

Source  
 Mike Hood *MA*  
 Tim Teddy

**TO:** City Council  
**FROM:** City Manager and Staff   
**DATE:** May 8, 2008  
**RE:** Feasibility of locating a Shotgun House at Douglass Park

Fiscal Impact  
 YES  
 NO  
 Report Only X

Other Info.

**Summary:** Per Council request, Parks and Recreation staff has prepared a report regarding the potential relocation of a historic home, also known as a “shotgun house” from the corner of Garth and Worley to Douglass Park. This report summarizes the feasibility of locating the house to Douglass Park versus the original proposed relocation site as part of the historic village at Nifong Park. The owners of the house and the Boone County Historical Society representatives are interested in a quick resolution of the location issue as they have insurance concerns and a City mandated June 2008 restoration or demolition deadline.

**Discussion:** This report was prepared with assistance from the City Planning Department and discusses the acquisition of the 411 N. 5<sup>th</sup> Street lot and the feasibility of relocating the shotgun house to Douglass Park versus the original proposed site in Nifong Park’s historical village also known as Boone Junction.

**History of Acquisition of the Douglass Park Lot**

In 2006, the Planning and Development Department approached the Parks and Recreation Department regarding the possible foreclosure of property located at 411 N. Fifth Street, adjacent to Douglass Park. This contact was made as the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan, 2002 Facility Update, recommends the City acquire properties along the east boundary of Douglass Park if they become available. The City’s Planning Department used the Park Master Plan as guidance in its review of the foreclosure situation.

This type of property acquisition was included in the park master plan due to comments received from participants at focus group meetings held in central Columbia as part of the master plan development process. Both public and staff expressed a strong desire to increase the amount of green space and recreational opportunities in central Columbia. This included acquiring any properties located adjacent to Field and Douglass Parks if they became available. The intent was that the Department would only acquire land from willing sellers at prices of market value or less, including any opportunities resulting from foreclosure, property abandonment, or donation.

Commerce Bank of Kansas City was ready to foreclose on the lot at 411 N. Fifth, but was willing to accept \$8,000 in lieu of having to go through foreclosure proceedings. The City also had a CDBG Housing Rehab loan in the amount of \$14,844.63 against the property. Planning staff were willing to recommend that the Council forgive the loan provided Parks & Recreation would clean up the property and dedicate it as part of Douglas Park. Funding for the acquisition came from the dedicated Park Sales Tax. At the August 21, 2006 Council meeting, the purchase was brought before the Council and it was unanimously approved (see attached minutes).

Following acquisition, the Parks & Recreation Department paid approximately \$10,000 for the demolition of the structure; closure and removal of utilities; and finish grading, clean-up and seeding. The Department currently maintains the lot as part of Douglass Park.

### **Original Plan to Locate the Shotgun House to Nifong Park**

This past winter, representatives from the Boone County Historical Society (BCHS) met with park staff regarding the placement of a shotgun house in the historical village at Nifong Park. This historical village, also known as Boone Junction, currently contains the "Pop" Collins log cabin and the Easley Store and was developed to represent historical homes of Boone County. Boone Junction is part of the Nifong Park master plan as approved by Council and is leased to the BCHS. The Boone County Historical Society is responsible for the location, restoration, maintenance, and operation of the historical structures.

Per discussions with the co-owners of the "shotgun house" and parks and recreation staff, BCHS agreed to the relocation of the shotgun house to Nifong's historical village under the following contingencies:

1. Cost of foundation and moving to be paid for by others;
2. Lack of significant community opposition to the project.

BCHS further agreed to take care of the restoration of the house at an estimated cost of \$11,200 in materials and about \$6,500 in labor. The Society will not provide any heating and cooling for the house, just electricity for lights and convenience outlets. Further restoration possibilities includes remodeling the middle room of the house and dedicating it to display space, initially telling the story of the impact of the 1950s "urban renewal" project on Columbia's landscape and people. Restoration work is estimated to take several months to complete with the goal of having the house ready for public viewing beginning in May 2009 with the opening of the third season at Boone Junction. City staff is currently reviewing the owners' proposal to obtain NRT demolition funds to defray the expense of moving the shotgun house to Nifong Park.

BCHS representatives contacted community leaders; appeared on Wynna Faye Elbert's radio show; and attended public meetings. It was during one of these meetings that the possibility of relocating the shotgun house to Douglass Park was discussed.

