



David B. Cohen  
Mayor

# City of Newton, Massachusetts Community Preservation Committee



## MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Board of Aldermen  
FROM: Community Preservation Committee (CPC)  
DATE: 5 June 2003  
RE: CPC Recommendation

PROJECT TITLE: **ALBEMARLE COMMUNITY COMMONS (Outdoor Classroom)**

CPA CATEGORY: Recreation

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant, The Playground Project at Albelmarle, Inc., requests \$99,931 to create an outdoor community classroom/park on a portion of the Halloran Sports and Recreation Complex, adjacent to the new playground. The proposed elements include gardens, a gazebo, tables, benches, a sundial and weather station, a water fountain, and educational signage. Due to the design and construction requirements of the Engineering Division, the request was amended in June 2003 (the original request was for \$87,135; see the attached "Budget Estimate 5/14/03" for itemization of amended request).

Since the Community Preservation Committee's original consideration of this project in February, the applicant has received approval from the Parks and Recreation Commission for the concept of the project subject to completion of a professional site plan for the "Community Classroom". In response, the City's Engineering Division has completed a site plan, attached.

### FINDINGS

#### *Community Preservation Act*

This proposal meets the criteria established under MGL c.44B for the following reasons:

1. The land's proposed use complies with the definition for recreational use, which includes passive recreational use.
2. In accordance with §5(b)(2), the project will create land for recreational use, since the project will transform a portion of land to a community classroom/park, creating passive recreational opportunities.
3. Since the proposal does not include any acquisition of real property or real property interest, no permanent deed restrictions are required.

#### *Newton Community Preservation Plan*

##### *Overarching Goals*

1. Contribute to the preservation of Newton's unique character, boost the vitality of the community and enhance the quality of life for its residents. Yes
2. Serve more than one CPA category. No
3. Demonstrate the highest cost/benefit value relative to other proposals. See below
4. Leverage other public and/or private funds. Yes, see below
5. Preserve a resource or opportunity that would otherwise be lost. Yes
6. Create incentives for other private projects to occur. No
7. Show that a project is the most reasonable available option to achieve the objective. Yes
8. Demonstrate strong community support. Yes, see below
9. Serve to equitably distribute CPA funds throughout the City. See below

Additional comments on selected goals:

Goal #3: Projects received during the November funding round included a high CPA cost of \$850,000 and a low CPA cost of \$24,780. The CPA cost for this project is \$99,931. The relative benefit for is creating a new accessible passive recreation amenity for the students, teachers, and the general neighborhood.

Goal #4: This proposal is part of the larger playground project which has received private funding in addition to some seed money from the city.

Goal #8: The project has strong community support as detailed and documented in the application. No opposition has been voiced.

Goal #9: As presented at a recent CPC meeting, this round of applications is geographically distributed throughout the City; this project is located in Newtonville.

#### *Recreation Goals*

1. Address the needs targeted in the Recreation and Open Space Plan and take advantage of other opportunities to meet the recreation needs of the residents of the City. Yes, see below
2. Meet the recreation needs of the greatest number of residents possible. No
3. Meet the greatest variety of recreation needs possible. Yes, see below
4. Serve passive as well as active uses. Finding ways to balance the range of recreational opportunities and serve the diverse recreation needs of the community is a priority of the CPC. Yes
5. Preserve sight lines consistent with open space. . . . Decisions about scale and placement should be made with the objective of enhancing or enabling open views. NA
6. Access for disabled residents should be included in plans wherever possible. Yes, see below

Additional comments on selected goals:

Goal #1: Although the project is not specifically mentioned in the updated Recreation and Open Space Plan, the project will help meet the passive recreation needs of the neighborhood and will enhance accessibility for people with disabilities.

Goal #3: Since this project will add a passive recreation element to a mostly active recreation complex, it will create greater variety of recreation facilities in this area.

Goal #6: This project will enhance access for disabled residence (particularly the design of the gazebo, table, and Braille/large print signs).

#### **CPC RECOMMENDATION**

Based on consistency with the CPA criteria and many of the Plan's goals as described above, the Community Preservation Committee unanimously recommends funding this application to create an outdoor community classroom/park on portion of the Halloran Sports and Recreation Complex by appropriating and transferring the requested \$99,931 to be expended under the direction and control of the Director of Parks and Recreation for purposes of funding costs for the Albemarle Community Classroom as detailed in the application (submitted on 1 November 2002, with amended budget dated 5/14/03):

1. The initial funds needed for design, engineering, and soil boring samples, not to exceed the amount of \$8,925, shall be available for disbursement immediately upon appropriation.
2. The remaining funds shall be available for disbursement upon receiving final project approval from the Park and Recreation Commission.
3. Work shall commence no later than 31 December 2003 and shall be completed no later than 31 December 2004 or such other date(s) as may be approved in writing by the Director of Planning and Development. In the event of failure to meet the project start or completion dates as stated herein or as approved by the Director of Planning and Development, any remaining funds in the project account shall be returned to the Newton Community Preservation Fund.
4. Any portion of the grant not used for the purposes stated herein shall be returned to the Newton Community Preservation Fund.