



New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

Albany, New York 12238

www.nysparks.com

Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor

Rose Harvey
Commissioner

June 29, 2015

Michael Kalin
510 W Lawrence Street
Albany, NY 12208

**Re: Freedom of Information (FOIL) Request #142-15
South Allen Street**

Dear Mr. Kalin:

Attached is the information you requested in regards to the above mentioned FOIL request.

Be advised you have 30 days by which to appeal this determination. Appeals must be directed to Paul J. Laudato, General Counsel, to the address contained on the letterhead.

Sincerely,

Petra M. Larsen
Records Access Officer

PART I - ON-SITE INSPECTION

Lands Being Alienated or Discontinued

1. OVERALL CHARACTER OF THE PARKLANDS.

- a) Are the lands currently used for park purposes? If not, how are they used?

Currently, there is a small playground in a 3-sided fenced-in area next to 225 South Allen Street, utilizing a small portion of the 2+ acres for park purposes. The playground contains 4 swings (2 baby/2 kid), a tire swing and a picnic table. The remaining lands are deeply wooded and overgrown. From the sidewalk on South Allen Street, the woods slope down to wet land that does not appear suitable for a park, unless a footbridge or boardwalk was built for crossing. The wooded area extends back to Onderdonk Avenue, a dead end street that runs parallel to South Allen Street.

Do they appear to have been used for park purposes in the past?

The playground area is/has been used for park purposes. It does not appear that the remaining wooded area has ever been used for park purposes.

Are they suitable for use for park and/or recreational purposes?

The playground is still in tact. The condition is good except for a crack in the front of one baby swing (see photo) and the lawn area needs to be mowed. The wooded area would take quite a bit of work to create trails or clear brush to use for park and/or recreational purposes.

- b) Characterize the parklands in which the parcel(s) being alienated is located. *(Check all boxes that apply.)*

☒ Mini-Park

☒ Neighborhood park

☐ Community park

☐ Linear Park

☐ Special Use

☐ Conservancy

☐ Regional/Metropolitan Park

☐ Regional park preserve

Details:

- c) Are there any structures other than park facilities on the property? (Restaurants, old barns, museums, fire houses, libraries, community centers, etc.)

There are no other structures on the property.

- d) How would you characterize the way the parklands are maintained, taking into account their usage?

As mentioned above, the playground area lawn needs to be mowed and a baby swing should be repaired or replaced. The wooded area has been left wild.

2. INFORMATION ABOUT THE PARK OR PARCEL TO BE ALIENATED.

a) How is it used? (Check all boxes that apply.)

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Heavily | <input type="checkbox"/> Moderately | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occasionally |
| <input type="checkbox"/> For fitness | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> For play | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> For relaxing |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> By families | <input type="checkbox"/> By seniors | <input type="checkbox"/> By children and youth |
| <input type="checkbox"/> By groups | <input type="checkbox"/> For school athletics | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> For formal recreation programs | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | |

Details:

b) Facilities or equipment located on the lands in questions. (Check all boxes that apply.)

- | | | |
|--|------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Playing fields | <input type="checkbox"/> Courts | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Playground |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pool(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> Beach | <input type="checkbox"/> Waterfront |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dock facilities | <input type="checkbox"/> Golf | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Picnic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Comfort station | <input type="checkbox"/> Snack bar | <input type="checkbox"/> Nature |
| <input type="checkbox"/> study/signage | <input type="checkbox"/> Parking | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trails | | |

Details:

There is space on the street for parking, but most playground users are probably within walking distance; it is not a destination park that would attract users from afar.

c) Are there any known or observed natural or cultural resources on the lands in question? (Check all boxes that apply.)

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Streams | <input type="checkbox"/> Significant Habitats |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wetlands | <input type="checkbox"/> Ecological Communities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Scenic Areas | <input type="checkbox"/> Historic Resources |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gardens | <input type="checkbox"/> Archeological Resources |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other | |

Details:

The wooded area contains some wet/muddy area and habitat for city birds/wildlife.

3. SETTING; NEIGHBORHOOD

a) Describe the setting of the parkland and the surrounding neighborhood (suburban residences, densely populated City streets, etc.)

There are apartments and multi-family/single family houses in the immediate vicinity on a relatively busy street, South Allen Street, which provides access to the playground. The back of the wooded area faces single family homes on Onderdonk Avenue, a dead end street.

- b) Is the park readily accessible to residents of the surrounding neighborhood? yes
- c) How will the neighborhood be affected by the alienation? Consider aesthetic, environmental, cultural, social and recreational impacts.

