

**PARKS & RECREATION
STAFF REPORT**

Meeting Date: December 3, 2012

Agenda Item: Conversion of McKenzie Park

Action Item: Yes

Submitted by: Dan Cahill CPRP, Land Steward

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Conversion of McKenzie Park

The Parks and Recreation Department intends to “convert” the McKenzie Park property so that it can become available for commercial agriculture purposes.

Two action steps from the Conservation Board are sought:

1. Approval of the concept of converting the LWCF regulations from 30.5 acres of McKenzie Park to the entirety of the Arms Grant Property.
2. Approval from the Commission to use Conservation Legacy Fund monies to finance appraisals necessary for the conversion process. (*Cost of appraisals - \$4200*)

McKenzie Park is a 63 acre plot located in Burlington’s Intervale. The parcel was purchased by the City of Burlington in 1980 with the use of Land and Water Conservation Funds. The composition of the parcel is approximately 35 acres of grasslands and 28 acres of floodplain forest and wetlands. Of the 35 tillable acres, 25 acres in the north field are currently managed through haying and 9 acres of the south field are mowed bi-annually by the IC. Please see attached map for reference.

These fields are highly productive and sought after farmlands due to alluvial deposits of the Winooski River. This conversion would allow for existing farms, or potentially new farms, to grow a significant amount food for the Burlington community. Presumably, the recreation potential of this area without the LWCF restrictions would be equal to or greater than it is currently. As was seen when Healthy City (a non-profit, youth-entrepreneurship program) farmed on the McKenzie property, public awareness of this area for recreation increased. The general maintenance and public access to the bike path and walking trail that is currently provided by the City of Burlington would continue unaffected as well.

Burlington Parks and Recreation has identified a property with equal or greater recreational value where the LWCF restrictions could be moved/converted to. The property, the Arms Grant Property, is 30.5 acres. Therefore, 30.5 acres of the McKenzie property could be freed for agriculture and still leave 31.5 acres of recreational property under LWCF. Ideally, the 30.5 acres would include the entire north field and the difference of the south field.

In summary, moving 30.5 acres of the LWCF restrictions to the Arms Grant Property would benefit the Intervale Center, farmers, the City of Burlington and its community members by simultaneously increasing the amount of tillable land while providing more active stewardship to existing recreation spaces.

Proposed Conversion Lands - McKenzie Park



0 125 250 500 750 1,000 Feet

Legend

- Proposed Agriculture Land
- Buffer Zones
- Parcel Boundary

