

**CITY OF CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA  
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA**



<b>Agenda Date:</b>	August 21, 2023
<b>Action Required:</b>	Approve Resolution
<b>Presenter:</b>	Chris Gensic, Park and Trail Planner, Brenda Kelley, Redevelopment Manager
<b>Staff Contacts:</b>	Chris Gensic, Park and Trail Planner Brenda Kelley, Redevelopment Manager
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Resolution to approve Land Acquisition of Property on Moores Creek for Park and Trail Use - 410 Old Lynchburg Road (1 reading)</b>

**Background**

The City of Charlottesville, through Parks and Recreation, has been awarded funding from two separate agencies: \$175,000 in funding from the Virginia Land Conservation Fund (VLCF) and \$175,000 in funding from the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), to assist with acquisition of an 8.45 acre property, located in Albemarle County, along Moores Creek adjacent to Azalea Park, north of I-64, at the south end of the City. The property may be used for general park uses, trail development, possible stream restoration, and to support urban agriculture and community gardens. Following acquisition, the Department of Parks and Recreation intends to create trails on the property and begin to determine possible tree planting and stream restoration opportunities for the future.

The agreed upon purchase price for the property is \$350,000. While the assessed value of the property is currently \$9,300, three separate appraisals were prepared as required by the granting agencies, and both granting agencies approved grant funding based on the \$350,000 purchase price.

Additional agenda items to implement this property acquisition have been in front of City Council on the following previous occasions:

April 3, 2023/April 17, 2023 – City Council approved the appropriation of \$175,000 in grant funds from the Virginia Land Conservation Fund (VLCF)(#R-23-041) and the appropriation of \$175,000 in grant funds from the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (#R-23-042), for this property acquisition.

(See the attached additional information on the proposed property acquisition transaction and Location Map).

**Discussion**

The Department of Parks and Recreation is seeking approval for the acquisition of the property and approval for deed restrictions to be placed on the property for permanent use as open space.

This property is being funded with matching grant funds from the VLCF and the LWCF, so the purchase price is fully covered with grant funds. Local trail and land acquisition City funding (Department of Parks and

Recreation budget) has been used for the legal and appraisal work to date and will be used to record the deed. The acquisition will provide parks and recreation space as well as opportunities for stream and forest restoration work. Use of VLCF and LWCF funds will require deed restrictions to be placed on the property so that the property can only be used for permanent open space public use. This property is located just across the City limit and is beneficial to the City as it eliminates the need for a bridge over Moores Creek to continue the Moores Creek Trail towards 5<sup>th</sup> Street, a bridge which would most likely cost more than the acquisition price of the property and would require regular maintenance.

Currently, the International Rescue Committee operates the New Roots Farm on this property. A draft lease agreement with the International Rescue Committee New Roots Farm is proposed for Council approval to allow the continuation of these outdoor gardening activities. If approved, the lease will ensure the existing farm and gardens can remain on the property for at least three years as Parks and Recreation works to determine the long-range home and plan for the IRC farm and gardens, which could move to an adjacent City-owned property or stay on this property.

### **Alignment with City Council's Vision and Strategic Plan**

Acquisition of the property will further council goals of being a Green City by protecting the Moores Creek watershed and providing for urban forest and trail opportunities. The project supports City Council's "America's Healthy City" vision by providing outstanding recreational areas and walking trails, as well as the vision of being a "Connected Community". It contributes to Goal 3 of the Strategic Plan, for a beautiful and sustainable natural and built environment.

### **Community Engagement**

The Bicycle, Pedestrian and Trail master plan and the Azalea Park Master Plans were developed with multiple public meetings and was approved by City Council.

### **Budgetary Impact**

Grant funds will be used for acquisition. City Capital Improvement Program (CIP) funds have been used for legal and appraisal/title/survey fees. Acquisition of the property will add to Parks Department mowing, trail maintenance and other operational budget costs related to general park maintenance.

### **Recommendation**

Staff recommends approval of resolution to acquire the property and authorize the deed restrictions on the property.

### **Alternatives**

Abandon the grant funding and do not purchase the property.

### **Attachments**

1. Purchase Checklist 410 Old Lynchburg 072123
2. 410 Old Lynchburg Prop Acq Presentation 082123
3. Resolution 410 Old Lynchburg prop acq 082123 AMD (2)
4. Moores Creek Farm Purchase Agmt draftAugust2023(2)