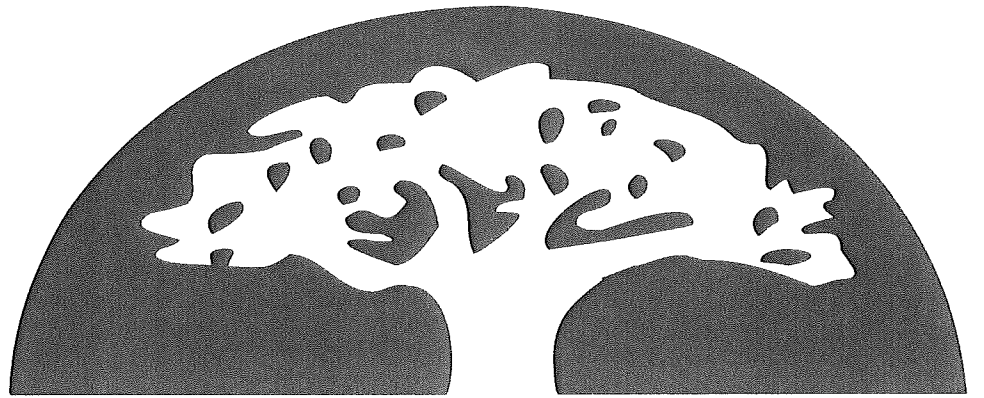


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NEWTON

Parks & Recreation

Upper Falls Playground & Newton Highlands Playground Strategic Design

January 20, 2006

APPLICATION FOR COMMUNITY PRESERVATION FUNDING

Form CPA-1

Submit to Jennifer Goldson, CPA Program Manager
Newton Planning and Development Department
1000 Commonwealth Avenue, Newton, MA 02459
jgoldson@newtonma.gov
617-796-1131



David B. Cohen
Mayor

Name of Applicant³ Parks & Recreation

Name of Co-Applicant, if applicable _____

Contact Name Fran Towle, Commissioner

Mailing Address 70 Crescent St. City Newton State MA Zip 02466

Daytime Phone 617-796-1500 Email ftowle@newtonma.gov

Name of Proposal Upper Falls Playground & Newton Highlands Playground Strategic Design

Address of Proposal (or assessor's parcel id) Pennsylvania Ave. & Winchester St.

CPA Category (circle all that apply): Open space Historic preservation **Recreation** Community housing

CPA Funding Requested \$ 107,100 Total Cost of Proposed Project \$ 107,100

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Attach answers to the following questions. Applications will be returned as incomplete if all requested information is not provided. Include supporting materials as necessary.

1. **Goals:** What are the goals of the proposed project?
2. **Community Need:** Why is this project needed? Does it address needs identified in existing City plans?
3. **Community Support:** What is the nature and level of support for this project? Include letters of support and any petitions.
4. **Timeline:** What is the schedule for project implementation, including a timeline for all critical milestones?
5. **Credentials:** How will the experience of the applicant contribute to the success of this project?
6. **Success Factors:** How will the success of this project will be measured? Be as specific as possible.
7. **Budget:** What is the total budget for the project and how will CPA funds be spent? All items of expenditure must be clearly identified. Distinguish between hard and soft costs and contingencies. (NOTE: CPA funds may NOT be used for maintenance.)
8. **Other Funding:** What additional funding sources are available, committed, or under consideration? Include commitment letters, if available, and describe any other attempts to secure funding for this project.
9. **Maintenance:** If ongoing maintenance is required for your project, how will it be funded?

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Provide the following additional information, as applicable.

10. Documentation that you have control over the site, such as Purchase and Sale Agreement, option, or deed.

³ If the proposal is on City-owned land, either the applicant or the co-applicant must be the City Board, Commission, or Department in control of the land.

