



Media Contacts:

Jim Martinez, 313-320-1365
jmartinez@waynecounty.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 5, 2019

Historic Wilcox, Newburgh mills sale approved, closer to reinvention

Redeveloping former Ford Motor Company mills will enhance Hines Park, better connect communities

DETROIT – The Wayne County Commission today approved Purchase and Development Agreements for the Wilcox Mill, located in the city of Plymouth, and Newburgh Mill, located in Livonia, properties adjacent to Hines Park. The sales passed by a vote of 11-3. The Commission also approved an agreement for the County to acquire 16.73 acres in Westland from the Wayne County Land Bank that will be added to the Hines Park footprint.

Under the terms of the sale, and as part of the Mill Run Placemaking Project, the new owners agree to redevelop the vacant mill structures in compliance with the Secretary of Interior’s standards for rehabilitation, create new trail connections on the sites, and open green space that is currently inaccessible to the public.

As part of the purchase and development agreements for both Wilcox and Newburgh, the County retains first right of refusal to repurchase the property should the new owners decide to sell them in the future. The sale price for 4.3-acre Wilcox site is \$360,000 and \$405,000 for the 1.8-acre Newburgh site. Revenue from the sales will be reinvested into Wayne County Parks.

“This deal allows the transformation of the mills from eyesores into true community assets for Plymouth and Livonia while preserving an important part of our history,” said Wayne County Executive Warren C. Evans. “These projects also ensure the land surrounding the mills becomes public accessible and better connects Hines Park with surrounding communities.”

Wilcox Mill will be purchased by Mill on Rouge LLC created by local artist Tony Roko and the Art Foundation. They plan to rehabilitate the building into an art education space and construct a publicly-accessible “inner child sculpture garden” on the surrounding land that displays three-dimension realizations of children’s drawings.

Newburgh Mill will be purchased by Newburgh Mill LLC operated by local developer Richard Cox. Once renovated, Newburgh Mill is expected to be a distillery with additional retail space as well as park space in the shape of a spiral, meant to reflect the automotive parts once manufactured on the site. Cox is responsible for the successful rehabilitation of the Northville Mill into modern office space. He also purchased Phoenix Mill in Plymouth Township from Wayne County in 2018 and has begun rehabilitating that property into an event facility with public green space.



Media Contacts:

Jim Martinez, 313-320-1365
jmartinez@waynecounty.com

“We were at risk of losing these mills forever. These are the product of a collaborative effort to identify redevelopment solutions for these mills,” said Assistant County Executive Khalil Rahal. “Our economic development team, Wayne County Parks, local leaders, and community stakeholders worked together throughout this process to ensure we crafted the right deal for both properties.”

Wilcox and Newburgh mills as well as Phoenix Mill and Nankin Mills were part of the “Ford Village Industries” network of parts factories located along the Middle Rouge River and were deeded to the County by the Ford Motor Company in 1948.

Nankin Mills remains Wayne County property and houses the Parks Division’s offices and an interpretive center, which recently underwent an approximately \$800,000 renovation. The remaining three mills were largely used by the County as administrative and storage space.

“The mill properties were essentially inaccessible to the public for more than 70 years,” said Evans. “These deals ensure the development connects it with local communities and the larger network of non-motorized trails as well as enhances Hines Park with unique destinations that will celebrate our heritage.”

The sale of Newburgh and Wilcox was unanimously approved 7-0 by the Commission’s Committee of Public Services on Tuesday, November 26. As part of the purchase agreement Wayne County acquires 16.73 acres of the former Hawthorne Valley Golf Course property in Westland and is required to maintain the property as a park creating pedestrian trails and other recreation or conservation improvements.

“Acquiring additional park space will provide increased connections to Hines Park and recreational benefits to the community,” said Beverly Watts, Director of Public Services for Wayne County. “This type of initiative supports the vision of our strategic master plan and future planning of our parks.”

MORE INFORMATION: www.waynecounty.com/millrun

###