If the playground is removed, the families in nearby apartments would probably have to drive to other sites for a similar experience. The wooded area is overgrown and does not appear to be utilized by the community.

4. AFFECT ON REMAINING PARKLANDS

- a) How will any remaining parklands be affected by the alienation? Will there still be a viable park serving the same constituency?

If the wooded area is developed into apartments, the playground would no longer be surrounded by woods which provide a quiet, natural background.

- b) What public park resources or recreational facilities are available to residents of the community to take the place of any being alienated?

If the playground is lost due to the development of apartments, the following three parks may provide a similar experience based upon a search in Google maps (Note: we did not visit these parks):

1. Distance: **.8 miles** from South Allen Street Playground
Woodlawn Park (Partridge Street & Woodlawn Avenue)-contains ball fields, playground and basketball courts according to the City of Albany's list at http://www.albanyny.gov/files/Recreation_facilities.pdf
2. Distance: **.9 miles** from South Allen Street Playground
Ridgefield Park (Ridgefield Street & Partridge Street)-contains playground, ball fields, tennis courts, 4-H day camp, community garden, & water spray pool according to the City of Albany's list
3. Distance: **1.3 miles** from South Allen Street Playground
Buckingham Lake Park (Berkshire Blvd & Colonial Ave) – according to the City of Albany's list, this park contains a playground and offers ice skating.

PART II - GRANT-IN-AID INFORMATION

Questions should be answered for each grant used for acquisition or development of the park in which the lands being discontinued or conveyed are located, whether the grant was federal or State money, and including Natural Heritage Trust grants and those of non-OPRHP programs, such as HUD and Community Development.

<u>Grant Program</u>	<u>Amount/ Share/ Date of Award</u>	<u>Details</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> 1960-65 Bond Acts <input type="checkbox"/> LWCF <input type="checkbox"/> UPARR <input type="checkbox"/> 1986 EQBA <input type="checkbox"/> EPF <input type="checkbox"/> Clean Water/Clean Air <input type="checkbox"/> Member initiative <input type="checkbox"/> Other		
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PART III - ON-SITE INSPECTION

Lands Proposed As Replacement (If applicable)

1. How are the lands proposed as replacement currently used? Describe any facilities located on the lands.

2. Do they appear to have been used for park and/or recreational purposes at any time?

3. For what park and/or recreational purposes are they most suited? Is there adequate access for this purpose?

4. Does there appear to be anything about the lands, such as significant habitats, sensitive environmental resources or waste or landfill materials, that makes them unsuitable for park and recreational purposes?