11. For projects that include construction or rehabilitation, include the existing and proposed site plan, floor plans, elevations, and any other drawings as necessary to visually describe the proposal.
12. Evidence that the project is in compliance with the zoning ordinance, Architectural Access Board Regulations, or any other laws or regulations. Or, if zoning relief is required, specify what relief is needed and when an application will be made to the City for zoning review.
13. Evidence that the appropriate City Boards and Commissions have approved the project (for example, proposed new uses on Parks & Recreation land requires approval from the Parks and Recreation Commission)
14. Evidence that the proposed site is free of hazardous materials or that there is a plan for remediation in place.
15. Evidence that appropriate professional standards will be followed if construction, restoration or rehabilitation is proposed.
16. Information indicating how this project can be used to achieve additional community benefits.

NOTE: If the requested funds are for a real estate acquisition, an independent appraisal will be required which the applicant will be required to fund initially. No funding decisions will be made without an independent appraisal. Contact Jennifer Goldson, CPA Program Manager, at 617-796-1131 or jgoldson@ci.newton.ma.us to arrange for an independent appraisal.

Refer to the City web site (ci.newton.ma.us/Planning/CPA) for further information.
Form CPA-1 (Revised 9/11/03)

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UPPER FALLS PLAYGROUND & NEWTON HIGHLANDS PLAYGROUND STRATEGIC DESIGN

Application for Community Preservation Funding

Introduction

Having completed an extensive in-house assessment and evaluation of seventy-one varying sites under their jurisdiction, the Newton Parks and Recreation Department has identified two of its medium-sized parks as having the highest need for improvement and potential for development: Upper Falls Playground, a.k.a. Officer Robert Braceland Playground, an 8.8-acre active use park located on Chestnut Street in Upper Falls, and Newton Highlands Playground, a.k.a. Joseph Lee Playground, a 12.6-acre active use park located in Newton Highlands on Winchester Street. The current design, layout and condition of both these tired parks placed them high on the list of suitable candidates for redesign and rehabilitation. This strategic and focused two-park approach presents opportunities for improvements that have the potential to enhance Newton's current inventory of recreation, open space and park facilities. The Department is requesting Community Preservation Act funds to enlist the professional services of a planning and design consultant to work closely with the community and the City in the development of a conceptual design plan for each park.

Background

In order to address recreation, open space and park needs for the City of Newton, the Parks and Recreation Department working in conjunction with the Executive Office compiled the above-referenced assessment work in the bound document entitled, *Five Year Park Assessment and Development Planning and Evaluation*, dated January 1, 2006. The finished product is meant to be a guide to help define the sites citywide for future improvements and redesign. The assessment and evaluation took into account park development potential, existing site element condition and park accessibility. Using the aforementioned criteria, the department was able to identify these two of the top four sites best suited for strategic planning.

The individual site evaluations took into account the aesthetics of each site, site amenities, the parking facilities, and condition of the turf. When looking at the aesthetics, the reviewers considered the site's curb appeal and visual diversity. Site amenities were reviewed for excessive wear, structural stability, age and functionality. Parking was based on the quality of asphalt, number of marked and handicap spaces, number and size of potholes, signage and proximity to other park amenities. The grade and condition of the turf was assessed, i.e., bare areas and weed infestation.

Accessibility was measured through the development of an in-house comprehensive Handicap Accessibility Prioritization Project that evaluated the City's parks and

playgrounds based on a specific set of criteria. Researchers went out and conducted site visits and evaluated the parks and playgrounds on the current level of accessibility, usage, and proximity to schools or other recreation facilities. Handicap accessibility needs were prioritized by ward and the sites were documented photographically.

When evaluating sites for their potential for park development, researchers looked at usage, accessibility, active potential, passive potential and size. Usage was based on the number and types of users. Active potential was defined as the possibility for athletic field, play area and court surface development. Passive potential was defined as the possibility for including tree lined pathways, natural areas, seating, and other structures that promote passive activity. Size was based on the viable acreage suited to park planning and development efforts.

