

## The Petition

- Community engagement for determining the uses of the Legion property has already occurred as detailed below,
- In 2013 the Town's Parks and Recreation Department in its Comprehensive Parks Plan proposed a Community Park for the northeastern part of the town,
- A Community Park is defined as 50 acres. The 36.2 acres of the Legion site plus the adjacent 10 acres of Ephesus Park would essentially constitute the Community Park,
- In December 2016 the town bought the Legion land and in 2017 the Council appointed a Task Force to plan for the Legion property and held a community charrette involving over 120 participants.
- The Task Force presented its report in November 2017 to the Town Council. The report included the results from a citizen survey, which identified Athletic Activities and Casual/Passive activities. Also in the Report were staff priorities. The staff said: "This site is the best opportunity for a community park in northeast Chapel Hill. Residential growth nearby underscores the need."
- In late 2019 the Parks, Greenways, and Recreation Commission voted that all the Legion property should be a Community Park,
- Since early 2020, a hardy band of citizens on a weekly basis have removed invasive species growing on the Legion property, pulled stilt grass, cleared out the forest floor, planted native plants, and defined trails in the woods and near the stream. There are fifteen regular weekly volunteers plus UNC students, four Scout troops, and members of local civic organizations and churches. They estimate that they spend between 900 and 1000 volunteer hours per year working at the Legion site,
- The 36.2 acres of Legion land contains 8.6 acres of RCD land and 1.3 acres of steeply sloped land, leaving only 26.3 acres of buildable land. The portion near the stream is subject to flooding. The remaining acreage is composed of two portions: 19.5 acres from Legion Road to the RCD area (this includes the 3-acre pond) and 4.6 acres behind the RCD.
- The presence of mature trees on site dramatically reduces greenhouse gases and global warming, and the open green space and soils absorb carbon and reduce temperatures, thus contributing to the Town's climate goals.
- If up to 145 units were to be built in the woods and at the dance studio location, many trees would be sacrificed. There are many different options for affordable housing that the Town has not considered.
- If part of the land is sold for commercial space or for other private uses, even more land useable for a Community Park will be sacrificed.
- Instead, ARPA funds could be used to pay for park improvements. Virginia Gray, supported by 67 signatories, proposed to the Town's ARPA process the funding of necessary repairs. Her proposal cites the \$500,000 needed to repair or replace the leaking dam and the \$50,000 necessary to raze the Legion building.
- Thousands of new residents in new apartments deserve a place to recreate. The apartments located in "Blue Hill" built in the last few years contain 1015 units.

Additional apartments are under construction on Ephesus Church Road or under contract on Fordham Blvd. number 922 units, and additional anticipated units through 2029 number 921 units for a total of 2858 new housing units. If we assume that often more than one person lives in a unit, that means several thousand people will soon be added to Blue Hill.

- The four proposed housing developments along Old Chapel Hill Road will add even more residents in an adjacent area to the hundreds of residents in rental homes all along Legion Road and its side streets, Residents in affordable housing on Legion Road such as Greenfield Place, Greenfield Commons (for seniors), Legion Road Townhomes, Colony Woods West, and residents of the entire town deserve a place to recreate and connect with nature as well.
- Finally, and most importantly, the Legion property is the only available open space for a park left in the Town.