

# **Chamberlain Park**

---

**Park and Recreation Board...Did You Know?**

**November 17, 2016**



# Introduction

- Chamberlain Brothers
- Donation of Initial Parkland
- Controversial Move
- Current Park



Woodland Cemetery

Chamberlain Park

22nd St

19th St

Ingersoll Ave

Grand Ave

Terrace Rd

Martin Luther King Jr Pkwy

Martin Luther King Jr Pkwy

Martin Luther King Jr Pkwy

Woodland Ave

High St

Veridian Credit Union

Grand Ave

20th St

19th St

Ingersoll Ave

Grand Ave

19th St

19th St

19th St

19th St

Aposto

Woodland Ave

Ancient Ways

Ingersoll Ave

Grand Ave

Fleur Dr

17th St

17th St

17th St

17th St

17th St

17th St

17th St

Carl's Place

G&L Clothing

Power Life Yoga

Gusto Pizza Co

Midas

Mediacom Communications

Zzz Records

Dunn's Funeral Home

Who 1040 AM

American Red Cross

The Gateway Church

Manpower

Grand Ave

Grand Ave

Grand Ave

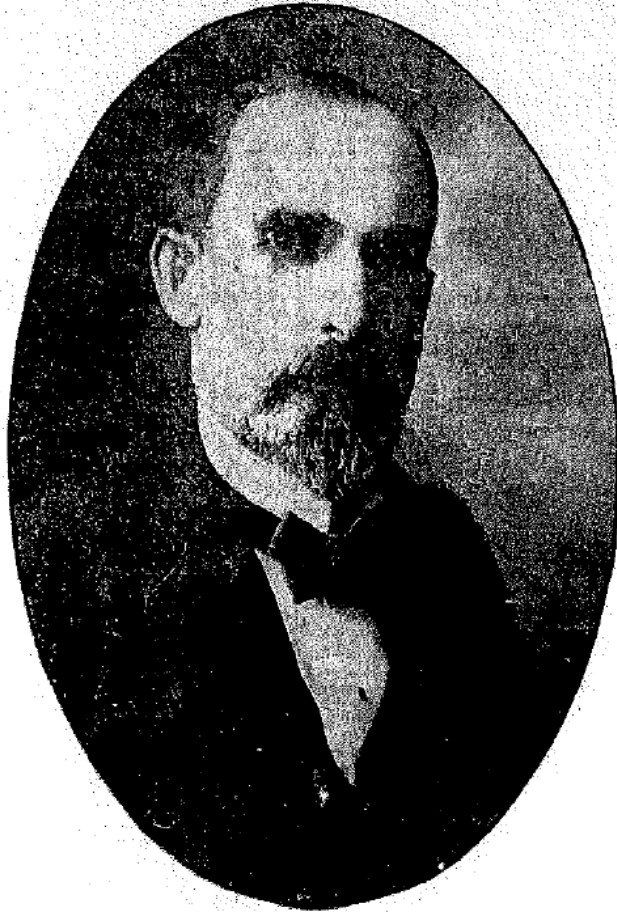
Grand Ave

Grand Ave

Grand Ave

1900  
1904  
1905  
  
1933  
  
1991  
1993  
1995  
  
1998  
  
2016

A PUBLIC BENEFACTOR



MR. LOWELL CHAMBERLAIN.

# Lowell and D.S. Chamberlain

- Pharmacists
- Developed Chamberlain Medicine Co.
- Global Market: Australia, Canada, & South Africa
- Adventurous – Europe, Cuba, Arizona, Florida...

# Chamberlain Medicine Co.

Des Moines, Iowa, U. S. A.

MAR 17 1903

## CHAMBERLAIN'S COUGH REMEDY



### A Safe Cough Medicine for Children.

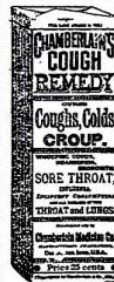
In buying a cough medicine for children never be afraid to buy CHAMBERLAIN'S COUGH REMEDY. There is no danger from it, and relief is always sure to follow. It is intended especially for coughs, colds, croup and whooping cough, and is the best medicine in the world for these diseases. It is not only a certain cure for croup, but, when given as soon as the croupy cough appears, will prevent the attack. Whooping cough is not dangerous when this remedy is given as directed. It contains no opium or other harmful drugs, and may be given as confidently to a baby as to an adult.



When you cough, sneeze & groan - you've got it!  
Take Chamberlain's Cough Remedy & get fit.

Yours for Health. *Granny Chamberlain*

## A GOOD NAME



See that the next cough remedy you buy is wrapped like this.

EVERY one desires to establish for himself a good name, but it takes time to win the confidence of your fellow men. Truth and perseverance are the alternate rungs on the ladder of success, and he who reaches the top must make no false step.

There are hundreds of cough medicines with all sorts of names, each claiming to be the best, but the test of time will prove whether or not they have established the right to be called the best.

Chamberlain's Cough Remedy has had thirty-five years of sale and use, and has cured coughs and colds under all conditions, in all countries and climates, and the verdict today is that it has no equal.

Careful selection of the drugs, intelligent and skillful compounding, the entire absence of opium, chloroform, or any other harmful ingredient, and the absolute purity of every article that goes into its composition, has built up and sustained its good name.

These are the things you should remember, and the next time you want a cough medicine, it is worth while to see that you get Chamberlain's and secure the virtues which a good name implies.

Every dealer who sells a bottle of Chamberlain's Cough Remedy guarantees it to give satisfaction or he will refund the money.



Price, 25c.  
Large size, 50c.



Some Good Short Stories and Poems. Take One—Free

Gross Chamberlain

Gross

Gross St. Patrick's Pills

75c



## West Chester

- Home of D.S. Chamberlain
- 3520 Grand Avenue
- Purchased by Wesley Acres & converted to retirement home.



## Salisbury House

- Built by Chamberlains' nephew, Carl Weeks
- Carl Weeks also a pharmaceutical tycoon
- Weeks & Leo



SPERM TO THE REGISTER

## 18th Street and Grand Avenue

When the dwellings shown at top were built they were known as double houses. Today they would be called duplexes or town houses, but about 1911 they were described as Lowell Chamberlain's double houses.

