

1969

CITY AGREES ON PARK LAND PRICE

X-Way Route Will Bring \$2.2 Million

Price Increased In Negotiations With State

City Council agreed today to sell 26 acres in Overton Park to the state for the east-west expressway for \$2.2 million — a price increased from \$1.9 million during negotiations.

Formal approval was set for this afternoon after Councilmen gave informal approval at an executive session this morning.

It was revealed that the state's offer, which is more than \$80,000 an acre, has already been approved by the Park Commission and Mayor Henry Loeb.

Thomas Prewitt, attorney for the Park Commission, reported the offer to a closed session of 11 members of the Council and their agreement was unanimous.

Prewitt and Hal Lewis, Park Commission superintendent, have been the main negotiators with the state.

The money received for the Overton Park acreage will be earmarked for purchase of other park land. An example of this is a deal which the city is working on now to buy the 160-acre Fox Meadows golf course for \$1 million.

Councilman Billy Hyman, who has battled to buy Fox Meadows since taking office, reported to Council today that a few details remain to be worked out before the purchase is made final.

While the Tennessee Highway Department had announced

it would open bids for construction of a \$4 million segment of the expressway through Overton Park in October, this opening was later postponed. The department's chief engineer, H. D. Long, said he thought a cutback in spending on new federal projects would require the delay, although President Nixon's September announcement of the cutback excluded highway projects.

Long had hoped to be enlightened on the situation after a White House meeting between the President and 13 governors yesterday on ways the federal and state governments can check the nation's continuing inflation.

The best way, Nixon told them, is to slow down construction on new public works projects, including those jointly financed by federal and state funds.

State highway officials have talked of an impending "freeze" in federal-aid highway funds, but there has been no such freeze.

Rather, President Nixon is urging states and local governments voluntarily to cut their own construction requests for federal-aid money. If they don't, the President says he may be forced into ordering a freeze.

Yesterday, most of the governors who met with the President swallowed hard and agreed to cut their own programs, including projects financed by state and local funds.

Some of the governors grumbled, but there was general agreement that construction costs have played a major role in the inflationary spiral.

Tennessee Gov. Buford Ellington was invited but did not attend yesterday's White House conference.

Long, the state's chief highway engineer, said:

"We are still in the position that we just don't know." PL. Sc. SEP 23 69

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