5. As a best guess, are the lands approximately equivalent to those being alienated or converted?

Figure 1: Swing set at South Allen St Playground 6-14-12

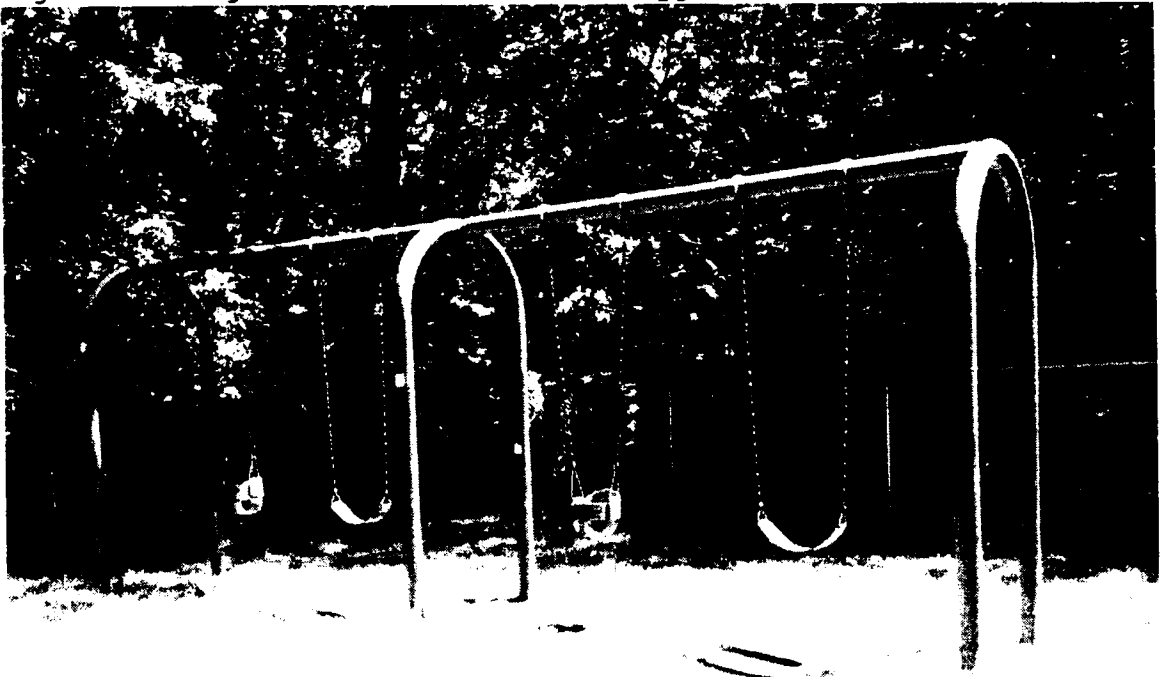


Figure 2: Tire swing at South Allen St Playground 6-14-12

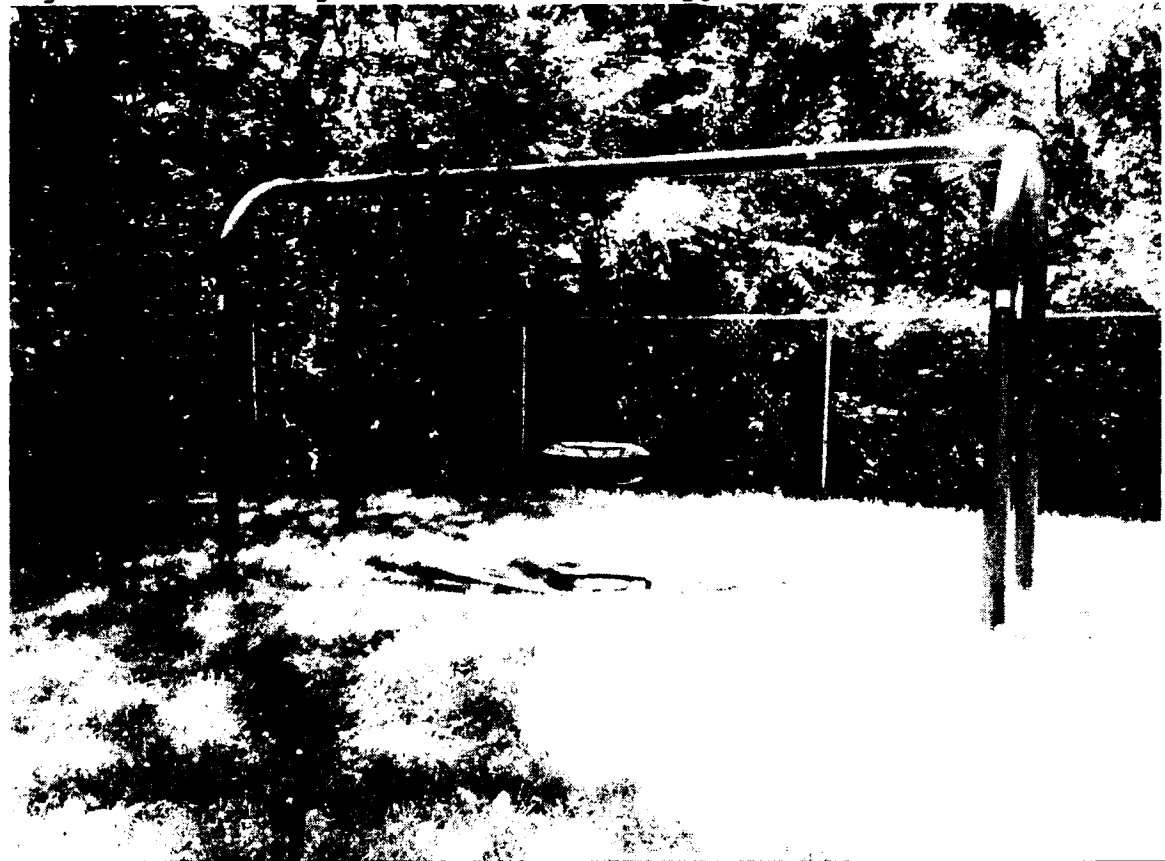


Figure 3: Cracked baby swing at South Allen St Playground 6-14-12

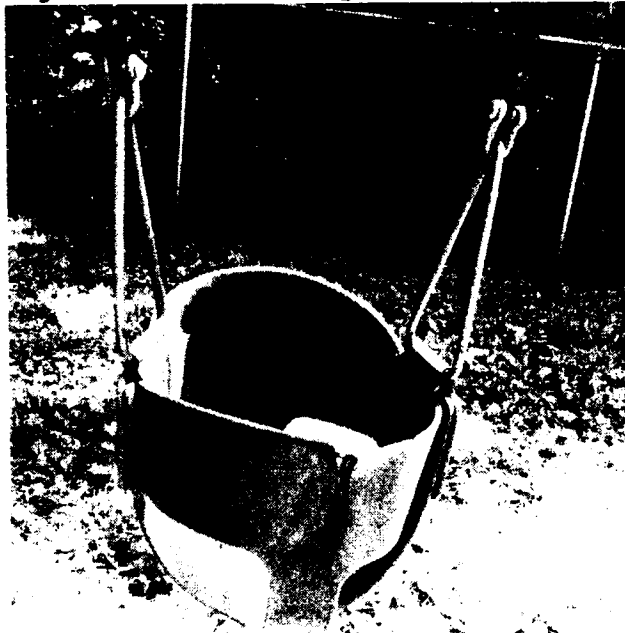


Figure 4: Single picnic table at South Allen St Playground 6-14-12



Figure 5: Wooded/wet area next to South Allen St Playground 6-14-12



Figure 6: Wooded area next to South Allen St Playground 6-14-12



Figure 7: Fenced, wooded area on Onderdonk Ave behind South Allen St
Playground 6-14-12



Figure 8: Wooded lands on Onderdonk Avenue behind South Allen St
Playground 6-14-12



Name of Municipality: **City of Albany**

Name of Park: **South Allen Street Park**

MUNICIPAL INFORMATION FORM

Lands Being Alienated or Discontinued

1. Has the alienation been reviewed under the State Environmental Quality Review Act or a comparable statute?

No

If so, and if the review documents provide the answers to the following questions, you may substitute the review documents for this questionnaire.

Not Applicable

2. How did the Municipality acquire the parklands being alienated?

See the attached memo from Keith McDonald, Commissioner of the City of Albany Dept. of Assessment and Taxation.

3. When were the parklands acquired?

See response to #2 above

4. What is, in acres, the size of the park in which the lands being alienated are located?

See response to #2 above

5. What is its name (if not given above)? Has the park ever been called something else?

South Allen Street Park. Park has never had another name.

6. What is the size, in acres, of the specific parcel being alienated?

See response to #2 above

7. Were State or federal funds used in the acquisition or development of any portion of the park in which the lands being alienated are located? If the answer is "Yes" please provide some details about the amount of the grant, its source, date of award and for what purpose it was used.

Upon information and belief, No State or Federal funds have been used in acquisition or development of this park.