Chamberlain was a prominent name in Des Moines. Lowell Chamberlain and his brother Davis had founded the Chamberlain Chemical Co., which produced pharmaceuticals, toiletries and lotions. Lowell owned a considerable amount of real estate in the Grand Avenue area. He had a large, elegant home at 2100 Grand Ave., as well as property along Ingersoll Avenue. In fact, a large plot from 10th to 19th streets on the north side of Ingersoll, until recently, was known as Chamberlain Park; his will left the land to the city in 1922 for use as a children's playground.

Perhaps he had the double houses built as an investment. Whatever the reason, their first occupants were prominent businessmen and other city pioneers.

The building second from right in the photo was the home of George Jewett, who, seeking a job, came to Des Moines in 1865. He was founder and president of one of the city's first lumber companies, Jewett Lumber Co., as well as a real estate firm. The lumber yard was at Ninth Street and Grand Avenue. It was replaced by the Jewett Building, which recently was razed. He also helped found Drake University and the YMCA.

Jewett's neighbor at 1809 Grand Ave. was Melborn McFarlin, a grain merchant who came to Des Moines in 1881. For several years he built grain storage facilities and elevators; in 1899 he founded Central Iowa Grain Co., with a large capacity-grain elevator at East



BOB MOORESEN IN THE REGISTER

18th and Vine streets. He also had interests in canning factories in Grimes and Dexter.

In the next house lived J.H. Phillip and his wife. He was the president of the Des Moines Investment Co. In the other half of the house, at 1815 Grand Ave., lived J.A. Fleming. In 1911, he was one of four brothers who were the general agents of a large Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance firm in the Fleming Building at Sixth and Walnut streets.

Next door to the Flemings was the home of Richard Rollins, who was involved in investment and real estate. He owned the Shops Building at Eighth and Locust streets and was instrumental in building the Hotel Fort Des Moines, serving as its first president. He was married to Gertrude Gatchell, the daughter of pioneer lumberman Charles Gatchell. Rollins' father-in-law had been a partner with his neighbor, George Jewett, in the lumber business. Also living in his home at 1821 Grand Ave. was Rollins' mother, Sarah.

Toward the end of the block at far left was the residence of Charles Chase, president of Chase and West Department Store. His widowed mother, Eliza, lived with the family.

Across the street from double houses were the magnificent homes of the Harbachs and the Clapps, pioneer families who had built their homes farther out in the country on "west" Grand Avenue from their early downtown homes. Up the street lived the Polks, the Wests and the Finkbines; the Hubbells lived at Terrace Hill.

In 1916, the houses on the south side of the street were torn down and replaced with a large manufacturing plant where Model-T Fords were assembled. Next to that the Wallace Homestead Building was constructed.

Some of the double houses eventually became rooming houses. By 1963 the former Rollins home was known as Wilbur's Residence for Business Girls. The home also provided lodging for students from the nearby American Institute of Business.

In the early 1980s every structure on the block — from 18th to 19th and from Grand to Ingersoll — was torn down. In 1982, the new occupant of the neighborhood was the broadcasting studio for WHO TV and Radio, which moved from Walnut Street to its present site, shown above.

— Linda Banger

MEET ME ON THE CORNER



Reporter Linda Banger can be reached at (515) 284-8529 or [banger@news.dmreg.com](mailto:banger@news.dmreg.com)

# “Double Houses”

- Built by Lowell Chamberlain in early 1900s
- Early town house
- Along Ingersoll & Grand
- Housed prominent businessmen





