



## CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Department of Planning and Development  
Michael J. Kruse, Director



newton  
community  
development  
block  
grant  
program

David B. Cohen  
Mayor

To: Jeff Sacks, Chairperson  
Community Preservation Committee

From: Amy Yuhasz, Community Development Program Manager  
On behalf of the Nonantum Advisory Community, Parks & Recreation Department and  
Planning and Development Department

Date: January 23, 2004

RE: Stearns Park Master Plan – Revised Request for CPA Funds

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At the December 8 working session for the Stearns Park Master Plan application, the Committee asked that the proposal be reduced in cost and that studies for Pellegrini and Stearns parks be combined.

Based on these comments, the scope of work for the master plan was revised (see attachment) to include the concurrent development of a master plan for Pellegrini Park. Costs for this combined effort would be shared equally between Community Preservation funds and Community Development Block Grant funds.

Additionally, the following changes were made to the scope of work to delineate tasks that do not require the skill of a landscape architecture firm and can be performed by City staff. These tasks include the following:

- Conducting site survey work for both parks in-house, through the Department of Public Works;
- Administering a park usage and attitudinal survey in-house, through the Planning and Development Department, with limited oversight performed by the consultant; and
- Facilitating all community meetings.

Based on the revised scope of work, requests for quotes were sought from five area landscape architecture firms, and two firms responded to the request. The quotes received were substantially lower than those received in November 2003, and averaged \$40,000. (Both of these firms also responded to the November request).

After reviewing the price estimates received, it is requested that the Community Preservation Committee consider a revised request for CPA funds of up to \$30,000 for the master planning work at Stearns Park and \$1,000 for the appraisal of the vacant parcel abutting the park. This represents a \$20,000 decrease in the amount of CPA funds requested, from \$51,000 to up to \$31,000. An

allocation of up to \$30,000 will allow plenty of leeway in case actual quotes received are higher than expected and also would allow any unneeded funds to be reallocated to future CPA-funded projects.

Thank you for the Committee's insight, as the revised request will result in a more comprehensive and less expensive master plan for these important Nonantum neighborhood parks.

We urge you to look favorably upon this revised request since it is the important first step that will result in park improvements that are community-designed and community-approved.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** *PREPARE A DETAILED MASTER PLAN AND VISION FOR TWO NEIGHBORHOOD-SIZED PARKS IN THE CITY OF NEWTON, MA-- PELLEGRINI PARK (4.2 ACRES) AND STEARNS PARK (3.5 ACRES) INCLUDING THE POTENTIAL ACQUISITION OF AN ADJACENT .5 ACRE VACANT PARCEL. SOME OF THE KEY GOALS OF THE PROJECT WOULD BE TO MAXIMIZE ACTIVE AND PASSIVE RECREATIONAL NEEDS WHILE MINIMIZING REDUNDANCIES, ENSURE ADEQUATE AND QUALITY ACTIVITIES FOR ALL AGE GROUPS, AND TO DEVELOP A BLUEPRINT FOR IMPROVEMENTS PROJECTS TO BE IMPLEMENTED OVER A FIVE-YEAR PERIOD.*

**COMPONENTS OF THE PROJECT SHOULD INCLUDE:**

- Complete an inventory and assessment of existing park components including but not limited to:
  - Types, quantity and condition of play structures and equipment;
  - Size, quantity, and condition of trees, shrubs, and other plantings;
  - Size and condition of passive and active recreation fields;
  - Location and condition of accessible routes;
  - Location and condition of water fountains, benches, tables, trash receptacles, and other park fixtures;
  - Analysis of recreational activities by age category; and
  - Condition of drainage system and erosion controls (will require the services of a civil engineer).
- Work with City staff to design park usage and attitudinal survey. Analyze data from survey as prepared by the City of Newton.
- Meet regularly with City staff representing various departments to discuss and review project status.
- Moderate four community meetings (City staff will organize and advertise the meetings):
  1. Meeting 1 will occur after the resident survey has been conducted and analyzed and the inventory and assessment has been completed. Findings and facts will be presented. The community will provide input on the problems with the existing park and begin collecting ideas for additional or improved park components.
  2. Meeting 2 will be a design charrette that allows for direct input from the citizens and community stakeholders. The consultant will provide base maps for small group activity and instruct them to build their ideal park. Groups can be broken out by park or by recreational need.
  3. Meeting 3 will be a presentation of the ideas generated at the charrette weighed against realities and ability to be implemented. The consultant will prepare schematics and present several scenarios to the residents, elected officials, and City staff. Ideally, one scenario will meet with a majority approval.
  4. Meeting 4 will be the unveiling of the master plan and a celebration of everyone's hard work.
- List and prioritize needs as obtained through the community participation process (needs are likely to encompass the areas of recreation, accessibility, lighting, evening usage, linkages/entrances, senior activities, play equipment, aesthetics, maintenance, parking, general infrastructure, etc.).
- Determine the feasibility of top priorities. The plan should be able to be executed, i.e. creative yet not too grandiose.
- Submit a final master plan that describes the community planning process, lists all comments received, details the major components to be addressed, presents recommendations for phasing, prescribes a maintenance plan, includes a map of concept plan for community distribution, etc.
- Furnish a cost estimate for implementation of plan as well as ongoing maintenance costs. Show a detailed timeline delineating the necessary steps to implement the plan in five years.

| Company & Contact Info | Lump Sum Phone/Fax Quote <i>(for grant request purposes- not official)</i> |
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City of Newton staff will:

- Perform a formal site survey, given that the varied topography may directly affect potential projects.
- Conduct a general survey of residents within a .5 mile radius of park prior to start of community meetings that solicits information about residents' attitudes about the park, the quality and quantity of their household's park usage, and ideas for improvements. The City will design the survey with the assistance of the consultant, as well as distribute the survey and tabulate results.
- Facilitate all community meetings, including preparing and distributing flyers, booking space, and providing materials, equipment, and refreshments. The City of Newton can also prepare maps and make copies of handouts.

The City of Newton is applying for grant funds for master planning at 2 neighborhood parks within .5 miles of each other. The City is seeking an informal phone/fax quote to verify that the City's grant request will be adequate. Please review the attached sheet that lists the desired components of the master plan.

**Please complete the lower section of the attached sheet  
and fax back to**

**Danielle Bailey at (617) 796-1142  
by 1:00pm, Friday, January 23, 2004.**

Do not hesitate to call Danielle at (617) 796-1139 if you have any questions. Thank you for helping us to determine the right amount of grant funds to request for master planning at these neighborhood parks. If funding is approved, we expected to issue a formal RFP in late Spring 2004. Thanks again!