### **Feasibility of Locating the Shotgun House to Douglass Park**

**Douglass Park** is a 6.2 acre park consisting of a swimming pool, baseball/softball field, picnic shelter, playground, horseshoe courts, two basketball courts and a 23 car parking lot. The City actually owns 4.3 acres of the park and the Columbia Public School District (CPSD) owns 1.9 acres. The CPSD owned property contains the two basketball courts and baseball/softball field (see attached map). CPSD has not indicated any immediate plans to use their property for anything else other than park uses.

**Lot information:** The proposed lot at 411 N. Fifth Street is 66 ft wide by 140 ft deep or 0.2 acres in size. This lot was purchased using dedicated Park Sales Tax funds for use as additional green space and recreation opportunities. Utilities have been capped at the street as part of the demolition of the former structure. The proposed shotgun house

currently sits on a much smaller lot so the physical size of the lot is sufficient. The lot is not large enough for parking other than what is found on typical homes, so any additional public parking which might be needed would have to be on the street. The lot is zoned R-3 which allows for single family homes. The house would need to meet all Zoning Regulations pertaining to building setbacks, parking and open space, as well as all building codes. The use of the house as a “museum” is allowable under current zoning.

**Funding:** The funding for the proposed moving and restoration of the shotgun house to Nifong Park is all being provided by private funds. The BCHS Board feels that the shotgun house would be a fine addition to Boone Junction—one that would represent the African-American community in a setting where it would be secured but available to the public. As indicated earlier, BCHS has tentative plans to fund an exhibit that would respect the origins of the building by telling the story of “urban renewal” and its impact on the entire community of Columbia. However, it appears that BCHS involvement with the shotgun house would not happen if the house is not placed in Boone Junction. In correspondence from Boone County Historical Society President Gary Smith, the Society indicates that:

“We respect the more recently advanced desire to move it to another location within the black community to maintain a context and to compliment a larger historic district. We would not oppose such a move. BCHS could not have an official roll in moving or furnishing the house if the decision is to move it to Fifth Street.”

The Parks and Recreation Department does not have any funds budgeted for the relocation or restoration of the shotgun house. In order to find a funding source, staff would have to evaluate current and future projects and determine which if any, may be eliminated or reduced in scope. The problem is determining an appropriate amount. The work that BCHS was going to do was estimated to cost approximately \$11,200 in materials and another \$6,500 in labor. As with many BCHS projects, they are able to utilize a combination of donated and hired labor, often at reduced prices. Without a detailed evaluation of the building by an architect/engineering specialist, it is difficult to determine what level of restoration work would be required and what it would cost the City to place the house at the Douglass site and meet all occupancy and use requirements.

**Operation:** If the shotgun house is relocated to Nifong Park, the BCHS would be responsible for not only the restoration and maintenance of the exterior and interior of the structure, they would also create a historically relevant display consisting of appropriate furnishings and artifacts. These historical artifacts are either donated or purchased by BCHS and are maintained and updated by the staff at BCHS. This is critical as some of the historical artifacts require specialized care. BCHS also pays for all utilities associated with the structures in Boone Junction and provides the resources to open the buildings for public viewing.

In order to provide public viewing times, BCHS provides a combination of staff and volunteers to monitor and operate the structures located in the historic village of Boone Junction. Unfortunately, BCHS involvement ends if the house is located elsewhere other than Nifong Park. BCHS President Smith states:

“We also could not operate it for several reasons, including the fact that

we do not have the volunteers to staff a separate facility and security issues associated with off-site exhibits are a real problem.”

In Nifong Park, BCHS has a resident caretaker that assists with security, maintenance and operation of the historical structures. Volunteers, serving as docents, not only provide opportunities for public viewing, but also are trained to provide historical information.

If the house is relocated to Douglass Park, the Columbia Parks and Recreation Department has concerns over how the house would be maintained, funded and operated. The Department does not have the staff or financial resources available to begin maintaining a historical house and providing time for public viewing.

Funding sources would need to be found for the annual operating costs such as utilities, materials and supplies, repairs, and personnel. There may be support for a volunteer ran and funded organization, but considering the financial difficulties that the well known, historically significant Blind Boone home is having, it does not seem likely that a well funded volunteer group would be available to take responsibility for the shotgun house.

**Timing:** The owners of the shotgun house, Brian Treece and Mike Martin, are seeking a quick resolution to this situation. They have some insurance concerns and are facing a City of Columbia mandated June 2008 deadline to either restore or demolish the house. If the house is to be relocated to Nifong Park, the move could begin as soon as a contractor is scheduled. BCHS staff plans on working on the restoration during the fall and winter months with a tentative goal of opening the house to the public in May, 2009. All of the timing issues are unknown if the house is located to Douglass Park. It will be difficult to get all of the permission, permits, etc, ready by the end of June.

