

City of Aurora

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Ann Womer Benjamin
Mayor

June 14, 2023

Dear Fellow Aurorans,

Exciting news! Monday evening I presented to City Council for its consideration a proposal to purchase Geauga Lake together with 40 acres of lakefront land in the former Sea World from Industrial Commercial Properties (ICP). We believe this is an incredible opportunity to make our city an even better place to live for generations to come. It is the chance of a lifetime to guarantee our residents lake access and a destination that is going to be one of the gems of Northeast Ohio, and to protect the land from residential development. Plans are not finalized, but our vision is to redevelop the property into a public park with a pool, beach and related amenities, non-motorized boating, and other recreational attractions. You can see conceptual drawings on the city's website, auroraoh.com.

Most importantly for our residents and taxpayers, we are committed to doing this in the most fiscally responsible way possible. The city will pay about \$4.5 million for the purchase, with \$1.3 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) money and the rest coming from general funds that will be budgeted for this purpose. Under the purchase agreement, ICP will pay for a substantial portion of the demolition cost of some of the remaining structures on the 40 acres of land we would acquire.

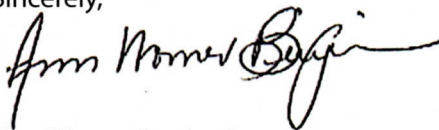
As many of you know, in November 2020, ICP announced it had acquired the remaining 377 acres that had been the home of our treasured Geauga Lake Amusement Park and Sea World Ohio. Geauga Lake was a recreational attraction and a focal point of our community for decades. We all felt the loss when the parks closed and we were cut off from enjoying the lake. Now, with this acquisition and project, we are taking our lake back, coupled with a park and recreational amenities that will only enhance our community and enable all of us to again enjoy one of Northeast Ohio's greatest natural attractions.

We are strong proponents of greenspace and development that serves the people who have chosen to make Aurora their home. To that end, in the last 10 years we have purchased more than 200 acres of land in Aurora to protect it from development. This Geauga Lake purchase is consistent with that strategy to manage development in our community.

We expect to tackle this project in stages, but we are eager to provide public access as soon as reasonably possible. Site work on the property is expected to begin within 12 months after demolition is completed. We also are determined to be thoughtful and deliberate with this development. Some of the structures may be saved, rehabilitated and reused. For example, imagine the iconic Sea World aquarium as a restaurant!

Many decisions still remain to be made as this project evolves so expect more to come on this unique opportunity. As always, I welcome your input on this and all matters concerning the city we call home.

Sincerely,



Ann Womer Benjamin
Mayor