1900  
1904  
1905

1933

1991  
1993  
1995

1998

2016



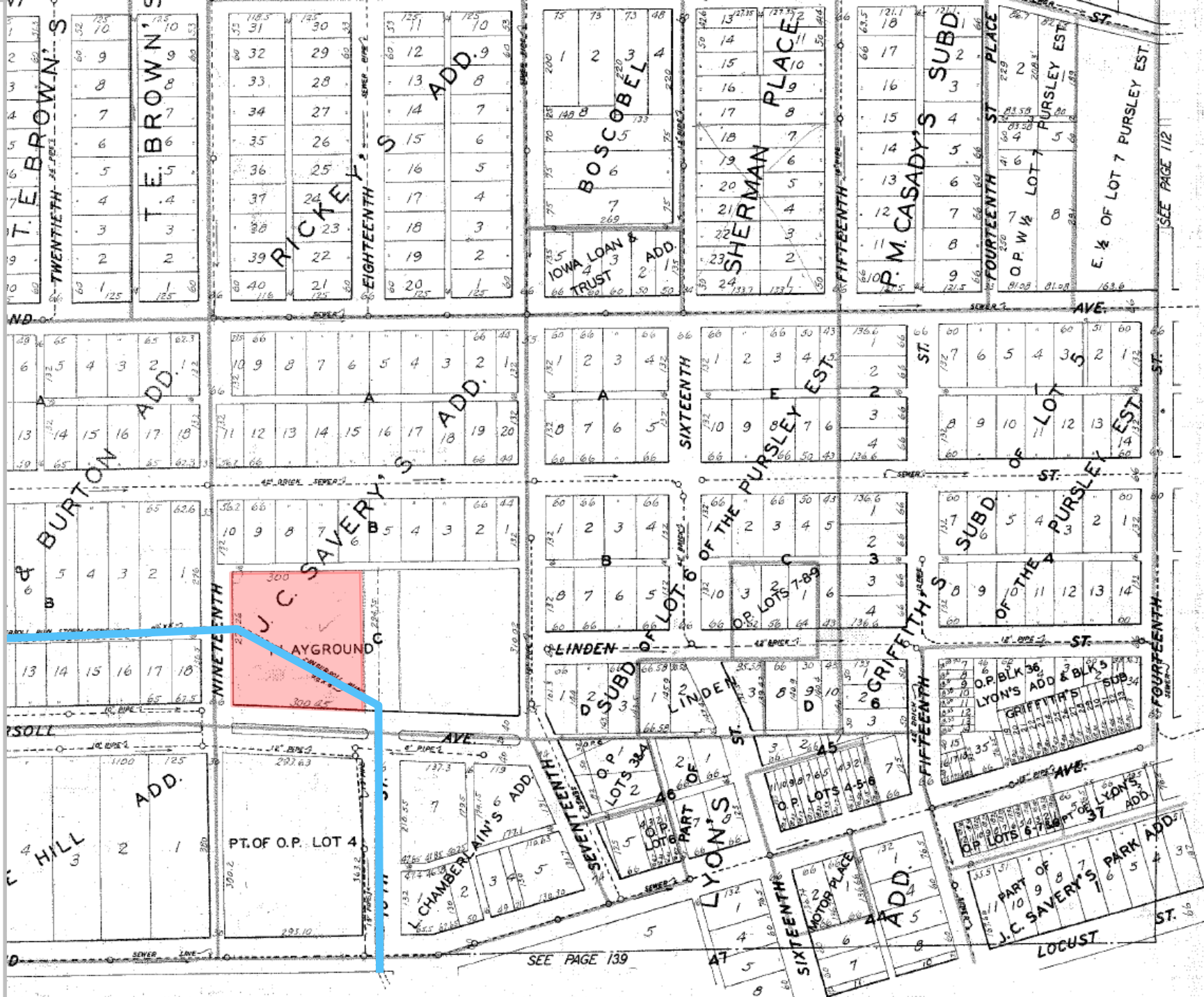
1900  
1904  
1905

1933

1991  
1993  
1995

1998

2016



SEE PAGE 139

SEE PAGE 112

# Chamberlain Park

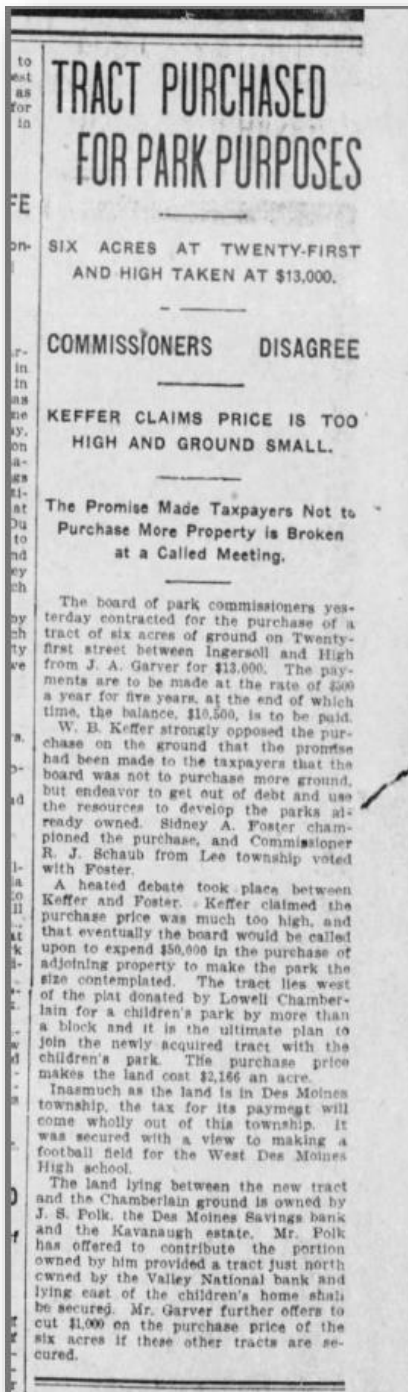
- Donated by Lowell Chamberlain in 1904
- Located on Ingersoll between 17<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup>
- Valuable, two-acre property
- Originally belonged to the Ingersoll's
- No adults unless accompanying children under 12 years of age
- Improved morality of area youth

*“... the park be frequented by children only and that no adult shall be allowed to enter unless accompanied by a child under 12 years of age.”*

