



CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Department of Planning and Development
Michael J. Kruse, Director

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Mayor

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July 27, 2006

Community Preservation Committee
c/o Planning and Development Department
1000 Commonwealth Avenue
Newton, MA 02459

RE: Newton Centre Playground Accessibility and Rehabilitation Project

Dear Community Preservation Committee Members:

The Newton Historical Commission would like to express its enthusiastic support for the Parks and Recreation Department's grant application to complete Phase I of their project to restore and increase accessibility to the Newton Centre Playground. Not only is the park associated with nationally renowned landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, whose company developed the initial design in 1890, but it is also the City's first playground and one of the earliest recreational spaces specifically designed as a playground in the country. The Newton Historical Commission considers this site to be an historic resource which is significant to the history and culture of the City of Newton.

While this historically significant landscape is a valuable resource within the City, its early development and importance has long been undocumented and largely unrecognized. Walker-Kluesing Design Group's recently completed study of the grounds for the Parks and Recreation Department offers both a thorough history of the park and its development as well as a careful guide for its future rehabilitation. It is the conclusion of this study that while many of the original details have been lost, the Playground has retained its basic historic structure and the significant qualities of an Olmsted designed park. Its rehabilitation plan is respectful of the history and intent of the grounds while integrating contemporary needs and uses for the enjoyment of future generations.

The Newton Centre Playground is a unique component of the City's landscape which has retained its historic setting, layout, and use. The Playground's restoration will have a significant impact on the integrity of this historic City-owned resource and the Newton Historical Commission hopes that you will look favorably upon this grant application.

Sincerely,

John S. Rodman, Chairman
Newton Historical Commission

Newton Historical Commission
1000 Commonwealth Avenue, Newton, Massachusetts 02459
Email: lkritzer@newtonma.gov
www.ci.newton.ma.us

MASON-RICE SCHOOL

149 Pleasant Street
Newton, Massachusetts 02459

Mark Springer
Principal
Mark_Springer@newton.mec.edu

617-559-9570
(fax) 617-552-7315

June 2, 2006

Fran Towle, Commissioner
Newton Parks and Recreation Dept.
70 Crescent Street
Newton, Massachusetts 02466

Dear Fran,

It was a pleasure to meet with you and Carol Schein on Thursday morning. Thank you for inviting us to view the plans you now have in place for improving the accessibility to the new playground structure being installed in Newton Centre. This new structure will be a great benefit to the Mason-Rice School community, the Newton Centre neighborhood and all of the children and families in the City of Newton.

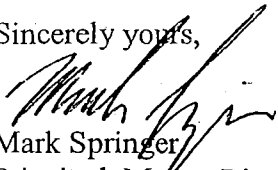
We fully support the addition of one new handicap parking space in the Mason-Rice School parking lot. Widening the present sidewalk leading along the side of the school from five to eight feet will provide greater access to our school playground and the new playground in Newton Centre. Our school community will also benefit from the other rehabilitative measures being planned for the area surrounding our playground.


We are most pleased to have the improved grading and paving that will lead to the establishment of a walkway from the back driveway of the school across the brook leading to the new playground. Currently service vehicles and cars use the paved road to drive directly across our existing playground to the ball fields on the other side of the brook. This creates a potentially dangerous situation for the children playing behind the school or on the ball fields. Your proposed enhancements will eliminate access to vehicles to this area.

We are also intrigued with the idea of creating a walking bridge from the school parking lot to the soccer fields on the other side of the brook. This direct access will afford us the opportunity for holding more physical education classes outside as the fields will now be much closer to the school building. Access to bathrooms and the school nurse will be greatly improved.

Thank you for involving us in the planning stages of this project. If we can be of any further assistance to you, please let us know.

Sincerely yours,


Mark Springer
Principal, Mason-Rice School


Michael Cronin
Chief of Operations, Newton Public Schools

Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities
City of Newton
1000 Commonwealth Avenue
Newton, MA 02459

October 7, 2004

Fran Towle
Commissioner
City of Newton Parks and Recreation Department
70 Crescent Street
Newton, MA 02466

Dear Fran,

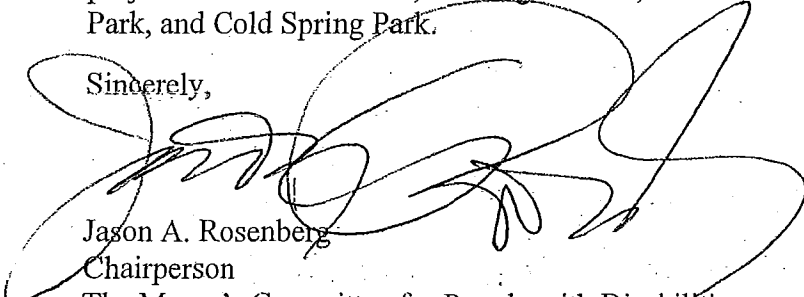
On behalf of the members of the Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities, I have the pleasure of conveying our support of your goal of making the Newton Centre Playground accessible for people with disabilities.

The Mayor's Committee would like to achieve a city environment in which people with disabilities can use and enjoy the same public areas already enjoyed by able-bodied people. To that end, the Committee has made access to public recreational facilities in the City one of its highest priorities.

The Mayor's Committee has recommended the use of CDBG funds to support the increase of accessibility at Newton Centre Playground. We agree that it is an important facility to make accessible because of its central location and its heavy use by people of all ages.

Incidentally, some of the past accessibility projects supported by the Mayor's Committee with CDBG funds include projects at Nahanton Park, Auburndale Park, Burr Park, Albemarle Park and Playground, Gath Pool, Crystal Lake, and Lower Falls Community Center. The Committee has also given its support to future projects in Nahanton Park, Wellington Park, Burr Park Activity Center, Auburndale Park, and Cold Spring Park.

Sincerely,



Jason A. Rosenberg
Chairperson
The Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities

cc: Bob
Mark
Carol

MIRASP

mason-rice afterschool program

October 14, 2004

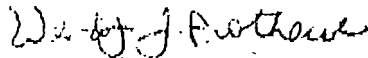
Community Preservation Committee
Newton City Hall
1000 Commonwealth Avenue
Newton, Massachusetts 02459

Dear Community Preservation Committee,

I am writing in support of the Newton Parks and Recreation proposal to make the Newton Centre playground more accessible to people of all abilities and ages. Along with its natural beauty, the park offers many advantages to the citizens of Newton and to the Mason-Rice community – playground structures, basketball courts, playing fields, etc. A network of pathways would make the park more accessible to the whole community. Pathways would also eliminate automobile traffic thus making the park a safer place.

I sincerely hope that this proposal will be supported by the Community Preservation Committee. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Wendy J. Protheroe
Executive Director