

PETITION

TO: Mayor and Town Council

FROM: Parks, Greenways, and Recreation Commission

SUBJECT: American Legion Property Petition

DATE: September 22, 2022

On September 20, 2022, the Parks, Greenways, and Recreation Commission voted unanimously to respond to Council's October 3rd Work Session meeting where a consultant is expected to present preliminary design concepts for how the American Legion Property in Chapel Hill could host affordable housing, a Town park, and commercial development. The Commission is concerned that we have not had a chance to weigh in on this issue. We feel that it is imperative that we provide our input before design options are discussed. For this reason, our Commission is asking the Council to delay the meeting with the consultant and to allow our board an opportunity to review and provide feedback on any design concepts.

As stated in our previous memorandum dated May 20, 2022, "The Commission would like to be more intentionally included in the future conversations surrounding the American Legion Park and any proposed plans for its development." The Commission needs to be on the front-end of the decision making. It is the duty of the Parks, Greenways, and Recreation Commission to analyze and evaluate the need for park space and to advise on the park amenities to be included.

Legion Park is the largest available piece of land that can be used for a much needed community park in a location where there is a substantial amount of dense housing and no large area for recreation, unlike in the northern, southern, and western parts of Chapel Hill. The Commission would like to incorporate the Town's parks needs for a growing population that seeks recreation. It is our obligation as the Town's advisory commission to provide this type of insight into planning.

Additionally, as a reminder in our May 20, 2022 petition, the Parks and Recreation Commission urged the Town Council not to sell any portion of the American Legion Park, and in the February 23, 2021 petition, the Commission asked for all 36.2 acres of American Legion Park to be used as a community park.

Members Present: Tyler Steelman, (Chair), Leah Boucher (Vice Chair), Alice Armstrong (Orange County Representative), Shane Brogan, Hallie Cherry, Renuka Soll, Marcella Twamley, and Chris Worrell.