

April 23, 2019

Newton Parks & Recreation Department and Friends of Farlow Park

Community Preservation and Community Development Block Grant Project

Farlow Park Bridge and Pond – Final Report

The Parks and Recreation Department along with co-sponsor, the Friends of Farlow Park, applied for Community Preservation Act and Community Development Block Grant funds to restore this historic park's primary character-defining features: the centrally located reflecting pond and its Adirondack-style bridge. Designed by George Meacham, designer of the Boston Public Garden, Farlow Park is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and falls under the CPA-definition of restoration of a historic resource. The pond was "restored" as originally designed and built, and the bridge was "rehabilitated," as defined in the Secretary of Interior's Standards, as required by the CPA statute, meaning the new design referred to but did not precisely reproduce the historic original. The project plan included updating Underwood School's irrigation system for the field, using water from well drilled-for the pond restoration

Farlow – Chaffin Park Historic Planning and Design, Landscape Restoration Report - 2005-June 2006

- Parks and Recreation assigns in-house Project Manager, Stephanie Lapham.
- RFP advertised and Brown, Richardson and Rowe, Landscape Architects and Planners, with consulting engineers Ammann & Whitney, Structural Engineers and CMS Collaborative, Fountain Consultants, awarded the project.

Restoration of Farlow Pond (Phase I Design) – February 2010-January 2012

- RFP advertised and pond restoration project awarded to Weston & Sampson – February 2010
- Scope of Work:
 - development of matrix summarizing potential public safety issues of an ornamental pond in a historic New England park. with appropriate design solutions and respective cost implications for construction, operations and maintenance.
 - preliminary Investigation of the existing pond basin with borings to determine its depth and condition.
 - preliminary and final design (plans, specifications and probable cost) of a complete pond system, including all electrical and mechanical equipment and storage areas, incorporating well irrigation of the Underwood School playground area (technically part of Farlow Park).

Restoration of Farlow Pond (Phase II Construction) – June 2013 CPA proposal

- P&R and Friends of Farlow apply for CPA funds to restore pond and upgrade Underwood School's irrigation.
- CPC proposes an expanded scope: rather than only restoring the pond, leaving replacement of deteriorated concrete slab bridge for a future proposal, CPC requests a cost estimate and proposal for designing a new bridge and constructing both the pond and bridge together as an integrated feature.

Bridge Pre-Design Phase - 2014-2015

- Friends of Farlow Park registers as a 501(c)3.
- Friends of Farlow Park's architect, Jay Walter, develops and donates the conceptual design of the bridge.
- The Historic Commission approves the bridge design as presented.
- The Friends have an independent structural engineer review their design.

Restoration of Farlow Park Bridge and Pond, Design and Bid Phase – 2015-2017

- Parks and Recreation assigns new in-house Project Manager, Carol Schein, and then in 2017, Elaine Gentile.
- RFP advertised and design bid awarded to Ray Dunetz Landscape Architecture (RDLA) with subconsultants Nitsch Engineering (Structural), GGD (Electrical) and Joyce Consulting (Civil). Contract #3381.
- Scope of work: final design of a new bridge to comply with the “rehabilitation” treatment under the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) and American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) guidelines for pedestrian bridges.
- A thorough investigation of the buried concrete basin, including a chemical analysis of new borings. Basin deemed solid and in very good condition (Nitsch Engineers).
- Integration of the final bridge design package with the original Farlow 2008 bid package (restoration of the pond basin plus upgrade of the playground area’s irrigation system), produced by Weston & Sampson, Inc.
- November 2016 – Planning Board approves request for additional CDBG funding.
- RDLA coordinates bidding for the construction phase.

Construction Phase – May, 2017-Fall, 2018

- Parks and Recreation assigns new in-house Project Manager in 2018, Allison Crosbie.
- April 2017 - RDLA requests additional funding for construction administration (approved by Planning and Parks and Recreation).
- Construction contract awarded to A.J. Virgilio Construction Inc., April 2017.
- Construction begins in May 2017.
- Construction administration by RDLA, Newton Parks and Recreation and Engineering Departments.
- Project completed Fall, 2018.