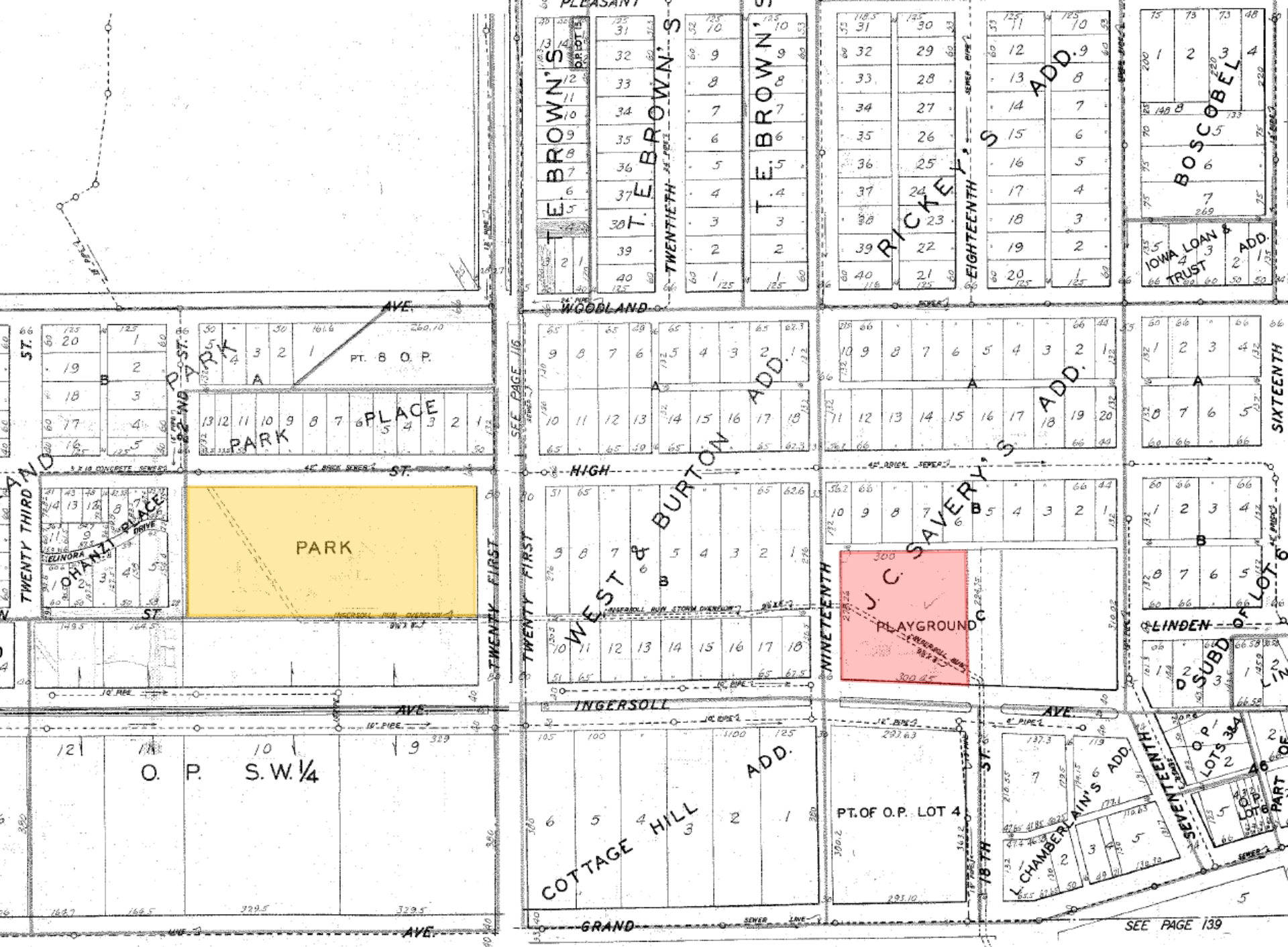


# Chamberlain Extension

- Six acre lot purchased by City in 1905
- Intention to connect parks
- Polk conditionally offers to sell his intermediate tract
- Purchased for \$13,000
- Payment via taxes
- Strong opposition to purchase
- Became the athletic field for Tech High School



to  
est  
as  
for  
in  
  
FE  
  
on-  
SIX ACRES AT TWENTY-FIRST  
AND HIGH TAKEN AT \$13,000.  
  
COMMISSIONERS DISAGREE  
  
KEFFER CLAIMS PRICE IS TOO  
HIGH AND GROUND SMALL.  
  
The Promise Made Taxpayers Not to  
Purchase More Property is Broken  
at a Called Meeting.  
  
The board of park commissioners yester-  
day contracted for the purchase of a  
tract of six acres of ground on Twenty-  
first street between Ingersoll and High  
from J. A. Garver for \$13,000. The pay-  
ments are to be made at the rate of \$500  
a year for five years, at the end of which  
time, the balance, \$10,500, is to be paid.  
W. B. Keffer strongly opposed the pur-  
chase on the ground that the promise  
had been made to the taxpayers that the  
board was not to purchase more ground,  
but endeavor to get out of debt and use  
the resources to develop the parks al-  
ready owned. Sidney A. Foster cham-  
pioned the purchase, and Commissioner  
R. J. Schaub from Lee township voted  
with Foster.  
A heated debate took place between  
Keffer and Foster. Keffer claimed the  
purchase price was much too high, and  
that eventually the board would be called  
upon to expend \$50,000 in the purchase of  
adjoining property to make the park the  
size contemplated. The tract lies west  
of the plat donated by Lowell Chamber-  
lain for a children's park by more than  
a block and it is the ultimate plan to  
join the newly acquired tract with the  
children's park. The purchase price  
makes the land cost \$2,166 an acre.  
Inasmuch as the land is in Des Moines  
township, the tax for its payment will  
come wholly out of this township. It  
was secured with a view to making a  
football field for the West Des Moines  
High school.  
The land lying between the new tract  
and the Chamberlain ground is owned by  
J. S. Polk, the Des Moines Savings bank  
and the Kavanaugh estate. Mr. Polk  
has offered to contribute the portion  
owned by him provided a tract just north  
owned by the Valley National bank and  
lying east of the children's home shall  
be secured. Mr. Garver further offers to  
cut \$1,000 on the purchase price of the  
six acres if these other tracts are se-  
cured.



PLEASANT

|    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 30 | 29 | 28 | 27 | 26 | 25 | 24 | 23 | 22 | 21 |
| 31 | 32 | 33 | 34 | 35 | 36 | 37 | 38 | 39 | 40 |
| 12 | 11 | 10 | 9  | 8  | 7  | 6  | 5  | 4  | 3  |
| 2  | 1  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |

T. E. BROWN'S

|     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 10  | 9   | 8   | 7   | 6   | 5   | 4   | 3   | 2   | 1   |
| 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 |

T. E. BROWN'S

|     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 10  | 9   | 8   | 7   | 6   | 5   | 4   | 3   | 2   | 1   |
| 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 |

|       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 35    | 34    | 33    | 32    | 31    | 30    | 29    | 28    | 27    | 26    | 25    | 24    | 23    | 22    | 21    | 20    | 19    | 18    | 17    | 16    | 15    | 14    | 13    | 12    | 11    | 10    |       |
| 118.5 | 118.5 | 118.5 | 118.5 | 118.5 | 118.5 | 118.5 | 118.5 | 118.5 | 118.5 | 118.5 | 118.5 | 118.5 | 118.5 | 118.5 | 118.5 | 118.5 | 118.5 | 118.5 | 118.5 | 118.5 | 118.5 | 118.5 | 118.5 | 118.5 | 118.5 | 118.5 |

RICKLEY'S

|     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 10  | 9   | 8   | 7   | 6   | 5   | 4   | 3   | 2   | 1   |
| 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 |

|    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 15 | 14 | 13 | 12 | 11 | 10 | 9  | 8  | 7  | 6  | 5  | 4  | 3  | 2  | 1  |
| 75 | 75 | 75 | 75 | 75 | 75 | 75 | 75 | 75 | 75 | 75 | 75 | 75 | 75 | 75 |

BOSCOBEL'S

|    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 15 | 14 | 13 | 12 | 11 | 10 | 9  | 8  | 7  | 6  | 5  | 4  | 3  | 2  | 1  |
| 75 | 75 | 75 | 75 | 75 | 75 | 75 | 75 | 75 | 75 | 75 | 75 | 75 | 75 | 75 |

