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## Athletic Fields/Parks/Beach/Gath Pool - \$2,500,000

The pandemic dramatically reminded us that getting outside, interacting with nature, playing and exercising is good for the body, the mind, and the soul. In the most challenging time of our generation, Newton's parks, playgrounds, athletic fields and recreation facilities were there for us – to nurture and to comfort, and to host safe and happy gatherings and sports outings.

The Parks, Recreation & Culture Department (PRC) has worked with the Parks and Recreation Commissioner and the Community Preservation Committee, City Councilors and residents – to identify and bring forward improvements across our city to support active and passive recreation and community engagement in our parks and open/green spaces.

I am allocating \$2.5 million dollars to accelerate the reinvestment in our parks and recreation areas, including Gath Pool, Crystal Lake, playgrounds, playing fields and open spaces. These additional ARPA funds will supplement the \$300,000 of ARPA funding going towards a new community garden at Spears Park in Nonantum and to support neighborhood pocket parks and traffic islands as well as the \$150,000 of ARPA funds being invested to improve our trails and paths in conservation areas and parks.

The additional infusion of \$2.5 million will be used to accomplish work in a number of areas:

- Gath Pool: PRC and the Public Buildings Department worked with the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) to move forward with the design and construction of a new pool, pool deck area and splash pad at Albemarle Park. Construction was completed in June 2024. ARPA funds will be used to supplement substantial CPC funding, and a state earmark, for the project.
- Athletic Fields: PRC is working with the CPC on the design/engineering and then construction of major athletic field projects at Albemarle/Halloran Sports Complex, Burr School fields, and McGrath Park fields. These projects will transform tired

playing fields for many athletes and a variety of sports teams and leagues into high quality surfaces that will support heightened athletic use with the City's substantially upgraded maintenance program. As of October 2024 the Burr Fields are under construction and the Albemarle project is out to bid. ARPA funds have also been used for hydrogeological investigations to identify groundwater sources for irrigation systems that are critical for the long-term sustainability of grass athletic fields.

- Crystal Lake Beach and Park Improvements: PRC is working with the community to design renovations to the park and the "Left Beach" at Crystal Lake. These improvements will protect the shoreline, improve accessibility, improve resiliency to impacts from climate change, and enable more fun and exercise. ARPA funds have been used to complete the Livingston Cove Improvement Project and make repairs at Cronin's Cove.
- Park Improvements: This funding will accelerate needed investments at PRC facilities, including courts, playgrounds, pathways and open spaces.