



Setti D. Warren
Mayor

City of Newton, Massachusetts
Department of Planning and Development
1000 Commonwealth Avenue Newton, Massachusetts 02459

Telephone
(617) 796-1120
Telefax
(617) 796-1142
TDD/TTY
(617) 796-1089
www.newtonma.gov

Candace Havens
Director

**Community Preservation Committee
FUNDING RECOMMENDATION for
Newton Highlands Playground Rehabilitation Design**

DOCKET
ITEM
127-14

date: 1 April 2014
from: Community Preservation Committee
to: The Honorable Board of Aldermen

PROJECT GOALS & ELIGIBILITY

This project will create a final design and biddable specifications to rehabilitate the Newton Highlands/Joseph Lee Playground at Winchester and Dedham Streets, by improving the site's accessibility and aesthetics, upgrading its active recreation facilities, and providing passive recreation access to the wooded area. This park is ideally located to provide badly needed recreation opportunities for Newton residents of all ages, but it is currently underutilized because of poor drainage, outdated facilities and a lack of paths or trails.

This project is eligible for funding under the Community Preservation Act as the rehabilitation of land for outdoor recreation. Both the Parks & Recreation Commission and the Parks & Recreation Department have identified this project as their own top priority for CPA funding.

The 2008 CPA-funded Master Plan for this community park was approved by the Parks & Recreation Commission after extensive community meetings. The Parks & Recreation Department has committed to holding an additional informational meeting to update the community about the project going forward.

RECOMMENDED FUNDING

On 20 March 2014 by a unanimous vote of 8-0 (member Dan Green absent), the Community Preservation Committee recommended appropriating the requested \$200,000, based on this summary budget:

Newton Highlands/Joseph Lee Playground Rehabilitation – Design Phase				
Uses		Sources		% of total
Total design cost	\$320,000	CPA funds	\$200,000	63%
		Private donations	\$120,000	37%
Total	\$320,000	Total	\$320,000	100%

SPECIAL ISSUES CONSIDERED BY THE CPC

Matching funds from non-CPA sources: The CPC considered this design funding request in the context of an expected future request for construction funding. Of the total \$3,791,800 cost for all phases, the Parks & Recreation Department expects to request 61.9% from CPA funds and to cover 38.1% from other sources, including significant contributions from Newton's youth leagues for soccer, baseball and football. While making no commitment to recommending construction funds, the CPC found the project's total intended, relatively high proportion of non-CPA funds one compelling reason to support at least the design phase.

website www.newtonma.gov/cpa

contact Alice E. Ingerson, Community Preservation Program Manager

email aingerson@newtonma.gov phone 617.796.1144

SPECIAL ISSUES CONSIDERED BY THE CPC (cont'd)

Parking: The CPC shared the interest expressed by many park users in improving public access and parking at this site. The Parks & Recreation Department has committed to addressing both concerns in the final design, if possible without adding impermeable surface within the park's current perimeter.

Project components not using CPA funds: CPA funds will not be used for the design or construction of two specific components of this project: artificial turf and the playground/play structures. Funding for artificial turf is prohibited under the Community Preservation Act. Newton's criteria for CPA funding of recreation projects, submitted by the Parks & Recreation Department and endorsed by the CPC in February 2013, state that "projects should not request CPA funds for play equipment or related safety surfacing."

Schedule: This recommended design funding may be made available too late for a construction funding request based on the completed design to be submitted by the upcoming 1 October 2014 proposal deadline. The CPC therefore agreed to consider a construction funding request for this park after that deadline, without committing in advance to recommending funding for that phase of the project.

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS (*funding conditions*)

1. The recommended CPA funds should be appropriated to the control of the Commissioner of Parks & Recreation from the Community Preservation Fund's general/ unrestricted fund balance and should be allocated 100% to recreation.
2. No CPA funds should be expended for design until the Parks & Recreation Department has submitted to the CPC written documentation showing that all funds required to complete this phase of the project have been committed.
3. The Parks & Recreation Department will provide project updates to the CPC and Board of Aldermen upon request, including reports on the progress of community fundraising and documentation showing that CPA funds were not spent to design the artificial turf field or playground/play structures.
4. Any portion of the Community Preservation Fund grant not used for the purposes stated herein will be returned to the Newton Community Preservation Fund.
5. Before submitting any construction funding request, the Parks & Recreation Department will obtain all required reviews and approvals of the final design, including from the Conservation Commission and the Design Review Committee.
6. Any construction funding request for this park submitted to the CPC will briefly summarize and explain any differences between the final design and the 2008 CPA-funded master plan for the same park.

KEY OUTCOMES

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

1. completion of the final design without the need for any additional CPA funding
2. submission by winter 2014-15 of a construction funding request based on professional cost estimates for the scope of work in the completed final design

ATTACHMENTS

(delivered to the clerks of the Programs & Services, Public Facilities and Finance Committees)

- CPC webpage for this project, with links to documents listed below as well as additional project information: www.newtonma.gov/gov/planning/cpa/projects/upperfalls.asp#Highlands
- Final funding request and overall project budget (March 2014)
- Original Proposal (November 2013), with supporting documentation
- Letters of support submitted as part of the proposal
- Additional written community feedback submitted directly to the CPC