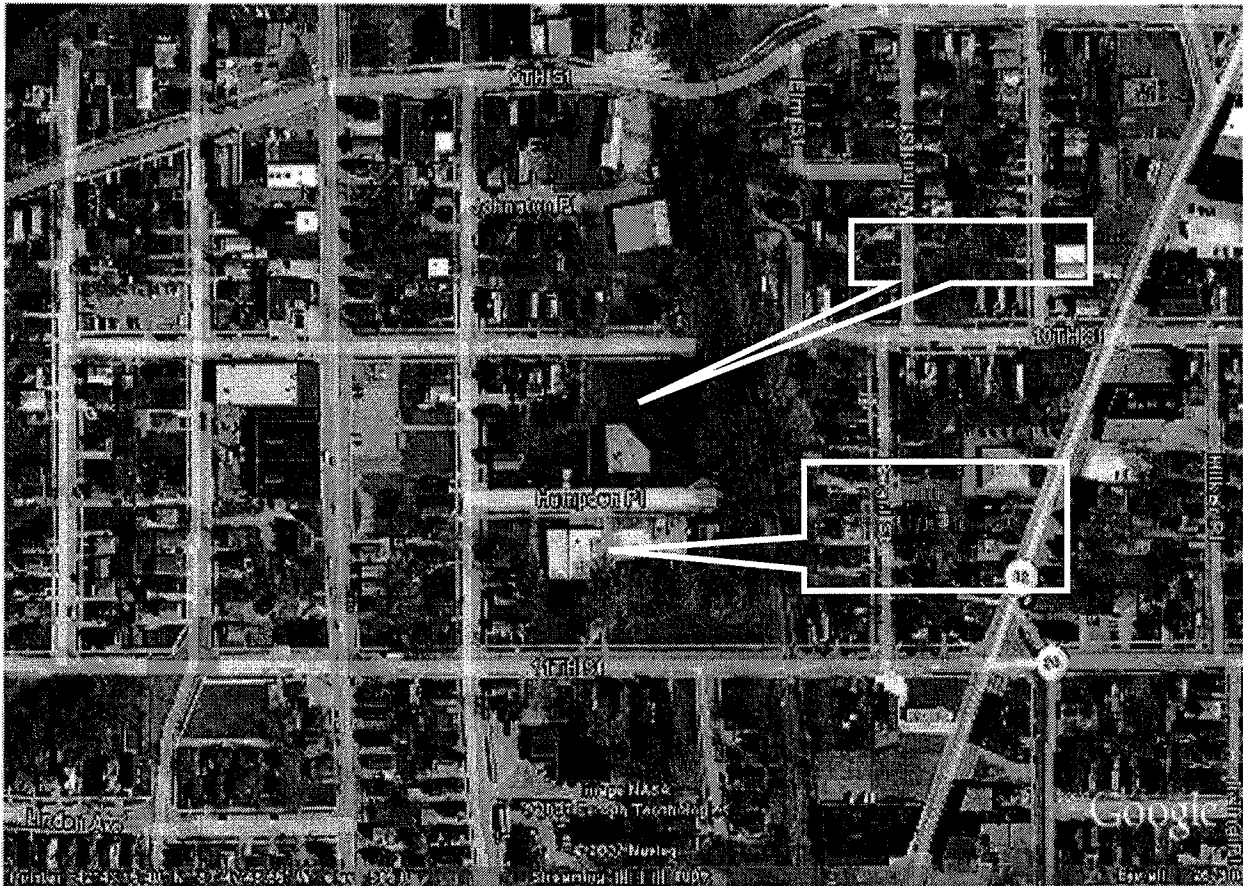
In walking through the neighborhood, I noticed at least 7 vacant lots. Improving these lots, with the help of Habitat for Humanity, would add significant value to the area and provide a sense of neighborhood, all without having to sacrifice any public parklands.

Two of these lots are directly to the south of the property on 11<sup>th</sup> Street. I contacted the City Assessor's office and confirmed that these properties are owned by Racine County. Preliminary discussions with the County confirmed this. They are identified on the County Recorder's GIS system below:



### **Potential City Facility Consolidation**

If you look at an aerial survey of the area, as provided by GoogleEarth, you can see MANY vacant lots in the area. In addition, just southwest of the property, is the City Traffic repair facility which could conceivably be relocated to existing City facilities for the storage of their streetlights and repair facility, thus creating housing sites. I have noted Jones Park and the Traffic Facility in the photo below:



### **Legislative Concerns**

I did some research through the Wisconsin Legislature Revisor of Statutes Bureau. They are the official publisher of the Wisconsin Statutes and Administrative Code. There are very specific references on the sale of "public parks and places of recreation" and the conditions for their sale. Some chapters refer to creation of dedicated funds for the deposit of any property sales, while other sections mention the need to create parkland areas to replace those that are sold off.

### **Dangerous Precedent**

Selling off (or donating) this property opens up the potential for disposing of public parklands at the whim of the administration. A process should be developed for this.

It seems clear that the efforts of the City should be focused on cleaning up the area first before creating "white elephant properties" that abut a noisy, dangerous, train track...one that will get busier after the Metra extension happens.