**Summary:** The relocation of the shotgun house to Douglass Park is feasible, but the following staffing and financial considerations need to be determined:

1. Cost of Relocation
2. Timing/Scheduling
3. Permits/Zoning issues (if needed)
4. Utility connection and annual payment
5. Restoration (Structure: exterior and interior)
6. Maintenance (structure and historical artifacts)
7. Public viewing times
8. Artifact updates (adding new, storing old historical artifacts)
9. Security

If the shotgun house is located to the historical village in Nifong Park, all of these considerations are assumed by the Boone County Historical Society and/or their partners. This also allows the existing 411 N. Fifth Street lot to remain part of Douglass Park and open to future recreational possibilities.

**Recommended Council Action:** Direct staff on how to proceed. The property owners and the Boone County Historical Society are interested in a quick resolution based on City mandated June 2008 deadlines.

**MINUTES**  
**CITY COUNCIL MEETING – COLUMBIA, MISSOURI**  
**AUGUST 21, 2006**

**B312-06 Authorizing the acquisition of property located at 411 N. Fifth Street for park purposes.**

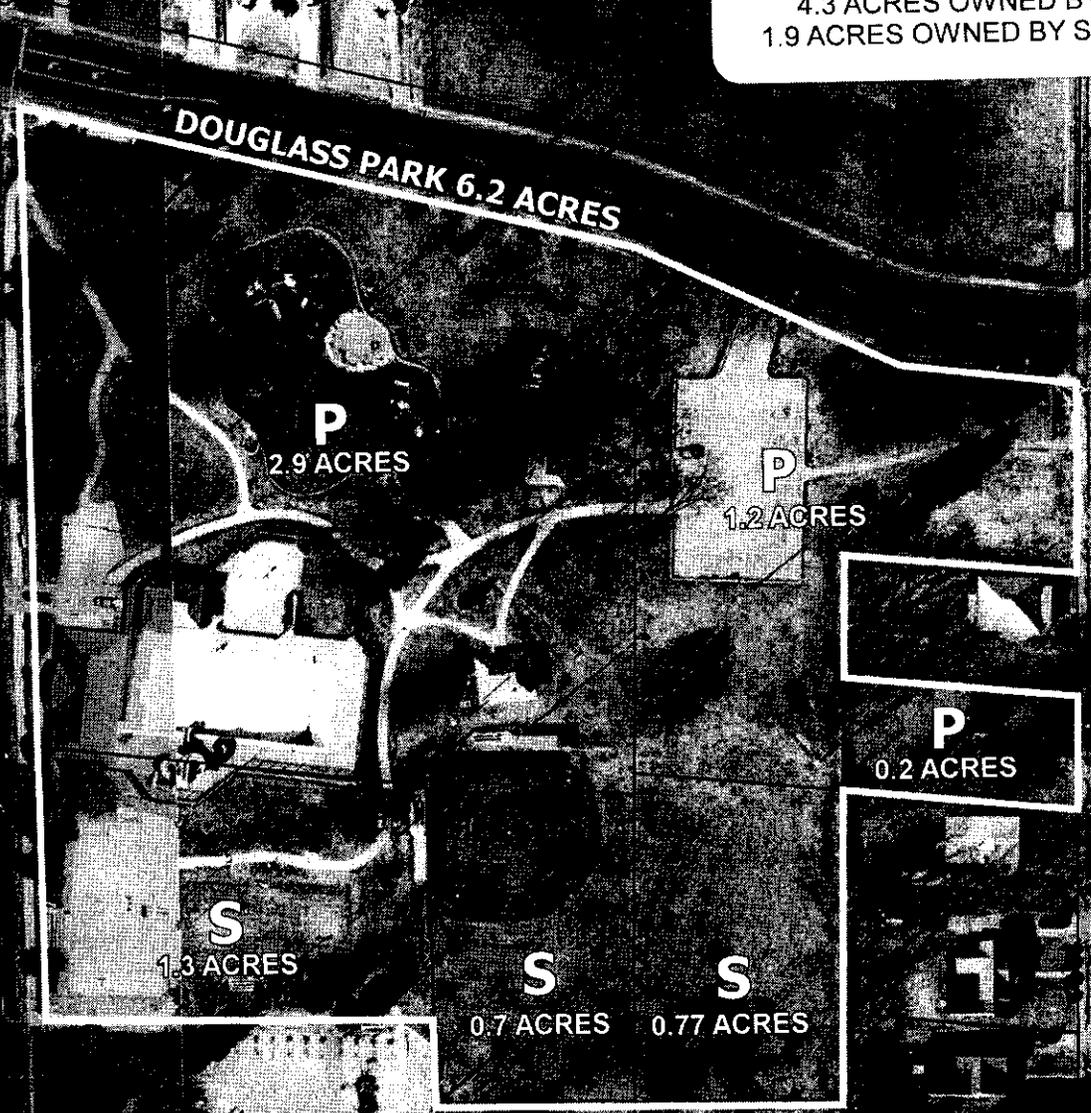
The bill was given second reading by the Clerk.

