

City of Newton



David B. Cohen
Mayor

City of Newton, Massachusetts
Community Preservation Committee

MEMORANDUM
REVISED 4/7/03

TO: Honorable Board of Aldermen
FROM: Community Preservation Committee
DATE: 19 February 2003
RE: **CPC Recommendation for CPA Funding**

PROJECT TITLE: BALLFIELD IRRIGATION SYSTEMS

CPA CATEGORY: Recreation

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant, Newton East Little League, requests \$138,915 to install irrigation systems at four ballfields: Memorial-Spaulling Upper, Memorial-Spaulling lower, Bowen Elementary, and Solomon Schechter. The irrigation systems proposed are drilled well and pump systems that would enable the use of groundwater in addition to rainwater for irrigation purposes. This project would enable the fields to be maintained and create a more usable playing surface. The applicant has informed the Parks and Recreation Department that they will cover the maintenance costs at Bowen and Memorial Spaulding (but, not at Solomon Schechter) for at least five years (see letter from Commissioner Fran Towle dated 1/8/03). More recently, the applicant has increased this commitment to seven years (see letter dated 2/14/03 from the Newton East Little League).

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 active recreational use.
2. The Act defines "preservation" to be "protection of personal or real property from injury, harm or destruction, but not including maintenance." In accordance with §5(b)(2), this irrigation project would preserve land for recreational use, since the project will help to protect the field from harm or destruction by enhancing the condition and durability of playing surfaces.
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 this funding round include a high CPA cost of \$850,000 and a low CPA cost of \$24,780. This CPA cost for this project is \$138,915. The relative benefit for this project is preserving and enhancing existing ballfields in the long term for continued recreational use and enjoyment.

Goal #4: This proposal includes a minimum maintenance commitment of seven years by two private organizations that will use the field, including the applicant, Newton East Little League.

Goal #8: The project has strong community support as detailed and documented in the application. The Commissioner of Recreation submitted a letter dated 1/8/03 stating that she supports the proposal for two of the three locations, Bowen and Memorial-Spaulling, due to the organizations' commitment to maintenance on those fields and because Bowen Field is one of the Department's priorities for renovation. Irrigation for the field at Solomon Schecter Elementary School was not included in the Commissioner's expressed support. The League of Women Voters stated opposition in their letter dated 1/15/03 partially due to the feeling that a limited number of residents would be served.

Goal #9: As presented at a recent CPC meeting, this round of applications is geographically distributed throughout the City; this project is located in two neighborhoods: Oak Hill and Newton Centre.

Recreation Goals

1. Address the needs targeted in the <i>Recreation and Open Space Plan</i> 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.	Yes, see below
3. Meet the greatest variety of recreation needs possible.	No
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, see below
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.	No

Additional comments on selected goals:

Goal #1: Although field irrigation is not specifically mentioned in the updated *Recreation and Open Space Plan*, the support for this project and the grassroots nature of the proposal indicates that it would work toward meeting the recreation needs of residents of the City.

Goal #2: According to the application, the children and families who regularly recreate on these fields is extensive: Newton East Little League has approximately 450 families with 500 children; and Newton Youth Soccer has approximately 3,500 players. The fields are also used by Newton Girls Softball, elementary

school children, and many other organized and less formal sports groups. In addition, the subject fields serve as passive open space for the community where people come to picnic, walk dogs, and fly kites.

Goal #4: Although fields are primarily intended to serve active recreation uses, they also enable passive recreation as described in Goal #2, above.

CPC RECOMMENDATION

The proposal is consistent with the CPA criteria and many of the Plan's goals, as described above. However, since the fields are under the control of the Parks and Recreation Department, the Community Preservation Committee supports funding for the Bowen Field because it is listed by the Commissioner as one of the fields that are departmental priorities for renovation. In addition, the Committee supports funding the irrigation project for this field as a pilot project only and will evaluate any similar future proposals based their unique merits. Therefore, the Community Preservation Committee, in a 6-1 vote, recommends funding this application to install an irrigation system to preserve the existing recreational ballfield at Bowen Elementary School by appropriating and transferring the sum of Fifty-Six Thousand Eight Hundred and Five Dollars (\$56,805) from the Community Preservation Unreserved Funds, to be expended under the direction and control of the Director of Parks and Recreation for purposes of funding costs for installing a drilled well and pump irrigation system at the Bowen Elementary School Field only as detailed in the application (submitted on 1 November 2002), but not at the Memorial Spaulding or Solomon Schechter fields.

1. 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.
2. A legally binding Memorandum of Understanding shall be executed with the City, Newton East Little League, and Newton Youth Soccer regarding the proposed seven-year commitment by Newton East Little League and Newton Youth Soccer to maintain Bowen Field, and such Memorandum of Understanding shall contain a prohibition from requesting approval for or installing any commercial or public service signage at Bowen Field.
3. Work shall be coordinated with the drainage project associated with the Terraces development project on Langley Road as described in Special Permit #250-02.
4. If, after drilling a test pit, insufficient water is found, then the remainder of the funding shall be returned to the Newton Community Preservation Fund.
5. Any portion of the grant not used for the purposes stated herein shall be returned to the Newton Community Preservation Fund.