Upper Falls Playground

Upper Falls Playground, or Officer Robert Braceland Playground as it is known, is located on Chestnut Street in Newton Upper Falls. It is approximately 8.8 acres and consists of an upper and lower playground area. The playground currently contains a regulation baseball diamond with players' benches, bleachers, and a backstop. There is a little league diamond with backstop that is located on the lower field. There are two hard surface tennis courts adjacent to the parking lot at the front of the playground. During the fall and spring seasons there are two elementary soccer fields marked out on the site. There is a building on site that was used for recreational purposes and also had functional bathroom facilities. The bathrooms have not functioned for years and the building has been permanently secured to dissuade vandalism. The building was painted in 2002 as part of a Boy Scout project. A sun shield was placed in front of the building when it was in use to provide shade to aid in the facilitation of passive recreational activities. Along Pennsylvania Ave. there is a fenced tot lot with a modular structure, four spring animals, a balance beam, swings and a balance beam. Parking is located on the street and in a parking lot at the front entrance of the playground. The parking lot has been problematic in the past with neighborhood citizens using the lot for off street winter parking. The lot needs to be repaved and upgraded. The playground and fields are not handicapped accessible.

The undulating topography of Upper Falls has given the playground a tiered effect to the point that a large portion of the playground is not visible from the street. In past winter seasons the lower portion of the playground has been designated as an alternative snow dumping site. In 2003, a need arose to utilize Upper Falls as a snow dumping site. The weight of the vehicles entering the site as well as the stacking of snow created damage to the turf that necessitated turf remediation in the spring. The cost of the repairs was approximately \$4,000 and was shouldered by the Department of Public Works.

The lower field abuts the natural and wooded reservation area along the Charles River that is under the jurisdiction of the Department of Conservation and Recreation.

Newton Highlands Playground

Newton Highlands Playground, also known as Joseph Lee Playground, is situated on Winchester Street in The Highlands, with its vehicular entrance on Dedham Street. It is an approximate 12.6-acre site that is in a mixed residential/commercial district. The playground has a regulation baseball diamond with players' benches and a backstop, a lighted football field with three bleacher stands and a wooden player's bench, a basketball court, two hard surface tennis courts and is marked for elementary soccer in the fall. The tot lot is enclosed and contains a play booster modular structure, metal slide and spring animals. There is parking on Dedham Street and along an off street driveway that is shared with adjacent businesses. The site is level but there are no pathways to make the existing facilities accessible.

There is a trailer on site that is used by NAA Football. Ideally the trailer could be replaced with a permanent structure more conducive to the site. In recent years, NAA Football has sodded and irrigated the football field at their own cost. The lighting that surrounds the football field is only adequate for football practice and would not suffice for game conditions. NAA has shown an interest in paying for the upgrade of the lights. Outside of the football field, the remainder of the park has drainage problems that need to be addressed. In 2003, the site received serious consideration to house a skateboard park. Strong neighborhood resistance resulted in the Skate Park Committee having to reassess its direction and open the process to considering other sites in the city along with Newton Highlands. Parking in the lot has been a problem with the adjacent businesses encroaching upon recreation land.

Covering about one-fifth of the site near the eastern border of the park is a large and natural wooded area that could potentially be used for nature walks or nature-related study.

1. **Goals:** What are the goals of the proposed project?

The goal is to develop a Strategic Design Plan for each of these two parks that will greatly improve their design, layout and usability and thus add to the current overall inventory of the City's parks and open space facilities. The plans are to create a vision that is the result of a good working relationship with the Department, a thorough analysis of the parks' usage and condition, and an open community process that establishes mutual goals and objectives.

Neighborhood/Stakeholder Survey

Development of a statistically valid survey form to gather information from the community. The survey form to be designed so that the consultant will be able to elicit the needs, desires and suggestions from users of the recreational facilities and programs as well as those that are non-users within the community.

Site Inventory and Assessment

The designer will prepare a site inventory and assessment for each park. They will need to gather and analyze information and then determine gaps, deficiencies and surpluses in order to begin to prepare an action plan. The current park conditions and uses in conjunction with the needs of the neighborhood will be assessed.

The consultant shall be required to complete an inventory and assessment of existing playground components and site conditions at both Upper Falls and Newton Highlands, including but not limited to:

- Type, quantity and condition of play structures, facilities and equipment;
- Size, quantity and condition of the trees, shrubs and other plantings;
- Assessment of topography, erosion control and grading issues;
- Condition of turf;
- Assessment of current lighting and on-site utilities;
- Location and condition of water fountains, benches, tables, trash receptacles and other fixtures;
- Condition of storm water and drainage systems;
- Condition and location of pedestrian paths, walks and site accessibility;
- Condition and configuration of on-street and lot parking;
- Size and condition of recreation fields and courts;
- Assessment of other uses apparent by visual observation.