What worked well

Although it took over 14 years from the initial funding to the completion of this project, Parks and Recreation in cooperation with Friends of Farlow Park worked together in a lengthy process that culminated in a major Park restoration and renovation which will serve all of Newton. This process included the efforts of many volunteers, city staff and administrators (including 3 Mayors) City Councilors, the DPW and various other City Departments. Major funding was made possible by the Community Preservation Committee and the Newton Planning and Development Department overseeing Community Block Development Grant funds. The CPC and the Department of Planning were essential in funding feasibility studies and the design and construction of the project. Also, funding from the local community was instrumental, helping this project move forward.

The number of meetings to make this all possible was prodigious, but in the end the aspirations of all those involved made possible a very positive outcome. It was truly a group effort and a great example of how a public/private partnership can work together to achieve something of significance. The restored Farlow Park can be seen as a remarkable achievement of collaboration.

What could have been improved

Based on experiences with several projects that took many more years, and many more rounds of supplemental funding, to complete than originally anticipated, the CPC added the following requirement to its proposal instructions (the *Proposal & Project Handbook*) in approximately 2012:

In general, the CPC recommends construction funding only on the basis of completed professional designs and cost estimates, for either buildings or landscapes. If you do not already have professional designs and estimates, you should start by requesting funds to create them.

Applying this CPC “fund design first” requirement to the Farlow Park pond and bridge together would have allowed the City to

- integrate historical and engineering evaluations
- obtain more realistic construction cost estimates as a basis for final design choices

This project illustrates the importance of City staff continuity for design & construction projects. As in other cases, staff work re-assignments and turnover contributed to lengthening this project’s timelines and increasing project costs.

Though the City’s Engineering Division (Dept. of Public Works) provided critical advice for Parks & Recreation in the project’s later phases, it might have made more sense to reverse their roles, given the complexity of the project’s engineering challenges. In other words, design and construction funds could have been appropriated to the Engineering Division, with Parks & Recreation in an advisory role. A similar division of labor is now being used to manage the dam at the Waban Hill (Manet Road) reservoir: Engineering is responsible for the dam itself, with Parks & Recreation responsible for the surrounding landscape.

Finally, this project illustrates the importance of an adequate construction contingency for hardscape features such as ponds and bridges. The CPC has become accustomed to defending higher contingencies (often around 15%) for projects that rehabilitate historic buildings without accurate “as built” plans, compared to contingencies for all-new construction (often as low as 5%). **Parks & Recreation would recommend a contingency of 20% for any future projects that involve restoring landscape hardscape features.**

Attachments:

- ◆ historic, “before,” and construction photographs, 2004-2018
- ◆ budget-to-actual summary, 2004-2014
- ◆ summary of Newton CPC funding votes, 2004-2014



Restoration of Farlow Park Pond and Bridge

Construction Phase, 2017-2018

Funded by CPA, CDBG, Parks and Recreation and Friends of Farlow

Historic Postcards of Farlow Park



Farlow Park "Before" (2004-08)