IOWA LOAN & TRUST

|    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 19 | 18 | 17 | 16 | 15 | 14 | 13 | 12 | 11 | 10 | 9  | 8  | 7  | 6  | 5  | 4  | 3  | 2  | 1  |
| 60 | 60 | 60 | 60 | 60 | 60 | 60 | 60 | 60 | 60 | 60 | 60 | 60 | 60 | 60 | 60 | 60 | 60 | 60 |

|     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 13  | 12  | 11  | 10  | 9   | 8   | 7   | 6   | 5   | 4   | 3   | 2   | 1   |
| 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 |

PARK PLACE

|     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 10  | 9   | 8   | 7   | 6   | 5   | 4   | 3   | 2   | 1   |
| 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 |

WEST & BURTON ADD.

|     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 11  | 10  | 9   | 8   | 7   | 6   | 5   | 4   | 3   | 2   | 1   |
| 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 |

SAVERY'S

|     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 10  | 9   | 8   | 7   | 6   | 5   | 4   | 3   | 2   | 1   |
| 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 |

SIXTEENTH

|     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 13  | 12  | 11  | 10  | 9   | 8   | 7   | 6   | 5   | 4   | 3   | 2   | 1   |
| 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 |

CHAMBERLAIN'S PLACE

|     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 10  | 9   | 8   | 7   | 6   | 5   | 4   | 3   | 2   | 1   |
| 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 |

PARK

|     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 10  | 9   | 8   | 7   | 6   | 5   | 4   | 3   | 2   | 1   |
| 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 |

WEST & BURTON ADD.

|     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 10  | 9   | 8   | 7   | 6   | 5   | 4   | 3   | 2   | 1   |
| 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 |

SAVERY'S

|     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 10  | 9   | 8   | 7   | 6   | 5   | 4   | 3   | 2   | 1   |
| 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 |

CLINDEN OF LOT 6

|       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 12    | 11    | 10    | 9     | 8     | 7     | 6     | 5     | 4     | 3     | 2     | 1     |
| 329.5 | 329.5 | 329.5 | 329.5 | 329.5 | 329.5 | 329.5 | 329.5 | 329.5 | 329.5 | 329.5 | 329.5 |

O. P. S.W. 1/4

|     |     |     |     |     |     |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 6   | 5   | 4   | 3   | 2   | 1   |
| 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 |

COTTAGE HILL ADD.

|     |     |     |     |     |     |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 6   | 5   | 4   | 3   | 2   | 1   |
| 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 |

COTTAGE HILL ADD.

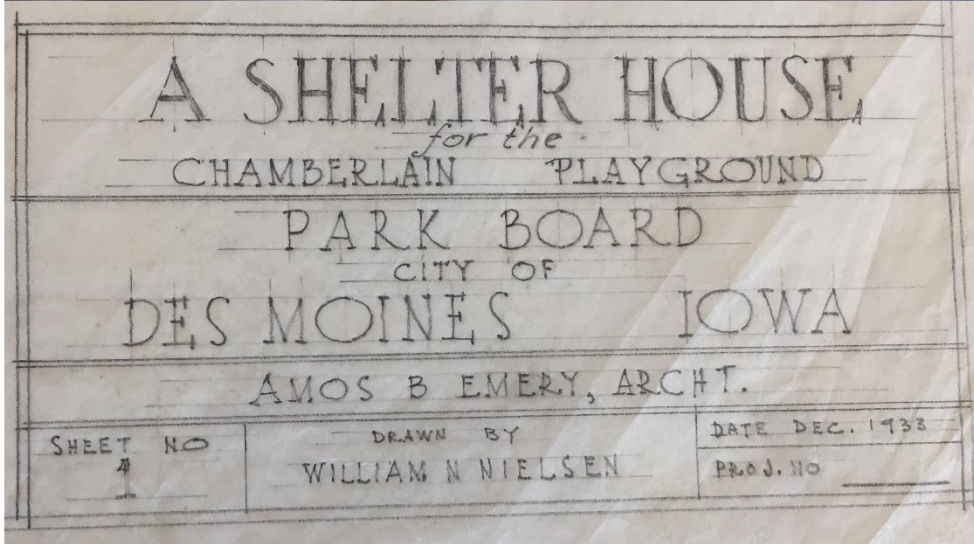
|     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 7   | 6   | 5   | 4   | 3   | 2   | 1   |
| 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 |

PT. OF O.P. LOT 4

|     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 7   | 6   | 5   | 4   | 3   | 2   | 1   |
| 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 | 125 |

CHAMBERLAIN'S ADD.

1900  
1904  
1905



1933

## INGERSOLL PLOT DEEDED TO CITY

### Playground Freed From Restriction.

Complete deed to the Chamberlain playground, Nineteenth st and Ingersoll ave. was given the city park board Friday, freeing the playground of the restriction that it be used only by children under 12 years of age.

Arthur Kirk, of the Chamberlain, Kirk & Co., Inc. turned over the deed from the Chamberlain estate. The playground commission and park board, with policies for creating recreational facilities for persons of all ages, had not improved the Chamberlain



1991  
1993  
1995

1998

2016

CHAMBERLAIN PARK

19th Street

Shelter  
House

Whirl

slide

swings

teeter

Wading  
Pool

60 X 100  
surfaced play area

x Basket  
Ball

Shuffleboard

soft  
ball

Tennis  
Courts

Reserved for street

horseshoe ct.

INGERSOLL AVENUE

Bought September 11, 1904.

1,973 Areas

1900  
1904  
1905

## Chamberlain Park sale to be discussed

A public meeting to discuss the possible sale of Chamberlain Park will be at 7 p.m. Tuesday at Willkie House, 900 17th St.

Crowley-Mandelbaum Commercial Brokers Inc. has offered \$280,000 for the 2-acre park, which is located in an area dominated by car dealers at 19th Street and Ingersoll Avenue in Des Moines.

The meeting will include discussion of the park's role in the Woodland Heights neighborhood. A master plan from the Sherman Hill neighborhood, also nearby, called for the sale of the park and its replacement with a new park near the planned downtown loop bypass.

The Park and Recreation Board and the Plan and Zoning Commission also are reviewing the proposal.

1933

## D.M. board votes against selling park

By PERRY BEEMAN

Register Staff Writer

The Des Moines Park and Recreation Board voted Tuesday to recommend that the city decline to sell Chamberlain Park.