City and Community Participation

The designer will participate in City department meetings as needed and will moderate three (3) community meetings for each of the parks for a total of six (6) meetings. Input from neighborhood groups, special interest groups and other City agencies will be a key element of the process. At the first public meeting the designer will solicit input and report on the findings of the site analysis and assessment.

Design Alternatives

At the second public meeting the designer will present three alternative design solutions developed for each park from ideas generated at the first meeting. The feasibility and an evaluation of the community's ideas as to cost, site conditions, etc. will be discussed at this point. Following this meeting the designer and the City will further evaluate and discuss the preferred solution for each park and any outstanding issues or concerns.

Final Strategic Plan

The third public meeting will focus on the final schematic Strategic Plan for each park that will celebrate the community's ideas and shared vision. Rendered plans will be developed for each park and a brief presentation summarizing the design for each park will be given.

The designer is to prepare a final design document for each park that describes the process, findings and recommendations for both parks. The bound documents are to be organized in a succinct and cogent manner that presents all findings and recommendations.

The final document is to include the following:

- a description of the existing conditions;
- an analysis of community needs and expectations;
- a summary of the public process (including the survey);
- design alternatives;
- final plan recommendations;
- recommendations for phases implementation and associated costs;
- a maintenance plan; and
- any related appendices (survey form, meeting notes, etc.).

2. Community Need: Why is this project needed? Does it address needs identified in existing City plans?

Within the assessment, planning and evaluation document that was developed by the Parks & Recreation Department, Upper Falls is ranked 70th out of 71 sites on the Parks & Recreation Inventory Evaluation. The tennis and basketball courts are in poor condition, signage is lacking, the parking lot is in disrepair, the play equipment is outdated, turf is of poor quality and the existing topography has created playing surfaces that are uneven. An on-site structure sits in disrepair and has been boarded up.

Newton Highlands Playground is ranked 68th out of 71 sites on the Parks and Recreation Inventory Evaluation. The tennis and basketball courts are in poor condition and have been at the top of the Department's list for repairs. The lights at the football field need to be upgraded to a level that is sufficient for practice and, with neighborhood approval, for game situations. The park's drainage problem will also need to be addressed.

In Appendix A, the parks' existing conditions and, in the opinion of the Department, potential improvements are listed for this application's purposes. These are not exhaustive lists, but are illustrative of some of the areas that need to be examined.

3. Community Support:

The Parks and Recreation Commission is in support of this request. At the November 21, 2005 meeting, the Commission voted unanimously (8-0) in favor of submission of this application. At the Newton Highlands Playground there is a neighborhood group along with the Newton Highlands Area Council that have organized previously in a fundraising effort for replacement of the outdated play equipment and they may be willing to do so again if funding for this project is approved.

4. Timeline:

Activity/Event	When
Submit CPA application (Strategic Designing)	January 2006
Secure Committee & BOA Approval	Jan. 2006-April 2006
CPA application approved	April 2006
RFP for Strategic Design	May-November 2006
Consultant identified	Dec.2006-Jan. 2007
Consultant begins work	January 2007
Consultant conducts series of community meetings	February- September 2007
Strategic Design finalized and adopted	October 2007
Prepare construction documents	October 2007-January 2008
Put contract documents out to bid and award bid	February 2008-May 2008
Construction phase begins	June 2008

5. Credentials:

Parks and Recreation Department staff has worked on a number of CPA projects and have the necessary experience to secure the appropriate consultant to perform the requested Strategic Design work and to then follow through with project implementation. The Parks and Recreation Department regularly administers contracts for professional services and construction work. Additionally, the community relationships developed by Parks & Recreation will help facilitate the level of citizen participation needed to make this planning effort meaningful.