Pond Restoration Design: Weston & Sampson, Feb. 2010-Jan. 2012

Bridge Conceptual Design: Jay Walter, 2013

Pond and Bridge Final Design: Ray Dunetz Landscape Architecture, Nov. 2013-2016

Construction Contractor: A.J. Virgilio Construction Inc., 2017-2018

Project start-up May 2017: existing bridge demolition



Excavation to uncover pond basin/18" below grade



Curvilinear form of 2-lobed concrete basin revealed



Power washing heavily stained concrete basin



Cracked concrete basin edging



Large cracked areas required sawcutting



Bridge layout/construction of steel-reinforced foundation



Pre-fab bridge components delivered and installed



Cracks repaired/bridge structure complete in place



Painting/waterproofing the basin



2017/2018 winter protection



Stone facing applied – spring/summer 2018



Bridge custom railing/accessible route





Project complete/Fall 2018

Farlow Park: Pond & Bridge Final Budget-to-Actual Summary	PHASES						
	Planning		Feasibility & Design		Construction		
	Proposed (2004-05 proposals to CPC)	Actual	Proposed (Dec 2007 proposal to CPC)	Actual	Proposed (Nov 2013 proposal to CPC)	Accepted Bids	Actual
USES							
2004-06, Historic Landscape Report for Farlow & Chaffin Parks (<i>orig. CPA request \$65,500, modified to reflect community fundraising</i>)	\$52,700	\$50,885					
2007-12, Feasibility & Design for Pond (<i>CPC recommended & Council appropriated \$40,000</i>)			\$38,000	\$40,000			
2013-18, Pond Construction, Bridge Final Design & Construction 2007 estimates for: pond, bridge [incl. final design], walkways, signage, wall, benches, fencing			\$455,927				
2013 estimates:							
Project Management (Independent Project Manager) See note 1.					\$61,600		
Bridge & Pond Final Design (<i>design fee includes \$49,750 base contract + \$14,250 engineering concrete evaluation + construction administration</i>)					\$238,620		\$123,780
Bridge Construction					\$189,425	} \$754,600	} \$891,633
Pond Basin and Irrigation System Installation (<i>designer's construction estimate of \$657,240 included \$177,000 for bridge</i>)					\$282,160		
(<i>construction contract included \$452,815 for bridge</i>)							
TOTALS	\$52,700	\$50,885	\$493,927	\$40,000	\$771,805	\$754,600	\$1,015,413
SOURCES							
CPA	\$52,700	\$50,885	\$38,000	\$40,000	\$476,780		\$476,780
CDBG (<i>construction contribution anticipated as of 2007: \$30,000</i>)			See notes at left.		\$10,000		\$464,837
Newton Corner Neighborhood Association					\$1,000		
Community Sponsors (Friends of Farlow Park) (<i>construction contribution anticipated as of 2007: \$10,000</i>)	\$6,000				\$89,000		\$30,000
Parks and Recreation Dept. Budget (staff time)					\$5,600		\$41,747
TOTALS	\$58,700	\$50,885	\$38,000	\$40,000	\$582,380		\$1,013,364

Parks & Recreation Dept. NOTES

1. Independent project manager not used. Project managed by Parks and Recreation staff.

Click here for the summary of 2004-2014 Newton CPC votes on proposals related to this site, as posted on the CPC webpage for the project, www.newtonma.gov/gov/planning/cpa/projects/farlow.asp.

Newton Community Preservation Committee votes on proposals related to Farlow Park

2 March 2005

The CPC voted, unanimously, to deny funding this request for \$65,500 for the Farlow/Chaffin Parks Historic Preservation and Recreation Study with the qualification that the CPC may be predisposed in the future to consider a resubmittal of the proposal (at any time) if a private match of an appropriate level is secured and other issues are addressed.

from 11 March 2005 memo from CPC chair to proposal sponsors

... At present, both Farlow and Chaffin Parks are in fairly sound condition, and as such, the need to preserve and restore the historic landscape is not as urgent as it is for other parks and projects.

In addition, the Committee felt that the proposal would benefit from financial investment by the community in the project. Other community-sponsored projects we have approved have included a substantial community contribution, often covering a significant portion, if not the entire amount, of design costs. Based on these factors, on March 2 the CPC voted unanimously not to approve the requested funding at this time.

We recommend that the Friends work with the Parks and Recreation Department to determine at what point and under what conditions the project might qualify for higher priority and that an effort be made to acquire private funds that could be matched with CPA funds to move this project forward. We invite resubmission of this proposal at the point at which these factors are addressed.

29 June 2005

\$52,177 for a historic landscape treatment plan

Fauteux moved recommending approval as requested with ... a statement (and cross reference) saying that support of this does not indicate support of future phases/implementation. McMillan seconded.

The CPC vote was unanimous to recommend approval.

from this CPC funding recommendation to the Board of Aldermen:

Consideration of CPA funds for future phases will require the demonstration of a good-faith effort on the part of the applicant to substantially leverage other funding sources; provided, however, the applicant understands and agrees that CPC's recommendation of funding for this design plan does not imply any CPC support for, or any applicant expectation of, a further CPC recommendation for the funding of future project design or construction phases.

27 January 2007

The CPC voted to defer this project, in terms of overall priorities.

30 May 2007

[Under agenda item for "status reports on deferred fy07 applications – Farlow Park"] a motion to reject the proposal was made by Jeff Sacks. The motion was seconded by Walter Bernheimer. The motion passed: 8 yeas, 0 nays. Chairman McMillan noted that the applicant would always have the option of revising and re-submitting the proposal in the future.

