

Subject: Acquisition of property at 5689 Ferry Road

File Number: ACS2024-SI-HSI-0028

Report to Finance and Corporate Services Committee on 3 December 2024

and Council 11 December 2024

Submitted on November 20, 2024 by Geraldine Wildman, Director, Housing Solutions and Investment Services

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Ward: West Carleton-March (5)

Objet : Acquisition de la propriété au 5689, chemin Ferry

Numéro de dossier : ACS2024-SI-HSI-0028

Rapport présenté au Comité des finances et des services organisationnels

Rapport soumis le 3 décembre 2024

et au Conseil le 11 décembre 2024

Soumis le 2024-11-20 par Geraldine Wildman, directrice, Services des solutions de logement et des investissements

Personne ressource : Robin Souchen, gestionnaire, Services immobiliers, Services des solutions de logement et des investissements

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Quartier : West Carleton-March (5)

REPORT RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Finance and Corporate Services Committee recommend City Council:

- 1. Approve the fee simple acquisition of a 223-acre parcel of land, including structures, legally described as Pt Lt B, C, D Con Gore on Chaudiere Lake Fitzroy as in N773438 except Pt 1 4R23277; West Carleton, (PIN 04559-1843) and shown on Document 1 and 2 attached hereto, from Marion Elizabeth Badham for the total consideration of \$1,950,000 plus applicable taxes and closing costs.**
- 2. Delegate authority to the Director, Housing Solutions and Investment Services to enter into a Purchase Agreement for the acquisition of 5689 Ferry Road as described in this report.**

RECOMMANDATION(S) DU RAPPORT

Que le Comité des finances et des services organisationnels recommande ce qui suit au Conseil municipal:

- 1. D'approuver l'acquisition en fief simple d'une parcelle de terrain de 223 acres, y compris les structures, dont la description officielle est : partie des lots B, C, D, concession Gore sur le lac Chaudière, canton de Fitzroy, comme dans N773438, sauf la partie 1 4R23277; West Carleton (PIN 04559-1843), indiquées dans les documents 1 et 2 ci-joints, de Marion Elizabeth Badham pour un montant total de 1 950 000 \$ (taxes et frais de clôture en sus).**
- 2. Déléguer à la directrice, Services des solutions de logement et des investissements, le pouvoir de conclure une convention d'achat pour l'acquisition du 5689, chemin Ferry, comme décrit dans le présent rapport.**

BACKGROUND

City of Ottawa Council has approved funding within the Natural Area Acquisition (Rural) Account for the purchase and stewardship of important natural lands in the rural area, in support of the City's Official Plan (OP) policies and corporate strategic priorities relating to environmental protection and climate resiliency (OP 11.6(5) and 11.6(6)).

These funds are being held for the acquisition of natural lands, particularly where those lands have been designated for environmental protection or identified as part of the Natural Heritage System in the Official Plan. The funds can also be used to fund

measures such as gates to control access, interpretive signage along trails, or habitat restoration. Policy 11.6(5) of the Official Plan specifically states: The City may acquire, hold, or secure land for the purpose of implementing any policy of this Plan, including “initiating the purchase of lands where acquisition of the land is critical to the achievement of the Plan’s objectives”.

Council funds the Natural Area Acquisition (Rural) Account (# 908894) for the purpose of implementing this policy. The capital account for conservation and stewardship of rural environmental lands has a current balance of approximately \$5 million and projected allocations of \$2 million per year in the Long-Range Financial Plan. Allocations in the last two budgets have been \$500,000 (2023) and \$250,000 (2024). The policy and budget support the strategic priority of a Green and Resilient City. Conservation of rural forests was also recently identified as a priority at the Rural Summit.

Staff in the Natural Systems Branch of the Strategic Initiatives Department became aware of this rural property, with frontage along the Ottawa River, in early 2024. A review of this parcel revealed that these lands occupy a significant section of the Natural Heritage System Core Areas and Linkage Areas, as per the Official Plan, that have been identified as being highly important to conserve over the long-term. Staff intend to use available funds in the Natural Area Acquisition (Rural) Account to acquire these lands, in accordance with City policies.