6. Success Factors:

Project success will be measured by determining how well the Strategic Design and subsequent improvements meet the needs of the neighborhood and the park user groups. Parks and Recreation Department staff will monitor the Strategic Design development and work closely to ensure the appropriate level of citizen participation.

7. Budget:

The Parks and Recreation Department is requesting a total of \$107,100 for the creation of two Strategic Design Plans, one each for Upper Falls Playground and Newton Highlands Playground. This total includes the cost of a topographic survey for each park. Refer to Appendix B, Price Proposals. It is the hope of the applicants that, where appropriate, CPA, as well as other City resources, will be used in both the design and construction phases of these projects. By combining the two parks, it is the Department's opinion that the necessary planning, data collection, in-house meetings and other elements can be combined and the resultant economies of scale produce cost savings. The budget is based on comparable proposals that have been submitted to CPC over the last couple of funding rounds.

8. Other Funding:

It is the hope that if the Strategic Design is approved for Upper Falls and Newton Highlands, it will help to leverage additional funds through both public and private resources. Since elements of both sites have been high priorities on past CIP initiatives, it is anticipated that CIP monies would be available to supplement the construction phase. Parks & Recreation will also explore the potential for state aid for both sites.

9. Maintenance:

Maintenance for any improvements made as a result of this planning effort will be funded through the Parks and Recreation Department, as is currently the case with the routine maintenance that is performed at both playgrounds.

Additional Information:

10. Documentation that you have control over the site, such as Purchase and Sale Agreement, option, or deed.

Both Upper Falls Playground and Newton Highlands Playground are City-owned playgrounds that are currently under the jurisdiction of the Parks & Recreation Department.

11. For projects that include construction or rehabilitation, include the existing and proposed site plan, floor plans, elevations, and any other drawings as necessary to visually describe the proposal.

This proposal's scope of work is for the schematic design phase for both parks. The next phase of the project would consist of design development and construction documents.

12. Evidence that the project is in compliance with the zoning ordinance, Architectural Access Board Regulations, or any other laws or regulations. Or, if zoning relief is required, specify what relief is needed and when an application will be made to the City for zoning review.

All proposals that are set forth through the Strategic Design Plan will be in compliance with city ordinances, state statutes, various building codes and specific committee regulations.

13. Evidence that the appropriate City Boards and Commissions have approved the project (for example, proposed new uses on Parks & Recreation land requires approval from the Parks and Recreation Commission)

The project was accepted by the Parks & Recreation Commission by a vote of 8-0 at the Commission Meeting of November 21, 2005.

14. Evidence that the proposed site is free of hazardous materials or that there is a plan for remediation in place.

Upper Falls Playground and Newton Highlands Playground are free of hazardous materials.

15. Evidence that appropriate professional standards will be followed if construction, restoration or rehabilitation is proposed.

This is a proposal for Strategic Design, approval will lead to construction and rehabilitation of both sites and appropriate professional standards will continue to be met.

16. Information indicating how this project can be used to achieve additional community benefits.

One of the goals of the Strategic Design is to create an in-depth and open community process so that citizens and stakeholders of both sites have an opportunity to participate in the development of this plan. Community input will be a very important aspect of the Strategic Design process. It is expected that the designer will collect and evaluate community stakeholder input ensuring a valuable and open process.