In other action, the board learned of a proposal to restore a wetland and prairie area north of the lagoon in Greenwood Park.

The Chamberlain vote followed the recommendation of the Plan and Zoning Commission and city staff workers. The City Council is expected to consider the matter Monday.

Crowley-Mandelbaum Commercial Brokers Inc. recently offered \$280,000 for the two-acre park at 19th Street and Ingersoll Avenue on behalf of Crescent Chevrolet. The sale has been opposed by neighbors and members of the Chamberlain family, who donated the land for the park.

The board also learned Tuesday that the city legal staff has ruled that the park may be sold because covenants the Chamberlain family placed on the land decades ago have expired. The family had intended the land to remain a park forever.

On the Greenwood Park issue, the board heard that the wetland would cover about 300 feet northeast of the pond, where cattails now stand and a stream flows at times. A boardwalk and an overlook area would be built.

The project would cost an estimated \$50,000 to \$75,000 and would be coordinated by the Des Moines Founders Garden Club and several other groups interested in Greenwood Park. The area would have a variety of plantings and small ponds.

Steve Drake, the parks department's landscape architect, said the plans would be coordinated with the Des Moines Art Center, which plans a sculpture in the area, and such groups as Friends of Greenwood Park.

1991  
1993  
1995

## Sell Chamberlain?

- Crescent Chevrolet offers \$280,000 for two-acre park
- DM Board votes against
  - Study of park system, open up to bidders, specific plan to replace the park
- Chamberlain family disapproves of sale

1998

2016



1900  
1904  
1905

1933

## D.M. council sees conflicts of interests, will remove Knutsen as planning chairman

By PERRY BEEMAN

Register Staff Writer

Morris "Morey" Knutsen should be replaced as chairman of the Des Moines planning commission because of conflicts of interests related to his job as a real-estate salesman, the City Council decided Monday.



MORRIS KNUTSEN

Knutsen said later that the vote amounted to slander. He plans to meet with his lawyer today.

"I've been slandered and humiliated publicly and my character has been defamed," Knutsen, who was appointed to the commission in 1984, said in a telephone interview.

On a 6-1 vote, with Thomas Vlassis dissenting, the council decided that Knutsen's attempt to sell city-owned Chamberlain Park, and the prospect of his getting insider information on

other matters, amounted to conflicts of interests that reflect poorly on the city. While council members said Knutsen should not be chairman, they said they want him to remain on the commission. His term runs through 1993.

Councilman Archie Brooks started an around-the-table debate of Knutsen's fate, saying he objected to Knutsen's move to sell 2-acre Chamberlain Park at 19th Street and Ingersoll Avenue to nearby Crescent Chevrolet.

Knutsen, a sales associate for Crowley-Mandelbaum Commercial Brokers Inc. who hoped to make a commission on the \$280,000 sale, made the proposal to City Manager Cy Carney. He abstained from discussion and did not vote on the matter when the commission considered it.

The commission, the parks board and the City Council rejected the offer after weeks of controversy.

"Even though he's been vindicated,

***"I've been slandered and humiliated publicly and my character has been defamed."***

— Morris "Morey" Knutsen  
chairman of planning commission

it's still very suspicious," said Brooks. City Attorney Roger Nowadzky said recently that Knutsen had handled the conflicts of interests appropriately.

Councilman George Flagg agreed with Brooks. "He should have known better than that," said Flagg.

Councilwoman Connie Cook and Mayor John "Pat" Dorrian said Knutsen's real-estate role could cause pe-

riodic problems. (While working for Iowa Realty, Knutsen raised eyebrows by trying to sell the city a Court Avenue lot east of the Polk County Courthouse. The council declined.)

Dorrian also said he objected to Knutsen's practice of voting only to break ties on the commission. "We have an odd number on the commission so everyone would vote and we would avoid ties. If you can't take a position, why are you there?" Dorrian said.

Vlassis, who served with Knutsen on the commission, said, "I don't think Mr. Knutsen has a conflict of interests," Vlassis said. "It was bad judgment."

Knutsen replaced Karla Fultz as head of the commission in April 1989. He is up for re-election as chairman the first week of April.

Sam Soda, head of the nomination committee, could not be reached for comment.

## Unanimous vote retains Knutsen in zoning post

By PERRY BEEMAN

Register Staff Writer

Morris "Morey" Knutsen won re-election as chairman of the Des Moines Plan and Zoning Commission Thursday despite a City Council request that the panel replace him amid questions of conflicts of interests.

The commission voted unanimously to extend Knutsen's chairmanship another year.

"I couldn't be happier that this commission has given me its unanimous support," Knutsen said after the meeting. "I am heartened that the full commission to the end has seen through this folly with the council and has supported me."

On a 6-1 vote, with Thomas Vlassis dissenting, the council voted recently to ask the commission to replace Knutsen as chairman. Council members were disturbed about possible conflicts of interests involving Knutsen's work as a real-estate agent for Crowley-Mandelbaum Commercial Brokers Inc.

Knutsen recently tried unsuccessfully to broker the sale of city-owned Chamberlain Park. He publicly declared a conflict of interests and did not participate in the debate or votes on the matter.

Sam Soda, the head of the nominating committee, said he checked with the city legal department and found no reason Knutsen should be replaced. City Attorney Roger Nowadzky has said Knutsen acted appropriately in handling the Chamberlain Park conflict.

***"I am heartened that the full commission to the end has seen through this folly with the council and has supported me."***

— Morris Knutsen

Soda said there is "overwhelming support" for Knutsen among commissioners. The move to re-elect Knutsen, Soda said, came as an acknowledgement of his "leadership, attitude, ethical conduct and devotion to the city."

The council has no power over the selection of commission chairman. It can remove a commissioner from the panel for legal cause; council members said they want Knutsen to remain on the commission.

Knutsen said he had been defamed by the council vote. He has been meeting with attorney Roger Hudson to consider action against the city.

On a 7-6 vote, with one member voting for Marilyn Staples, the commission chose Soda over Gregory Quick as vice chairman.

