TULSA DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: January 5, 2017
TO: CHAIRMAN & BOARD MEMBERS
FROM: O.C. Walker, Executive Director
SUBJECT: Urban Garden/Food Forestry
LOCATION: Southwest corner of North Greenwood Avenue and East Queen Street, Tulsa, Oklahoma

Background: Developer: Institute for Developing Communities (TIDC)
Owner: Tulsa Development Authority
Location: Southwest corner of North Greenwood Avenue and East Queen Street, Tulsa, Oklahoma
Size of Tract: N/A
Number of Lots: One (1) Lot
Development Area: Dunbar Neighborhood
Fair Market Value: N/A
Executive Director: O.C. Walker II

This is a request to allow a Urban Garden/Food Forestry to exist on TDA owned property located on the Southwest corner of North Greenwood Avenue and Queen Street, Tulsa, Oklahoma in the Dunbar Neighborhood. The property is currently vacant. The Institute for Developing Communities (TIDC) and their strategic partners would like to offer opportunities for enhancement to the area. There is a specific area to accomplish this goal.

1. Tree planting – one of the goals identified includes installing trees along the public parkways or providing bulk rate trees to residents. The proposal is to provide edibles (fruit and nut trees) that can be maintained and provide a source of food in the community versus decorative options, when appropriate, and when to do so does not create a public hazard or nuisance

2. Utilization of land for food forestry/permaculture installations – this would include utilizing land along highway rights-of-way, as well as strategic property sites for the installation of permaculture sites that can be planted with fruit and nut trees, as well as cover crops that mature through various seasons of the year.

The mission of TIDC is to establish or enhance the social, economic and government fabric of communities that have experienced neglect by leveraging strategic partners to create economic, education and
employment opportunities. TIDC has a concept to develop such sites throughout the community that will also provide lessons in basic agriculture to youth, provide a source of recreation for elders, provide a food source in “food deserts” and become a source of income for the youth employees.

TIDC also plans to partner with Langston University to apply for a grant that would support this effort. This is a request to enter into a Lease Agreement with TIDC for an Urban Garden/Food Forestry located on the Southwest corner of North Greenwood Avenue and East Queen Street, Tulsa, Oklahoma

Attachments:  Letter dated December 6, 2016, TIDC
Letter dated December 6, 2016 Langston University
Aerial Map

Recommendation: Staff recommends the TDA Board of Commissioners enter into negotiations with The Institute for Developing Communities for lease of the subject property.

Reviewed By: O.C. Walker II
TO: O.C. Walker, Executive Director, Tulsa Development Authority

1216 N. Lansing Ave – Tulsa, OK 74106

FROM: Thomas Boxley, Executive Director, The Institute for Developing Communities

RE: Food Forestry

December 6, 2016

Mr. Walker,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you and the Tulsa Development Authority for the work that you do every day in support of and in creating opportunities for our city to become an attractive, viable alternative for people – specifically our young professionals – enabling Tulsa to attract and retain the best and the brightest talent.

Your office recently updated and approved, with community feedback and recommendations, a sector plan for the Greenwood Heritage Neighborhood Plan, currently titled the Unity Heritage Neighborhood. This area is characterized by significantly higher level of poverty and lower median household income as compared to other sectors of the city of Tulsa. The plan calls for several upgrades to the identified area. The Institute for Developing Communities and our strategic partners would like to offer opportunities for enhancement to this area. There are specific areas by which we hope to accomplish this goal.

1. Tree planting – one of the goals identified includes installing trees along the public parkways or providing bulk rate trees to residents. Our proposal is that we provide edibles (fruit and nut trees) that can be maintained and provide a source of food in the community versus decorative options when appropriate and when to do so does not create a public hazard or nuisance.

2. Utilization of land for food forestry/permaculture installations – this would include utilizing land along highway rights of way (example: Tisdale Food Forest) as well as strategic property sites for the installation of permaculture sites that can be planted with fruit and nut trees as well as cover crops that mature through various seasons of the year.

The plan further calls for the acquisition of undeveloped lots that can be utilized as a neighborhood amenity and the “utilization of special zoning overlays to allow for innovative sustainable uses such as
urban agriculture and storm water management.” These opportunities are of particular interest to our organization.

The mission of The Institute for Developing Communities is to establish or enhance the social, economic and government fabric of communities that have experienced neglect by leveraging our strategic partners to create economic, education and employment opportunities. With this guiding principle, we seek to acquire property that would be an asset for the community in the form of a long term, sustainable source of food for the community. We have a concept to develop such sites throughout the community that will also provide lessons in basic agriculture to youth, provide a source of recreation for elders, provide a food source in the “food desert” and become a source of income for youth employees. In support of this mission, we are requesting that TDA partner with TIDC and deed identified strategic property for this means. This will allow us to leverage other grant funding to complete the development. Specifically we would like for you to consider the .93 acre, Pine Street frontage parcel that is bounded by the Osage Prairie Trail to the west, a church to the east, Pine Street to the north.

If you have any questions regarding this project please don’t hesitate to contact me. We look forward to working with you in the continued development of our city.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Thomas Boxley
Letter of Support: The Institute for Developing Communities

December 6, 2016

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter on behalf of Thomas Boxley and The Institute for Developing Communities, Inc. in support of candidacy for grantsmanship or for any agriculture and community development opportunities. The collaboration, guidance, support, leadership, advocacy, grantmanship and collegiality provided by Mr. Boxley throughout the duration and stability of the Agriculture Career Pathways Experience (ACE) project at Langston University has been very encouraging. Our partnership has greatly enhanced the credibility of the academic preparation, awareness and career development for many youths with and without disabilities beyond the classroom and training. To my knowledge The Institute for Developing Communities has served greatly providing leadership and training for youth development within the Tulsa community. More personally, Mr. Boxley and The Institute for Developing Communities have always been dutiful in their response to several community efforts to support and offer guidance to address many public concerns. Their experience presents itself well, and speaks loud and clear for the commitment that the organization has bestowed in making a significant difference in providing community outreach across the region.

Through it all, a number of their leadership and outreach initiatives have provided assistance to support many citizens, students, and the community. If provided the opportunity to serve in a greater capacity, I feel confident that The Institute for Developing Communities will transcend Mr. Boxley's personal qualities and professional endeavors to a greater level to promote quality services and encourage favorable human development initiatives beyond measure. I conclude, by offering the following character traits of Thomas Boxley from a variety of factors: Cooperative, Professional, Competent, Advocate, Responsible, Takes Initiative, Attentive, Integrity, Productive, Quality Work, and Favorable Relations. As a Colleague and community leader, I am certainly glad to know a person of like attainment, and I am pleased to announce that all of these character traits can be easily assessed as excellent. If you have any questions regarding this letter of support, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Dr. Phillip D. Lewis, CRC, LADC-C
Associate Professor/ Program Coordinator
Principal Investigator NIFA Grant

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