



City of Duluth Communications Office

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SUBJECT: Duluth Mayor Roger Reinert issues statement regarding Lester Park

BY: Kelli Latuska, Public Information Officer

Duluth Mayor Roger Reinert issues statement regarding Lester Park

[DULUTH, MN] Mayor Roger Reinert issues the following statement regarding Lester Park:

"In 2024, the City created a working group charged with exploring year-round recreational activities including, but not exclusive to, golf. They were also asked to evaluate nonprofit and alternative management models where the city would retain ownership but external partners would manage operations, akin to the Lake Superior Zoo model. They were also asked to consider the potential for additional adjacent housing.

The working group included input from various groups like the DAOA, COGGS, DXC, DuFTA, SHT, and Friends of Duluth Public Golf. I thank the golf advocates, neighborhood residents, and Lester area business owners who participated and provided input. And I especially thank Tim Meyer, who took on the thankless task of trying to facilitate some very disparate interests.*

Last spring the working group presented a final report to the City Council including three different possibilities. All of which required substantial public or private financial resources. No one option had consensus support. However, key elements of a future plan became very clear: public green space. A building that can provide equipment rental, community meeting space, event space, food, and beverage. A connection of adjacent hiking, biking, and ski trails. Year-round outdoor activities including, but not exclusive to, golf. And housing.

A recent study by Maxfield identifies demand for an estimated 8,713 new housing units in Duluth by 2035. Our most promising locations for new housing at scale are the former Lester Park Golf Course, downtown, and the former Central High School site. Only one of these is owned by the City: the former Lester Park Golf Course.

I encourage the Planning Commission and City Council to support conveyance of the former Lester Park Golf Course to DEDA to help meet Duluth's housing, workforce, and population growth goals. With over 250 acres at Lester, we can do this while also meeting our goals for green space preservation and additional outdoor recreation opportunities.

Lester cannot continue to sit and deteriorate. It dishonors both the legacy of Lester, and its potential."

*Duluth Area Outdoor Alliance, Cyclists of Gitchee Gumee Shores, Duluth Cross Country Ski Club, Duluth Foot Trails Alliance, Superior Hiking Trail

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