# Conflicts of Interest in Proposed Chamberlain Sale?

- Crowley-Mandelbaum Commercial Brokers Inc.
- Morris "Morey" Knutsen

1991  
1993  
1995

1998

2016

1900  
1904  
1905

● Asked Carney to review a request from the Sherman Hill Association Board of Directors that the city sell Chamberlain Park. The association wants the city to sell the park, located at the intersection of 19th Street and Ingersoll Avenue, because possible expansion of the Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway would make the park inaccessible to neighborhood residents. The association wants some of the money from the sale of the park to be used to pay for replacement parks.

1933



## Sherman Hill and Woodland Heights On Board With Park Sale

- Park is “little-used” and had “become rundown”
- Economic expansion along MLK
- Replacement parks for both neighborhoods

1991  
1993  
1995

1998

2016

1900  
1904  
1905

(R755)

### REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS TO PURCHASE AND REDEVELOP CHAMBERLAIN PARK

The City of Des Moines is soliciting proposals for the purchase and redevelopment of Chamberlain Park. Chamberlain Park contains approximately 2.18 acres fronting on Ingersoll Avenue at 19th Street. The City will consider proposals for the purchase and redevelopment of the entire property or for the east and west halves. The following criteria will be considered in reviewing and selecting a purchase proposal(s):

- **Minimum Purchase Price:** The minimum acceptable sales price is established at \$500,000 for the entire park site and \$250,000 for each of the east and west halves of the property. Additional consideration will be given to proposals offering more than the established minimum sales price. Development financing assistance, such as tax abatement, may be available for qualifying developments.
- **Land Use Compatibility:** Compatibility of proposed development with the land use and zoning of the property and the surrounding area. The land is zoned "C-2" (general retail and highway oriented commercial). The City has initiated rezoning of the site to "C-3A" (central business district support commercial).
- **Development Size, Cost:** The square footage of any proposed buildings, the estimated development costs, and the estimated taxable value of the overall project.
- **Quality of Development:** The overall design of the development proposal, including: building design and construction materials, landscaping, parking, etc.
- **Job Creation and/or Retention:** Number of jobs created and/or retained by the ultimate user of the site.

Any proposals should clearly address the selection criteria identified above. Proposals should be submitted to:

**Office of Economic Development  
602 East First Street  
Des Moines, IA 50309  
(515)-283-4004 Fax (515)-237-1706**

by 3:00 p.m. on April 14, 1995 to be considered. Questions regarding the proposed sale of Chamberlain Park and the proposed selection process should be directed to the Office of Economic Development.

1933

## City prepares for sale of park

By **CHRIS OSHER**  
REGISTER STAFF WRITER

The city of Des Moines wants to sell Chamberlain Park, and four businesses already have expressed an interest in buying the property.

Acting City Manager Richard Clark said G & L Clothing, Crescent Chevrolet, Betts Cadillac Inc. and an Amoco service station have expressed interest in buying the park at 19th Street and Ingersoll Avenue.

The City Council Monday night instructed Clark to contact other businesses that might want to buy the property and report back in two weeks.

Clark said in a letter to the council that the minimum purchase price of the park should be \$500,000, or

\$250,000 for each half of the parcel.

The Woodland Heights Organization and the Sherman Hill Association support selling Chamberlain Park and using the proceeds to create a park in an area closer to those neighborhoods.

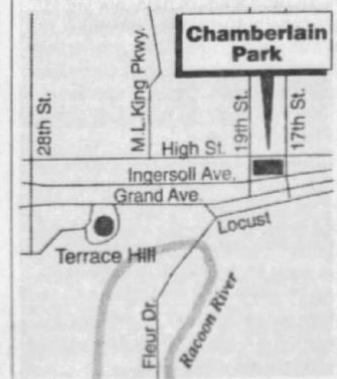
The owner of G & L Clothing told the council he needs to know soon whether the city will sell to him because he has a deadline for moving out of the fire-damaged building he is in at 901 Locust St.

Councilman George Flagg said the city should make sure it sells the property at a good price and no "sweetheart" deals are approved.

But Clark said it is just as important that the city make sure the buyer is a good match for the surrounding area.

### PARK SALE?

**THE DES MOINES** City Council on Monday considered authorizing the city manager to negotiate the sale of Chamberlain Park, located at 19th Street and Ingersoll Avenue.



## City Decides to Progress With Sale

- \$500,000 for entire park, \$250,000 for half
- Zoned for commercial retail or business
- Development size and cost
- Quality of development
- Job creation and retention

1991  
1993  
1995

1998

2016

1900  
1904  
1905

1933

DM THE DES MOINES REGISTER ■ THURSDAY, JUNE 1, 1995

# Park's sale called 'big puzzling thing'

## Neighborhood leaders are up in arms over deal on Chamberlain Park

By ANNE CAROTHERS-KAY  
Reporter/Staff Writer

Lyla Duzier wanted the city of Des Moines to sell Chamberlain Park as much as anyone in Woodland Heights. In fact, it was her neighborhood association that came up with the idea.

But now Duzier — along with others, including Planning Commissioner Senja Roberts and Fran Koozitz and east-side business leader James Boyt — are questioning that sale. They want to know why it has been on such a fast track.

Why did the City Council vote to sell the block-square park at 18th Street and Ingersoll Avenue to Crescent Chevrolet and G & L Clothing for \$500,000 when the city engineer's department put the value at \$1 million and the city's chief planner recommended the council wait?

Add to that \$125,000 in economic development benefits that the city approved for G & L and a tax-abatement expansion tailor-made for the two businesses.

### "Big Puzzling Thing"

"If you add up all these things, it's a pretty big puzzling thing," said Dan Frommelt, chairman of the city's plan and zoning commission, who expects the issue to be debated at the commission's meeting tonight.

"What's going on with Chamberlain Park? That's the big question out there," said Koozitz, who heads an umbrella group for the city's neighborhood associations. "And the theories are a dime a dozen."

Acting City Manager Richard Clark says the theories are just that. "There's nothing inappropriate that's going on, certainly not within the city organization," he said.

He said the council has been trying to work with the Woodland Heights and Sherman Hill neighborhoods' desire to sell the little-used Chamberlain Park and use the profits to create two parks, one in each neighborhood.