APPENDIX A

Current Conditions/Potential Improvements to Upper Falls	
Current Condition: Courts are cracked and uneven	Potential Improvement: Reconstruct tennis courts, including new fencing
Current Condition: Courts are cracked and uneven	Potential Improvement: Reconstruct basketball court
Current Condition: Lot needs to be repaved and striped, handicapped spaces	Potential Improvement: Reconstruct parking lot, mark spaces
Current Condition: Playground does not have established entrance	Potential Improvement: Create aesthetically pleasing entrance
Current Condition: Poor turf, difficult topography	Potential Improvement: Improve functionality of playground
Current Condition: Due to current topography, area is prone to erosion	Potential Improvement: Control erosion
Current Condition: Poor sod, drainage issues	Potential Improvement: Develop a drainage system
Current Condition: Dead trees, scrub brush along perimeter	Potential Improvement: Evaluate and plant new trees/remove trees where appropriate
Current Condition: Basketball standards are out of alignment.	Potential Improvement: Install new basketball equipment
Current Condition: Baseball fields have poor sod, lips, need to be cut out	Potential Improvement: Make improvements to baseball fields, Little League fields, soccer fields
Current Condition: Poor accessibility to elements and fields	Potential Improvement: Improve accessibility and connections to park features, pedestrian walkways
Current Condition: Building/structure is aesthetically and functionally inferior.	Potential Improvement: Assess building facility, redesign or eliminate
Current Condition: Benches are WPA era wooden benches	Potential Improvement: Remove all wooden benches and replace with new recycled plastic benches
Current Condition: Bubbler is non-functional	Potential Improvement: Replace existing non-functioning bubbler with new accessible bubbler
Current Condition: Shelter for shade and for protection from elements	Potential Improvement: Remove metal shelter, possibly replace with new and more attractive structure
Current Condition: Equipment is in old and worn, graffiti and substandard surfacing	Potential Improvement: Improve tot lot
Current Condition: Infestation of weeds, compacted turf	Potential Improvement: Irrigation, turf improvements (possibility of artificial turf)
Current Condition: Land is adjacent to the Charles River	Potential Improvement: Research potential of incorporating Charles River into park design.

Current Conditions/Potential Improvements to Newton Highlands

Current Condition: Courts are cracked and uneven
Potential Improvement: Reconstruct tennis courts, including new fencing
Current Condition: Courts are cracked and uneven
Potential Improvement: Reconstruct basketball court
Current Condition: Limited parking adjacent to park, shared with business owners
Potential Improvement: Assess parking lot, improve existing and/or add additional parking
Current Condition: Trailer is on concrete pad with cement stairs, old and in disrepair
Potential Improvement: Remove trailer, build permanent community facility
Current Condition: Space is not utilized to its maximum potential
Potential Improvement: Improve functionality of playground
Current Condition: Lighting is old and substandard, outdated breakers and fixtures
Potential Improvement: Improve current lighting
Current Condition: Fields drain poorly, settled water on baseball field
Potential Improvement: Develop a drainage system
Current Condition: Dead trees, scrub brush along perimeter
Potential Improvement: Evaluate and plant new trees/remove trees where appropriate
Current Condition: Limited equipment, poor placement
Potential Improvement: Improve tot lot
Current Condition: Basketball standards are out of alignment.
Potential Improvement: Install new basketball equipment
Current Condition: Baseball fields have poor sod, lips, need to be cut out
Potential Improvement: Make improvements to baseball field, football field
Current Condition: Poor accessibility to elements and fields
Potential Improvement: Improve accessibility and connections to park features, pedestrian walkways
Current Condition: Bubbler is non-functional
Potential Improvement: Replace existing non-functioning bubbler with new accessible bubbler
Current Condition: Shelter for shade and for protection from elements
Potential Improvement: Remove metal shelter, possibly replace with new and more attractive structure
Current Condition: Infestation of weeds, compacted turf
Potential Improvement: Irrigation, turf improvements (possibility of artificial turf)
Current Condition: Heavily wooded area in the southeast portion of the parcel
Potential Improvement: Research potential of incorporating surrounding wooded area into park design.

APPENDIX B
PRICE PROPOSALS

Strategic Design for Upper Falls Playground

Fee Breakdown

TASK FEE

1. Project Start Up, Site Inventory and Assessment **\$5,900**

Start-up meeting, gather existing documentation, prepare base map, conduct site inventory and assessment, prepare existing conditions plan.

2. City and Community Participation **\$10,500**

Development of neighborhood survey form, review/analyze results of survey, coordinate with City staff/departments (6 meetings), community meetings including preparation (3)

3. Strategic Design Alternatives and Final Strategic Design **\$15,700**

Prepare 3 alternatives for the park, prepare preliminary and final master plan drawing, revise final strategic design, produce final Strategic Design document.

TOTAL FEE ESTIMATE **\$32,100**

Estimated Reimbursable Expenses **\$ 1,700**

Photography, printing, reprographics, report production, deliveries/fed ex, telephone/FAX.

