



Environmental Law Center
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**CITIZENS FILE SUIT REQUESTING COURT TO ORDER BOARD OF ELECTIONS
TO PUT OLIVETTE PARKS MEASURE ON NOVEMBER BALLOT**

On August 21, 2014, Great Rivers Environmental Law Center filed suit in the St. Louis County Circuit Court on behalf of citizens of Olivette asking the Court to order the County Board of Elections to place an initiative question on the November ballot.

Earlier this year, citizens of Olivette successfully conducted an initiative petition drive for an amendment to the City charter that would prevent the City disposing of or building on public park land without a vote of the people. The St. Louis County Board of Elections certified that the initiative petition obtained a sufficient number of valid signatures to qualify for the ballot. In their suit, citizens argue that the City of Olivette and its City Council are defying the duty imposed on them by the Missouri Constitution to provide “at once” by ordinance for submission of the amendment to the voters.

The petition drive was sparked by the City’s plan for private development in the city’s largest park, 29-acre Warson Park. The plan calls for a 3.4 acre building with three ice-skating rinks and space for sports medicine offices, 750 additional parking spaces, and two artificial turf fields for soccer and lacrosse.

“People in Olivette are outraged,” said plaintiff Isabel Trusty. “This is our park, and it shouldn’t be turned over to private business. City government still isn’t listening.”

“Local governments tend to underestimate the value their residents place on open space,” said Henry Robertson, attorney at Great Rivers Environmental Law Center. “The City wants revenue, but it has to appreciate the intangibles.”

The citizens request the St. Louis County Circuit Court to order the County Board of Elections to put the measure on the November ballot.

Great Rivers is a nonprofit public interest environmental law firm in St. Louis that provides free and reduced-fee legal services to those working to protect the environment and public health. Its web address is: www.greatriverslaw.org.