DISCUSSION

At the request of the Natural Systems Branch, the Realty Services Branch was asked to acquire the property municipally known as 5689 Ferry Road, for the purpose of environmental conservation and stewardship. The subject property is an irregular shaped 223-acre parcel of land, located northwest of the intersection of Old Birch Road and Ferry Road, with municipal road frontage on Canon Smith Drive and Ferry Road. It has roughly 2,650 feet (807 metres) of shoreline on its northern border along the Ottawa River and it is situated immediately west of the dock of the Quyon Ferry, a cable ferry that provides a transit service for cars, bikes and pedestrians between Quebec and Ontario.

The subject property is zoned Rural Countryside Zone (RU) and is designated in the City’s Official Plan as Rural Countryside, with a Natural Heritage System (core and linkage) Overlay. The parcel is approximately 60 per cent forested lands and 40 per cent pasture lands, which present opportunities for restoration and tree planting. The

property's water features, which include Ottawa River shoreline and creeks, offer areas to enhance and protect for both aquatic and terrestrial species. Neither the property's zoning nor its overlay protects the existing mature forest.

Opportunities for tree planting and wetland restoration on existing City-owned land is limited, as most City-owned environmental land is already in natural vegetation cover. To meet its Official Plan goals regarding wetlands and rural forests, opportunities such as provided by this property will be required. As a result, the property offers a highly unique conservation opportunity and it meets several criteria for acquisition under the City's Rural Environmental Land Acquisition Program:

- It lies within a linkage area of the City's natural heritage system
- It includes Ottawa River shoreline (estimated at 807 m)
- It contains wetland and mature, significant woodlands
- it provides opportunities for reforestation and wetland restoration in support of the City's no net loss policies and tree planting goals

This property also has historical and cultural value. The site has numerous older structures, which include a farmhouse (built in ~1910), a log home (built in ~1845), two cottages (a three-bedroom structure built in ~1947 and a two-bedroom structure built in ~1977). Other structures on site include a small barn and two small machine sheds. Having been owned and occupied by the same family for over one hundred and eighty years, its primary historic use has been as farmland and it has never been developed beyond the current farm buildings. Its location on the Ottawa River and the lack of past shoreline development or other apparent alteration implies a potential for archaeological sites, including Indigenous occupation or use.

Property Oversight and Maintenance

Staff from the Natural Systems Branch have developed and will initiate a plan for short-term management and oversight of this property upon acquisition. RCFS will arrange for interim maintenance and oversight of the premises and charge associated costs back to the Natural Area Acquisition (Rural) Account. Natural Systems Branch staff are formulating a plan for the long-term management and oversight of the property, which will include a more detailed heritage evaluation of the site and investigation of potential partners on restoration, stewardship and potential passive recreational uses.

No decision has been made regarding plans for the aging buildings on site, though the management plan will assess potential operational uses. In the interim, the buildings will receive basic required maintenance.

City staff are aware of the existence of a former burial site on the premises, only the approximate location of which is known. This too will be addressed within the above stated management plan.

The City's due diligence process includes a Phase One Environmental Site Assessment (ESA). This will identify any potential concerns related to the property and will determine if a Phase two is necessary. This cost is being paid through the Natural Area Acquisitions (Rural) Account, as is the cost of a land survey.

Property Valuation and Negotiations

The property has been marketed for sale over the last two years, with an original asking price of \$3,500,000. Over time, the asking price was reduced to \$2,600,000, and it remained on the market at this price for approximately fourteen months.

