



GENERAL BROCK PARK COMMITTEE

Mayor MacIsaac, Members of Council, staff and citizens of Burlington,

On behalf of many Burlington citizens, it is my pleasure to stand before you this evening to request your support for the resolution you see before you.

After the City's General Brock public information meeting held in June of this year, a group of citizens concerned about the future of this significant green space were drawn together to share concerns, ask questions and explore ways in which we could have our voices heard. Ultimately we wanted everyone in the area to have a say in determining the future of the land that would best fit the community's needs and save as much of this irreplaceable green space as possible.

It did not take long for our group to realize that the task at hand was tremendous and the recommended time frame unrealistic. We saw that the community needed to seek support from both council and key members of staff to work together on this important issue.

Our group has already embarked on an ambitious awareness campaign. Why? First, to ensure that all the citizens of Burlington were aware of the fact that the Board of Education was closing the school and that the facility and surrounding lands were at risk, at least in part, by being lost to development. Second, to get a better sense of what people actually valued about these lands and what their concerns surrounding the issue were.

Determination and heart should not be underestimated. The difference a group of dedicated individuals can make is very real. In a few short months, this community group has already accomplish many things:

- The implementation of a comprehensive website
- The distribution of hundreds of information flyers
- The hosting of a recent public information meeting with 130+ in attendance (including Mayor MacIsaac, Councillors Jack Dennison and Mike Wallace)
- A petition booth at Tuck school's open house with hundreds of families in attendance
- The posting of numerous lawn signs throughout the community
- Over 300 petition signatures collected supporting the proposed recommendation
- An impressive list of potential project volunteers
- Phone calls, emails a letter campaign and more....with this, the interest and concern has only escalated and yetthis is just the beginning.

What have these efforts revealed thus far? In short, two things: that the citizens of Burlington are clear that they want, need and deserve this important green space in their community and second, that the number of questions, concerns and ideas pertaining to this important issue are exceptional.

We understand that city staff are preparing a report to provide recommendations on the future use of the land. We hope that those recommendations recognize the interests of the community. It seems reasonable then, that to achieve this, that staff should make every effort to seek this input from the community.

This is where we come in. We have a committee in place and Councilor Jack Dennison has joined these grassroots efforts in his new role as committee co-chair. I am here tonight on behalf of this committee to ask that you recognize this committee and support the initiative. It is critically important that city staff and council work together with the community on this. We are counting on you to do so.

Supporting the resolution will be taking the first step in respecting this precious green space and determining a future for it that existing and future citizens of Burlington will thank you for.

As you consider this recommendation, please reflect on at least a few of the key considerations of this issue:

- Think about the significance and rarity of this space within the immediate community and arguably for the city as a whole. (see map)
- Think about the uniqueness of the space and approach it with balanced consideration to the issue not only as a challenge but also as an opportunity.
- Think about safety – increased traffic & congestion
- When thinking about the reality of money as it applies to this project, don't just focus on how "the city can't afford it", turn it around and ask yourself "how can the city not afford to take the necessary time to handle this issue with care.
- Think with vision – where will all those children, adults and seniors that use the space regularly (it is an intensely used space), go to play soccer, baseball, fly kites, and go for peaceful walks. Consider those who have no voice but call the space their home – wildlife that deserve a habitat to live in.
- Think about quality of life and what the people of Burlington value when they choose to live in this city.
- Think, mostly, about the future and what you would be proudest of in 20 years, a community jewel or just another subdivision.

Many of us here tonight have been thinking of this (sometimes only this) for some time now. I think it is safe to say that everyone in this room recognizes the fact that you can't go back. Unique spaces like General Brock are few and far between in the City of Burlington and certainly within the immediate neighborhood. Once it is changed, it will be forever changed. Let's work together to come up with a solution for the land that is responsible, respectful and a legacy that we can forever be proud of.

Respectfully,

Amy Schnurr
Co-chair
General Brock Park Committee