8. How are the lands to be alienated currently used?

All lands are currently vacant property.

9. Are there any structures 50 years old or older on the property? Are any of the structures listed on the State or National Register of Historic Places? Does the property contain archeological resources?

No

10. Does the property contain wetlands, streams, significant habitats, or other similar features?

No

11. What is the reason the lands are being alienated?

The City wants to sell the land to a developer who can develop the land.

12. Describe any alternatives which would make the alienation unnecessary and why they were rejected.

No alternatives were considered.

13. How will any remaining parklands be affected by the alienation?

There will be no remaining parklands in that location.

14. What impacts, including aesthetic, historic, environmental, social, cultural and recreational impacts, will the alienation of these parklands have on the surrounding neighborhood?

Upon information and belief, no impact. The parkland is not currently used for recreational purposes.

15. What public facility will provide residents of the community with park resources and recreational facilities to take the place of those being alienated?

There are several parks within walking distance that have more foot traffic.

16. Will other lands be dedicated for park purposes to replace those being alienated? If so, please answer the questions on the next page.

No

Date: _____

Signed: _____

Title: _____

For the Municipality

Please provide a survey map of the property being alienated and a map, such as a tax map or street map, showing its general location in the community.

In addition, you are invited to include with this questionnaire any photos or other documents which will better enable us to understand this proposal. Kindly send this information to the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation's Regional Grant Representative for your area.

Send a copy of this form to the Members of the Senate and the Assembly who will sponsor the parkland alienation legislation.

In addition, please send a copy of the form to: Counsel's Office, 19th Floor, Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, Agency Bldg. #1, Empire State Plaza, Albany, NY 12238