An internal market value appraisal was completed by the City's Valuation and Leasing Unit to estimate the market value attributable to the lands. As the subject property's estimated market value was greater than \$750,000, an external appraisal was also commissioned. In both cases, the Appraiser relied on the Direct Comparison approach and compared the property to similar type properties that had been sold recently with adjustments made to compensate for observed differences. Its Highest and Best Use was concluded to be Countryside / Pasture / Residential (three lots maximum). The market value range was determined to be between \$8,520 per acre and \$10,000 per acre, which when applied to the area of 223 acres, resulted in a total value range of \$1,900,000 and \$2,230,000. The value of the property is predicated on land value only, with no value being attributed to the existing improvements on site. These analyses considered a severance of two 2-acre lots (0.8 hectares minimum), which is reasonably probable.

Upon the receipt and review of these appraisals, negotiations commenced with the vendor, which resulted in an agreement being reached to purchase the property for a total consideration of \$1,950,000 plus applicable taxes. The recommendation of this report and actions of staff comply with the Acquisition Policy.

This acquisition is recommended for approval.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Funding for the acquisition costs of \$1,950,000 million plus applicable taxes, closing costs, investigations and survey is available in account # 908894 - Natural Area Acquisitions (Rural).

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications associated with implementing the report recommendations.

COMMENTS BY THE WARD COUNCILLOR(S)

The Councillor for Ward 5, Clarke Kelly, has received a copy of this report and is not in support of the staff recommendation.

CONSULTATION

No public consultation was undertaken. The Realty Services Branch consulted with Surveys and Mapping and Legal Services on this acquisition.

ACCESSIBILITY IMPACTS

There are no accessibility implications associated with implementing the report recommendations.

ASSET MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no asset management implications associated with this report.

Asset Management (AM) staff and Recreation, Cultural & Facility Services (RCFS) staff are aware, and supportive of, this acquisition. Recreation, Cultural & Facilities Department Facilities (RCFS) Operations Services team will arrange for interim maintenance and oversight of the premises, which includes built structures, and charge associated costs back to the Environmental Land Acquisition (Rural) budget.

A long-term management plan for oversight and stewardship of this site is being prepared and will be implemented, which will include consultation with the Algonquin Anishinabek host nation and the potential involvement of one or more conservation partners. Options under consideration include returning the property to a natural condition, requiring little or no long-term maintenance, and transferring management of the property to one of these partner agencies or organizations for long-term stewardship.

CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

Conservation of natural landscapes is important for resilience to climate change and to biodiversity. The program and the budget support the strategic priority of a Green and Resilient City.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

The City's Environmental Remediation Unit (ERU) has completed environmental screening in support of the proposed Acquisition of PIN 04559-1843 (the Subject Lands). Environmental screening included a review through the City's Historical Land Use Inventory (HLUI), review of proximity of the subject lands to known former landfills and/or risk management areas, review of ERU files and available aerial photography. In accordance with the City's land acquisition policy, ERU has recommended a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) should be completed prior to acquiring the Subject Lands; and a qualified environmental consultant has been retained to complete the Phase I ESA as part of environmental due diligence under the terms of the Agreement of Purchase and Sale. A Phase I ESA is underway, the results of which will be reviewed by City staff to determine if there may be any potential environmental concerns or liabilities associated with the Subject Lands. If necessary, staff will commission a Phase II ESA for further testing prior to the final closing date. There are no indications that any substantial contamination issues exist.

DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY IMPLICATIONS

The purchase agreement has been negotiated subject to approval by City Council or its Delegated Authority. To complete the transaction in a timely and efficient manner, Recommendation Two is for Council to delegate authority to the Director, Housing Solutions and Investment Services to execute and conclude the Agreement on behalf of the City.

INDIGENOUS, GENDER AND EQUITY IMPLICATIONS

This acquisition presents an opportunity to collaborate with local Indigenous groups from the Algonquin Anishinabek communities on the stewardship of these lands.

