



MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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MEMORANDUM

TO: The Governing Board

FROM:  Joseph T. Edmiston, FAICP, Hon. ASLA, Executive Officer

DATE: September 10, 2014

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item XIV: Consideration of resolution authorizing: (a) entering into an agreement to acquire conservation easements and fee simple parcels by 8149 Willow Glen Drive contingent upon the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy waiving its first right of refusal on APN 5565-026-900; (b) acceptance of conservation easements on APN 5565-026-015, and (c) acceptance of APNs 5565-026-003 and 5565-027-010, Laurel Canyon, City of Los Angeles.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board adopt the attached resolution authorizing: (a) entering into an agreement to acquire conservation easements and fee simple parcels by 8149 Willow Glen Drive contingent upon the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy waiving its first right of refusal on APN 5565-026-900; (b) acceptance of conservation easements on APN 5565-026-015, and (c) acceptance of APNs 5565-026-003 and 5565-027-010, Laurel Canyon.

Background: The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (Conservancy) exercised its first right of refusal pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 33207(b) on a small City of Los Angeles-owned parcel in Laurel Canyon in May of 2013. The parcel is part of a habitat linkage that connects two habitat blocks on either side of Willow Glen Drive. The City had expected to sell it to the owner of adjoining APN 5565-026-015 which would have enabled him to build a second house.

The Conservancy negotiated and offered a land exchange with the owner as a condition of waiving its first right of refusal on the City-owned surplus parcel. The land exchange would net the public two fee simple parcels connected to APN 5565-026-015 and a conservation easement on APN 5565-026-015. The two parcels and conservation easement would secure an adequate wildlife corridor. In November 2013 the landowner broke off negotiations.

The applicant continued forward with an application to the City for a Zoning Administrator's Adjustment to allow a second substandard lot size based on the premise that he owned City-owned APN 5565-026-900. The Conservancy appealed the ZA's approval in May 2014. That appeal was to be heard on September 11th

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but was recently moved forward to October 23, 2014 before the South Valley Area Planning Commission.

A few weeks ago the landowner/applicant approached the Conservancy staff about working out another deal. The Conservancy staff offered the same deal as it had in 2013. That offer is under review by the landowner. The agreement provides for the MRCA to receive APNs 5565-026-003 and 5565-027-010 in fee simple and a conservation easement on the principal development parcel APN 5565-026-015. The attached figure shows the relationship of these parcels and the habitat linkage.

If the owner agrees to the Conservancy's offer, it benefits all parties to complete a signed agreement prior to the scheduled October hearing. The proposed action would authorize staff to enter into an agreement to receive the two parcels and a conservation easement if the Conservancy waives its first right of refusal. The Conservancy can consider such an action later this month.