Estimated Survey Cost **\$10,000**

10% Contingency **\$4,400**

TOTAL PROPOSAL **\$48,200**

Strategic Design for Newton Highlands Playground

Fee Breakdown

TASK FEE

1. Project Start Up, Site Inventory and Assessment **\$7,800**

Start-up meeting, gather existing documentation, prepare base map, conduct site inventory and assessment, prepare existing conditions plan.

2. City and Community Participation **\$10,500**

Development of neighborhood survey form, review/analyze results of survey, coordinate with City staff/departments (6 meetings), community meetings including preparation (3)

3. Strategic Design Alternatives and Final Strategic Design **\$17,200**

Prepare 3 alternatives for the park, prepare preliminary and final master plan drawing, revise final strategic design, produce final Strategic Design document.

TOTAL FEE ESTIMATE **\$35,500**

Estimated Reimbursable Expenses **\$ 1,700**

Photography, printing, reprographics, report production, deliveries/fed ex, telephone/FAX.

Estimated Survey Cost **\$16,300**

10% Contingency **\$ 5,400**

TOTAL PROPOSAL **\$58,900**

ATTACHMENT A

Minutes of November 21, 2005 Newton Parks & Recreation
Commission Meeting



NEWTON PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

70 Crescent Street, Newton, MA 02466
Office: 617 796-1500
Fax: 617 796-1512



FRAN L. TOWLE
COMMISSIONER

DAVID B. COHEN
MAYOR

NEWTON PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING

Monday, November 21, 2005
7:30PM, Room 209 at City Hall

Attending: Andrew Stern, Chairman, Francis Rice, Vice Chairman, Walter Bernheimer, Peter Johnson, Jennie DeVito, Myra Tattenbaum, Peter Kastner, Jack Neville, Fran Towle, Commissioner, Robert DeRubeis, Deputy Commissioner and Faye Hays, Secretary

Absent: Arthur Magni and Michael Clarke

Also attending: Dan Funk, City Solicitor, Law Department, Mike Rourke, Chief Administrative Officer, Carol Stapleton, Manager, Marc Welch, Director of Urban Forestry, Derek Mannion, Assistant Superintendent of Maintenance, Priscilla Leith, League of Women Voters and Ellen Lipoma, President Newton North Little League

1. **Minutes of the October Meeting were accepted 7 for and 1 abstention, Walter Bernheimer**
2. **Commissioner's Report of program, maintenance and forestry:**
Commissioner Towle reported on marketing and promoting the Department's programs and services. Department brochures are sent to schools, City locations, City Hall, Commission's, food chains, banks, etc. On Friday night November 25th, at the Marriott Hotel, former staff person Jean Cole, will be inducted into the Newton North/Newton High School Athletic Hall of Fame. Another plus for the Department, Mark Kelly, Director of Special Needs, was honored at the Massachusetts Recreation & Park Association's awards luncheon on November 15th, as Therapeutic Professional of the Year! Congratulation's from the commission members to both Jean and Mark on their awards. Also, Mark will show a power point presentation at the December 19th Commission meeting.

Update on CPA Projects:

- Bowen Irrigation: Last week power was installed to the pump. This Wednesday the controller will be finished and the well will be turned on and tested
- Farlow Park: Qualified for CPA design study
- City Hall Grounds: Historic Landscaping Architects, Pressley Associates
- Newton Centre Pedestrian Pathway to Parks: Scheduled to be finished in April

COMMISSION
MEMBERS

WARD 1 - JENNIE DEVITO
WARD 2 - ARTHUR MAGNI
WARD 3 - PETER JOHNSON

WARD 4 - FRANCIS J. RICE, VICE CHAIRMAN
WARD 5 - WALTER S. BERNHEIMER II
WARD 6 - ANDREW STERN, CHAIRMAN

WARD 7 - VACANT
WARD 8 - MYRA TATTENBAUM
FAYE HAYS - COMM. SECRETARY

ALTERNATES: MICHAEL CLARKE, PETER KASTNER, JACK NEVILLE

www.ci.newton.ma.us/parks

- Gath Pool: Resurfacing the floors, adding benches, grab bar and bubbler
- Community Commons Gazebo: 95% done
- Washington Park: Installing Historic lighting
- Wellington: Bid signed for resurfacing of tennis & basketball courts
- Forte Park: Finishing punch list, dedication in the Spring
- West Newton Common: Drilling finished, no water

Commissioner Towle will meet in two weeks with a resident requesting a temporary ice skating rink at Newton Centre.