Mr. Watkins explained this was a request to authorize the purchase of a lot at 411 N. Fifth Street for the amount of \$8,000 in lieu of foreclosure cost. The City also had a CDBG Housing Rehab loan in the amount of \$14,844.63 against the property, which they would recommend the Council forgive provided they could clean the property up and dedicate it as part of Douglas Park. It was currently a vacant property. He noted funds would come from the 2006 budget appropriation for neighborhood park acquisitions and the park sales tax.

Mr. Janku understood this was part of the Parks Master Plan, but asked how this would enhance the park. He wondered if a better alternative would be to acquire the lot and have someone build a new structure on it. Using the overhead, Mr. Hood explained this was the second of the first two lots from the north and if they were able to acquire those two lots, they planned to add a second picnic shelter facility to the park, which the neighborhood had requested. If the additional three lots became available and they were able to acquire them, they would be able to adjust the size of the ball field. It currently had a very short outfield with a lot of the balls going into the back yards of those houses. Ms. Nauser asked if it was cost-effective to buy houses at market value to tear down. Mr. Hood stated they felt that if the City wanted to expand the size of the park, this was the only opportunity. He pointed out they were not interested in aggressively pursuing the acquisition of those lots. The thought was that as they came on the market, the City should make an attempt to acquire them. In this case, since it was a foreclosure, the City had an opportunity to acquire it at a very reasonable price. Mr. Janku thought if for some reason it was decided it would not be used as a part of the park, they could sell it for redevelopment.

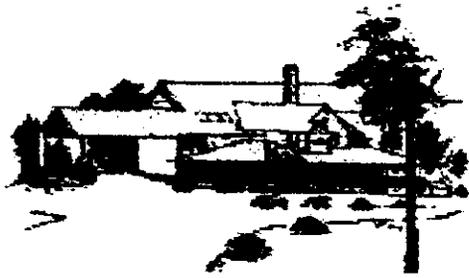
The vote on B312-06 was recorded as follows: VOTING YES: CRAYTON, JANKU, HUTTON, LOVELESS, NAUSER, HOPPE, HINDMAN. VOTING NO: NO ONE. Bill declared enacted, reading as follows:

DOUGLASS PARK: 6.2 TOTAL ACRES  
4.3 ACRES OWNED BY CITY  
1.9 ACRES OWNED BY SCHOOLS



**DOUGLASS PARK PARCEL OWNERSHIP MAP**

-  PARK BOUNDARY
-  PARCELS OWNED BY CITY OF COLUMBIA
-  PARCELS OWNED BY COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS



## **Boone County Historical Society**

### **Walters-Boone County Historical Museum**

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May 12, 2008

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The BCHS Board feels that the shotgun house would be a fine addition to Boone Junction-one that would represent the African-American community in a setting where it would be secured but available to the public. We have tentative plans for an exhibit that would respect the origins of the building by telling the story of "urban renewal" and its impact on the entire community of Columbia.

With that said we respect the more recently advanced desire to move it to another location within the black community to maintain a context and to compliment a larger historic district. We would not oppose such a move. BCHS could not have an official role in moving or furnishing the house if the decision is to move it to Fifth Street. We also could not operate it for several reasons, including the fact that we do not have the volunteers to staff a separate facility and security issues associated with off-site exhibits are a real problem.

Please keep in mind that the building will require extensive restoration and this may have been a role that BCHS could have assisted with if the house was located at Boone Junction.

Hopefully this give you the information that you need regarding the shotgun house and any role that BCHS might play in the moving and restoration of the house. Best wishes with a project that would appear vital to the history of Boone County.

Sincerely,  
Gary L. Smith, President of BCHS Board