

# *Westfield Acres*

## **History & Development**

The Westfield Acres residential housing development came about through the initial strategic goal setting by the Hartington Community Economic Development Corporation back in early 2008. Hartington had reached a point where there were very few prime lots available for new houses. Hartington needed to offer an adequate and a variety of housing options in the future, and a new housing development had to be an important consideration for the city, if Hartington wanted to keep and attract new families and grow as a community.

The Hartington Community Economic Development Corp. approached the city officials about the need for a new housing development and the opportunity that was available on several parcels of land for a possible housing development. The Economic Development Board indicated to the Hartington City Council that they would take the lead and coordinate the research, the funding and construction of the new housing development. A formal housing study that was completed by the Northeast Nebraska Economic Development District confirmed that there was a need for additional prime lots for new home construction and that Hartington could support 2-3 new homes per year and up to 18-20 homes over the next 10 years.

A nine (9) member new housing committee consisting of Economic Development Board members and Hartington residents was formed to work on the new housing development opportunity and bring it to completion. After researching several potential housing development land sites, it was determined that the 19 acres of agricultural land east of the community sports complex would be an ideal location for the new housing development. The property was owned by Duane and Elaine Arens.

In the Fall of 2008, Duane and Elaine Arens were approached by the Westfield Acres Housing Committee on the possibility of selling the land to the Hartington Community Economic Development Corp and they were open to the idea and the land was purchased.

The goal/plan was to begin the new housing development in the spring of 2011. Phase 1 (19 lots) would be on the north half of the property with an estimated schedule to begin Phase 2 (19 lots) on the south end of the property around 2018 when 80% of Phase 1 was expected to have homes built on the lots.

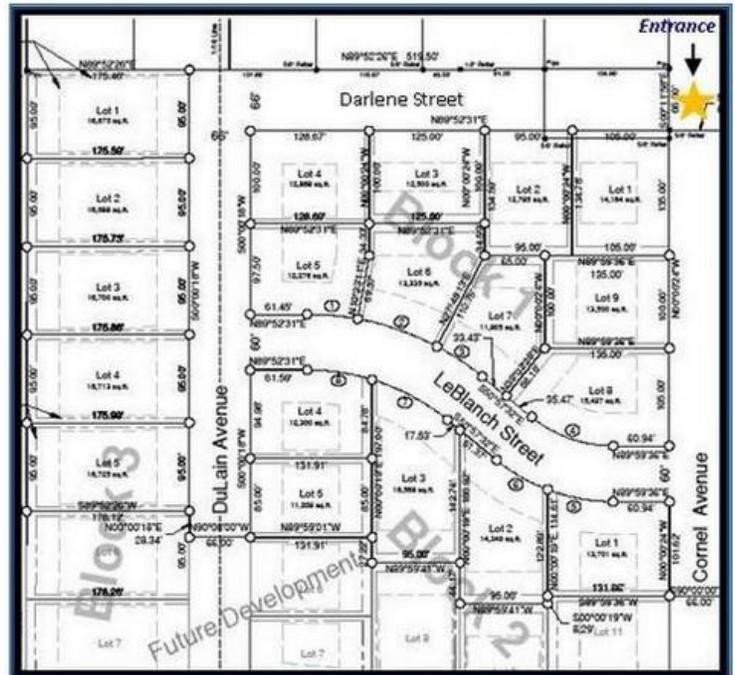




The engineering firm of Eisenbraun & Associates from Yankton, SD was hired by the Hartington Economic Development Board to begin the Preliminary Design and Plat for the new housing development with a goal to have lots averaging 100' wide and 150' deep with sewer, water, street paving and all utilities in place. After a number of changes to their original preliminary plat design, a final plat was agreed upon and an estimated cost of all the construction was provided based on average construction costs for the area. The estimated costs for constructing the initial 19 lots was going to run approximately \$50,000 per lot which was considerably more than the market could bare. The hope was that because of the slow economy, construction bids and costs would come in under the initial projected costs supplied by the engineering firm. It was determined that the lots would need to be priced in the \$25,000 - \$30,000 range in order for lots to be sold and homes built so finding ways to cut the cost of the lots had to be accomplished to allow the subdivision project to move forward.

The Hartington Economic Development Board researched various funding and financing options and opportunities which if fell in to place, would allow the project to begin, be financed, cash flow and allow the lots to be sold in the price range of \$25-\$30,000 on average. An average of two (2) homes built per year would be needed to make the plan work financially. The Hartington Economic Development Corporation would be the developer with a goal simple to break even on the project.

Plat of Lots



Key in funding the subdivision investment was a \$160,000 Federal Housing Grant and \$300,000 in Tax Increment Financing both of which helped with the cost of the construction and final lot price. In addition, the bids on the construction costs came in less than original estimate helping to get the cost of the lots down to \$42,500 on average. Additional funding came from a \$25,000 JOBS grant, private investor loans, Hartington Economic Development and LB840 Sales Tax Revenue all of which provided the upfront funding needed to get the project off the ground until lot sales occurred that would deliver over 50% of the investment costs but which would not be realized for up to 6-8 years as lots were sold. The total financing package has allowed the lots to be sold 40% less than the cost to develop them.

Construction of Phase 1 of Westfield Acres began in May 2011 and was completed in September 2011. Lots went on the market in early September 2011. Two Hartington Realtor firms (Don Miller Land Co. and Don Peterson & Associates) are contracted to sell the lots for the Hartington Community Development Corporation.



Restrictive Covenants are established for Westfield Acres to guide home construction and provide the security to the home builders that certain restrictions will apply to protect the investment of each homeowner and provide certain uniformity and continuity throughout the Westfield Acres subdivision. The vision of the developers is to have a subdivision outlined with a variety of colorful shade trees along the streets and yards and a tree allowance will be available to each lot purchaser for this purpose.

Currently, there will be two (2) entrance streets to the new Westfield Acres subdivision with access from Darlene St. or Cornel Ave. The goal/plan is to install another entrance and exit street to the south when Phase 2 of Westfield Acres is constructed that would extend DuLain St. south to a new street heading west to adjoin the south entrance and exit road to the Sports Complex. The plan is also to install a brick/stone and masonry entrance sign with appropriate landscaping to the new subdivision at the Darlene St. and Cornell Ave. entrance sometime within the first 2-3 years.

As part of the new Westfield Acres subdivision, a 1 1/12 acre water retention area will be constructed in the far southeast section of Phase 1 which will act as a slow release water retention area for both Phase 1 and Phase 2 of Westfield Acres. The water retention area will capture excess rain and water runoff from the subdivision streets and release the water through a 24" tube to downstream drainage. The water retention area will not be designed to hold water but simply slow down the runoff water and manage the flow to prevent flooding downstream. The plan is to plant wild flowers and warm season grasses along the sides of the water retention area with a grass infield that will be mowed and maintained and that can be used as "green area" by Westfield Acre residents.

An important added feature will be a 5' wide cement walking path/sidewalk that will run from the far northwest corner of the subdivision along the north fence line of the sports complex allowing residents to walk to sporting events or to the walking track at the sports complex.

Westfield Acres will provide Hartington and homeowners with an attractive and unique atmosphere with curved streets and a variety of different lot shapes and sizes to promote a diversity of nice homes and draw people to the area. The hope is that Phase 2 of Westfield Acres can begin in 6-8 years with the same attractive features as Phase 1.



*Looking Eastward from Westfield Acres*