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TO: County Board of Commissioners
FROM: Micki O'Keefe, Property Tax & Election Manager
SUBJECT: Tax Forfeited Land DNR Request
DATE: September 3, 2024

Background

In 2019, the County received an inquiry from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Division of Parks and Trails (DNR). They had been working with the State Chapter of the Izaak Walton League on acquiring parcels 47.029.1900, 47.030.2100 and 72.120.0370. During the donation/transfer process, it was discovered that the state chapter did not own the parcels. The Zumbrota Chapter #220 that had gone defunct owned the parcels. At that time, the DNR was informed that the parcels had delinquent taxes and if they remained unpaid, the parcels would go tax forfeited.

Discussion

The three parcels forfeited in May of 2021 and ownership was changed to the State of Minnesota in trust for local taxing districts.

On January 11, 2022, the County received notice from the DNR requesting ownership of the parcels as part of their Goodhue Pioneer Trail extension from Zumbrota to Mazeppa. On February 1, 2022, the County Board approved the DNR's request for acquisition. The County has been working with the DNR to transfer ownership of these parcels. To move the transfer forward, the three parcels needed to be classified as conservation land. On August 15th, the parcels were reclassified as conservation land. The City of Zumbrota and Zumbrota Township have been notified of the reclassification and have 60 days to respond.

Once the 60 days has expired, the DNR will send the County an executed formal application and resolution for the County Board for the release of tax-forfeited lands to the DNR.