

AVM Seeks Parcel In Square

APR 25 1979

By TOD PORTER

An offer by AVM Corp. to purchase a 1.2-acre parcel of land may mark the completion of the 40.8-acre Brooklyn Square Urban Renewal project.

The company made the offer to the Jamestown Urban Renewal Agency at a meeting yesterday. The agency routinely tabled consideration of the offer until its next meeting.

The massive urban renewal project involved the demolition of almost 100 buildings in the square and had a total cost of about \$7 million.

The project was the first major task of the URA when it was established in 1966. By 1969, plans called for demolishing 117 of the square's 126 buildings, opening the Chadaokoin River to public view, and relocating 58 commercial enterprises, 34 industries, seven non-profit organizations, 62 families and 40 individuals.

The actual work on changing the area's appearance began in 1970, and by 1972 the

A&P Supermarket held its grand opening. Finding a suitable developer for the largest parcel took a little longer, however. The URA gave approval to American Corporate Realty Corp. of Buffalo in 1975 to build a 32,000 square foot Tops Market and a 13,000 square foot retail area.

Those plans were dropped when the agency and the developer had a disagreement over the nature of the project. In 1976 the agency made Costima Realty developer of the site, which resulted in the construction of Hills Department Store.

AVM officials said that the last parcel, which is next to AVM property, is the only area its Precision Tops Division could expand to in the future.

They also said that if someone else bought the lot and built close to the property line on their side, AVM would have difficulty getting trucks in and out of the site.

The members of the agency were

generally receptive to the company's offer, although Councilman John Y. Carlson expressed concern that the company had no immediate plans to develop the parcel.

"I guess my concern is that we are tying up a parcel for an indefinite amount of time," he said. Carlson suggested that the URA give the company first option to buy the land if any other offers are made.

Agency member Carol Lucy said that it is unlikely the agency would be able to find a developer for the site if it gave AVM the first option to buy.

"I think if that building (the Tops Precision building) is going to be used for industrial purposes by AVM or anyone else that parcel is necessary," said Mayor Steven Carlson.

Mayor Carlson stated that whenever the agency has received an offer to buy urban renewal land it has tabled the offer for at least one meeting, and he suggested that procedure be followed in this case.

The price of the property is \$9,100,

which was set by the URA and approved by the federal department of Housing and Urban Development in the early 1970s. The assessed value of the land is about \$25,000.

The city has been using the parcel as a metered parking lot, which is earning about \$100 a month. If the parcel is bought and returned to the tax rolls it would provide about \$1,400 a year in taxes.

City Finance Director Joseph Johnson said that since much of the land was already being used as a parking lot when the URA got it, the city did little besides install meters at the site. If the land is sold, the city would retain possession of the meters.

Several groups have offered proposals to build at the site in the past. The most recent was a group of local businessmen who sought to build a racquetball court there.

That group lost their designation as developers of the site at a meeting earlier this month.