TERM OF COUNCIL PRIORITIES

The program and the budget support the strategic priority of a Green and Resilient City.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

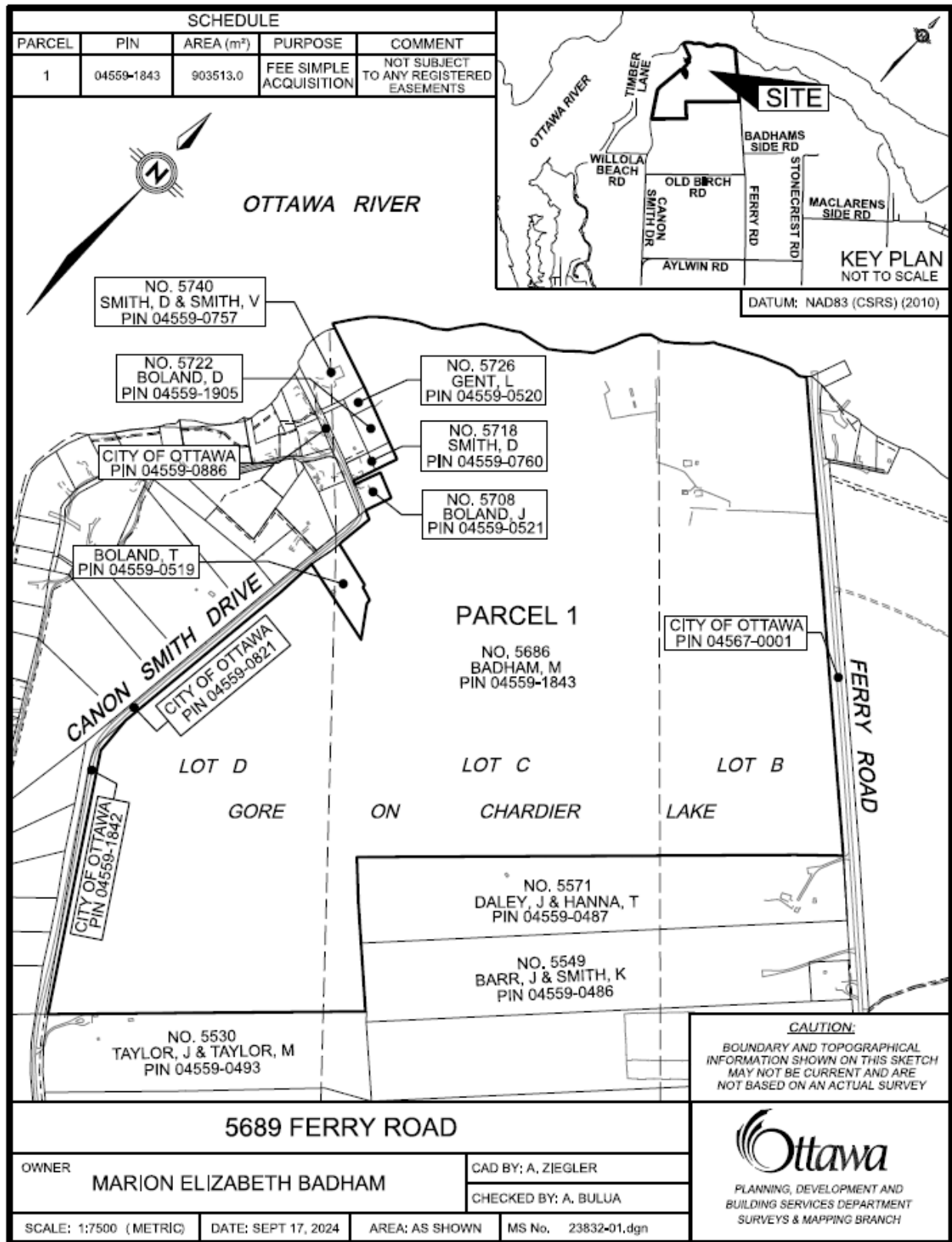
Document 1 – Property Sketch 1

Document 2 – Property Sketch 2

DISPOSITION

Following approval by Council, Housing Solutions and Investment Services staff will implement the second recommendation in this report.

Document 1 – Property Sketch of 5689 Ferry Road



Document 2 – Property Sketch of 5689 Ferry Road



Subject property is identified with a red outline.