30 April 2008

Doug Dickson moved recommending funding of \$40,000 [for] a feasibility study for well exploration, a plan and design for pond and bridge restoration, which must clearly address safety concerns and include a maintenance plan, on the understanding that recommending funding for this phase does not imply any commitment to funding further phases of restoration for Farlow Park. ... Charlie McMillan seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of 6 yeas, 1 abstention (Jacobson).

Chair Judy Jacobson abstained because she did not feel the total project was a high priority for its cost. ...

from this CPC funding recommendation to Board of Aldermen:

The CPC as a whole explicitly noted that a funding recommendation for this phase did not imply any commitment to funding further phases of this project.

30 April 2014 minutes

Clarke moved, and Robertson seconded, a motion to recommend that \$476,780 be appropriated from Newton's Community Preservation Fund for the Farlow Park Pond and Bridge project, to be released once the Friends of Farlow Park raise from non-CPA sources all additional funds required to complete the project and to create an operating reserve of not less than \$30,000, to be held by the Friends; with at least \$90,000 of non-CPA funds raised from community sponsors and the Newton Corner Neighborhood Association, as shown in the fall 2013 proposal. The motion was approved by a vote of 8-0 (member Dan Green absent).

5 August 2014 minutes

Jim Robertson moved, and Don Fishman seconded, a motion allowing any of the CPC-recommended funds appropriated by the Board of Aldermen for Farlow Park to be released for design costs prior to the commitment of all non-CPA funds required to complete the full project. The motion was approved by a vote of 6-0 (members Mike Clarke and Tom Turner absent).

from 18 August 2014 CPC funding recommendation to the Board of Aldermen:

SPECIAL ISSUES CONSIDERED BY THE CPC

This recommendation is the culmination of a neighborhood aspiration expressed since at least the 1980s, and especially of prior funding proposals to the CPC initiated by the all-volunteer Friends of Farlow Park in 2004-05 (denied), 2005-06 (funded), 2006-07 (denied), and 2007-08 (funded). The CPC's unanimous support for the current proposal reflects the Friends' responsiveness to the two major needs the Committee has identified most consistently since 2005: for raising private funds and for ensuring future maintenance.

Project Phasing: At the CPC's urging, based on both aesthetic and project management concerns about deferring replacement of the current concrete-slab-and-chain-link "bridge," the Friends of Farlow Park added the design and construction of a new bridge to their original pre-proposal for restoring the pond.

Funding Leverage: Also in response to the CPC's concerns, the Friends of Farlow Park increased their commitment to community fundraising from \$1,000 in the pre-proposal to \$90,000 in the full proposal.

Stewardship: Based on both the history of Farlow Park and its appropriate, primary use – for passive recreation by neighborhood residents – the CPC has always been concerned that in the future, it may once again be difficult for this historic gem to compete for routine City funding with larger, more active recreation sites. As part of the current proposal, the City of Newton has committed to invest in maintaining Farlow Park the annual \$4,000 it anticipates saving by switching from MWRA water to well

water for irrigating the Underwood School playing fields. In addition, the Friends of Farlow Park have now become a permanent 501(c)3 nonprofit, committed to holding at least \$30,000 of community donations in an “operating reserve” for the uses described in their 10 April 2014 submission to the CPC: “1. cost overruns [for the current project]; 2. future projects such as plantings and other ancillary needs such as new benches; and 3. emergency maintenance, if the Friends of Farlow Park determine the City of Newton has failed to fulfill its maintenance commitment” to Farlow Park.

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS (*funding conditions*)

...

2. CPA funds should be released for project design costs without condition. CPA funds should be released for construction only when all other funds in the budget on page 1 of this recommendation are committed.
3. Construction should begin within 6 months and be completed within 2 years after all funds in the budget on page 1 of this recommendation are committed, or by any extension of these deadlines granted in writing by the CPC in response to a request from the Commissioner of Parks & Recreation.
4. The Parks & Recreation Dept. should provide project updates upon request to the Friends of Farlow Park, the CPC and the Board of Aldermen; and prior to spending the final 10 percent of CPA funds, should present to the CPC an in-person and written final report, comparing budgeted-vs-actual expenditures.

...

KEY OUTCOMES

The Community Preservation Committee will evaluate this project based on these key outcomes:

- Completion of construction within the budget shown on page 1 of this recommendation, and by the deadlines listed above.
- Historically appropriate maintenance of Farlow Park, with minimal use of the “operating reserve” held by the Friends of Farlow Park.