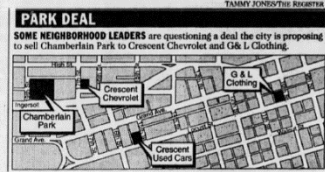
### "Legitimate Concerns"

And, he said, "There were legitimate concerns about the loss of G & L that were expressed to me by people in the business community, and to some extent I think there's legitimate concerns about Crescent Chevrolet, that somehow if they're not accommodated they run the risk of going out of business."

Crescent's used car lot is being taken for the Meredith building expansion and Gateway park project. Without a used car lot within walking distance of its new car lot, the company risks losing its license from Chevrolet, Clark said.

G & L was forced to move from its downtown store because of fires in the Irving building next door.

"There's really nothing clandestine about it," said William Lillis, a lawyer who represented G & L owner James Marovis in the sale.



**PARK DEAL**  
SOME NEIGHBORHOOD LEADERS are questioning a deal the city is proposing to sell Chamberlain Park to Crescent Chevrolet and G & L Clothing.

Scott Stricker, the city's economic development administrator, said the minimum was set because that's how much the parks department needed to create two new parks. He acknowledged that the city engineer's office had appraised the land at \$1 million, but added that all offers the city received in recent years were less than \$500,000.

### Less Than \$500,000

Stricker said a 60-foot-wide sewer easement that cuts across the property makes it less valuable because

you can't build over the sewer line.

"We think the city did very well with the \$500,000," he said.

But Koozitz said the city can't know that for sure because it never sought an outside appraisal. "A lot of us feel that it was rushed through, that it was not done in a business-like manner," said Koozitz.

### Increased Value?

She said the city should have waited to sell the park because the planned Martin Luther King bypass will increase its value.

Maybe so, said Clark, but "I think you've got to balance that kind of a point against the fact you've got very immediate needs and opportunities in front of us, and if you were the mayor and council, how would you go about this? If you thought

### ZONING REQUEST

The Plan and Zoning Commission will consider a request to change the zoning for the Chamberlain Park land at 6:30 p.m. today in City Council chambers at City Hall, 400 E. First St.

The commission also will discuss a change in the rezoning ordinance that would allow tax abatements on new retail properties — a move aimed at helping the businesses buying the park.

you were going to jeopardize a couple of darned good businesses, and I think that's what you'd be doing, by not pursuing this."

Frommelt noted that the city already has approved the sale and the economic development package for G & L. The plan and zoning commission is considering only a zoning change that would allow Crescent a larger display lot and the tax abatement question. He said he's not sure the commission will vote against those things.

"It's pretty clear that the council wants to expedite this. Other than having the opportunity for some public comment, I'm not sure the commission is going to try to make a statement over this."

# THE REGISTER'S EDITORIALS

## Defining top dollar

Outside appraisers should evaluate property before Des Moines sells it.

Des Moines City Councilman Preston Daniels is offering to give up some discretion in the sale of city property to avoid the kind of flap that arose over the recent sale of Chamberlain Park. It's an offer that shouldn't be refused.

Daniels has proposed that the city have outside appraisers determine the value of land estimated to be worth \$25,000 or more to establish a minimum asking price before it is advertised for sale.

It's basic. If you want top dollar, you first have to establish what top dollar is.

The city sometimes has done that informally and arbitrarily, and thus has entered into the competitive bidding process hoping for the best but not necessarily knowing what the best is. That leaves too much room for second-guessing — as in the Chamberlain Park sale.

The city decided to sell the little-used park at 19th Street and Ingersoll Avenue and use the proceeds to develop two replacement parks for the Sherman Hill and Woodland Heights neighborhoods. Rick Clark, the acting city manager, talked to real-estate executives who said that the city would be fortunate to get \$500,000. The City Council did not direct him to get

an outside appraisal.

The city established a \$500,000 minimum sale price and took competitive bids. The council voted, 4-3, in June to sell the property to Crescent Chevrolet and G & L Clothing for \$500,000.

Clouding the sale was a suggestion from the city engineering department that the land could actually be worth as much as \$1 million. Once that opinion began circulating, Sherman Hill and Woodland Heights neighborhood leaders began questioning whether their replacement parks would be only half as nice as they could have been. They thought the city should have held out for the mythical \$1 million.

What was top dollar — \$500,000, or \$1 million? We'll never know.

The city plans to gradually dispose of other excess land so that it can be put to better use, and council members occasionally might want some leeway in the sale of such property.

A policy requiring outside appraisals might limit their discretionary power. But it would define the top dollar, and that's what the seller in any real-estate transaction should expect.

# Disagreement on Park Pricing

- \$500,000 original asking price
- Estimated worth up to 1 million dollars
- Delay selling until MLK finished – possible property value increase?
- Neighborhoods worry new parks will be subpar

1991  
1993  
1995

1998

2016





# Construction Begins at New Chamberlain Park

- Designed by Larry Edris
- Contracted to R.G. Elder and Sons
- Wanted a “natural” color scheme
- Total cost to build: \$314,789.75
- Sherman Hill opts for lighting











1930s aerial photo



1950s aerial photo



Woodland Ave

20th St

18th St

22nd St

High St

Des Moines

19th St

Martin Luther King Jr Pkwy

Elinora Dr

Ingersoll Ave

18th St

1960s aerial photo



Woodland Ave

20th St

18th St

19th St

22nd St

High St

Des Moines

Martin Luther King Jr Pkwy

Elinora Dr

Ingersoll Ave

15th St

1970s aerial photo



Woodland Ave

20th St

18th St

19th St

22nd St

High St

Des Moines

Martin Luther King Jr Pkwy

Elinora Dr

Ingersoll Ave

15th St

1980s aerial photo



Woodland Ave

20th St

18th St

19th St

22nd St

High St

Des Moines

Martin Luther King Jr Pky

Ellinora Dr

Ingersoll Ave

1990s aerial photo

18th St



22nd St

20th St

18th St

Woodland Ave

19th St

High St

Des Moines

Martin Luther King Jr Pkwy

Elinora Dr

Ingersoll Ave

18th St

2002 aerial photo



CITY OF **DES MOINES**  
PARKS AND RECREATION