

Petition for city recreation development on 40th Street

By Tracy Werth

Concerned Arcadia resident Will Bullock needs your help in convincing Phoenix officials to obtain a state owned vacant lot on the southwest corner of 40th Street and McDowell Road before the land is sold at auction this summer. He would like to see the city utilize the corner for a much needed sports field complex. Bullock has even drawn up a sample plan for how the land can possibly be laid out to include soccer, lacrosse, rugby fields, basketball and volleyball courts, a running track, a children's play area and even a community center or offices for a park, fire or police satellite office.

"I have discussed this plan at length with Councilman Stanton, Councilman Johnson, Chad Campbell in the Arizona House and the State Trust Land Manager, Max Masel. I also presented the information to the Phoenix Parks and Recreation Board and the Parks and Recreation staff," says Bullock, who spends his free time both coaching and playing on adult soccer teams. "Without exception, every one of them agrees that it is a fantastic plan, but that it would have to really be supported by residents to get any real attention by the city."

Currently there is a vital deficiency in recreation facilities in our area. There is just one overused soccer field shared between Districts 6 and 8 and it is frequently closed for repair. Many other kinds of children's sports teams find parents having to drive their kids to Scottsdale or Tempe to get time for team play, but as those city's programs become more crowded, there is the strong possibility that fields could soon be limited to their residents only.

The price of the vacant corner at 40th Street and McDowell has been estimated to be between \$12 to \$20 million dollars, with only a small percentage of the money due up front. This would leave time for future funding to pay the balance, perhaps from the renewed Phoenix Parks and Preserve Initiative (PPPI) that Phoenix voters approved with Proposition 101 to provide funding to preserve acres of state trust land, improve neighborhood parks and build regional parks.

"The primary barrier to this project is the cost of the land in a budget cut year," says Bullock. "I believe if the city considers the need, the funding can be allocated." Bullock believes the cost of construction can be partially funded by PPPI monies, and the rest from donations and sponsorships. He is currently putting together plans to form a non-profit organization to make sure this land will be preserved for community use rather than turned into another strip mall or apartment complex.

Bullock further envisions that some of the costs involved could be offset by taking a small portion of the land that has frontage on 40th Street and McDowell Road and either reserving it for sale or long term lease to private companies and individuals to provide related services to the facility, such as a sports medicine clinic or sporting apparel store.

All area residents are urged to sign the on-line petition at www.phoenixsportscomplex.org where a mock-up plan is also posted along with further details of Bullock's proposal. Concerned citizens can also contact Bullock directly through e-mail at phoenixsportscomplex@gmail.com with any questions or suggestions to keep the plot of land to benefit area residents.

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