NNLL has a request to renovate the James E. Murphy Field on Albemarle Road next March/April. The little league will be absorbing the cost of the renovation.

The lighting at the Russell J. Halloran Sports & Recreation Complex is 25 years old and in dire need of replacement. The proposals are being worked on at this time. The cost will be between \$200,000 and \$300,000 to install/repair the lighting. Commissioner Towle will keep the commission members posted on this item.

Chairman Stern will be setting up a meeting with Commissioner Towle and Mike Cronin, Chief of Operations, School Department, to establish a dialogue about projects on Recreation land/School land.

Commissioner Towle invited the Commission members to a Holiday Luncheon, Thursday, December 8th, 12:00PM – 1:30PM at the Recreation office.

3. **Update Crystal Lake/Hannon Property with Dan Funk, City Solicitor and Mike Rourke, City Solicitor:** Commissioner Towle introduced Dan Funk and Mike Rourke to the commission members. Dan Funk - There were issues last summer regarding the wall and the rights to use the beach area at Crystal Lake. A diagram was shown of the beach area. Who has what rights to the beach? In 1962 there was a lawsuit and the Law Department looked into the records at Middlesex Superior Court. The plan did not match the records. The records were then looked into at Superior Court in Cambridge. A plan was found in which the then owner tried to establish exclusive rights to the so-called beach area. In fact, on the map/records, it was found that the owner has the right and the City also has right to use the beach area! This is new and good information at this time. Also, the wall is on the homeowner's property. The commission voted to go into Executive Session to discuss certain issues surrounding Crystal Lake.

Myra Tattenbaum motioned to go into Executive Session regarding Crystal Lake. Francis Rice seconded the motion. Roll call vote was executed from all

- Two Certified Playground Safety Inspectors examine playgrounds at 45 locations
- Certified pool operator
- Repair & maintenance of over 50 Departmental pieces of equipment
- Specialty Events
- Turf Maintenance
- Grass mowing, snow plowing
- Tree crew, Tree Commission, Tree Preservation Ordinance
- Responsible for 30,000 street trees, on 280 miles of road and 1,000 acres of land
- If funding becomes available, priority of trees is set up as 1, 2, or 3.
- Tree Manual will be revised for 2006
- Volunteers have done a great job pruning some trees at City Hall after the seminar by Marc Welch.
- Also, wood chips are put in Conservation areas

Commissioner Towle thanked Derek and Marc for the excellent presentation.

6. **Five Year Park Assessment Plan (DRAFT):** Motion was made by Francis Rice to accept the Five Year Park Assessment Plan as amended. Jennie DeVito seconded the motion.

The commission members voted 8-0 to accept the Five-Year Park Assessment Plan as amended.

7. **Youth League Application, Jennie DeVito & Peter Johnson:** There are a limited number of groups that would use the Youth League Special Application. The applications should be sent out to the little leagues and soccer groups in January to fill out and return to the Department by February 1st. Also, the application has been streamlined.

Ellen Lipoma, President, Newton North Little League, commented on other little leagues and who has what on their sites. i.e. porta potties, storage bins, etc.

Motion was made by Francis Rice to accept the Youth League Special Application presented by Peter Johnson & Jennie DeVito. Walter Bernheimer seconded the motion.

The Commission members voted unanimously 8-0 to accept the Youth League Special Application.

Chairman Stern thanked Peter Johnson & Jennie DeVito for the drafting of a Youth League Application.

8. **DRAFT CPC Application for Upper Falls Playground & Newton Highlands Playground:** Robert DeRubeis, Deputy Commissioner, drafted an application for

ATTACHMENT B

Upper Falls Playground Photos



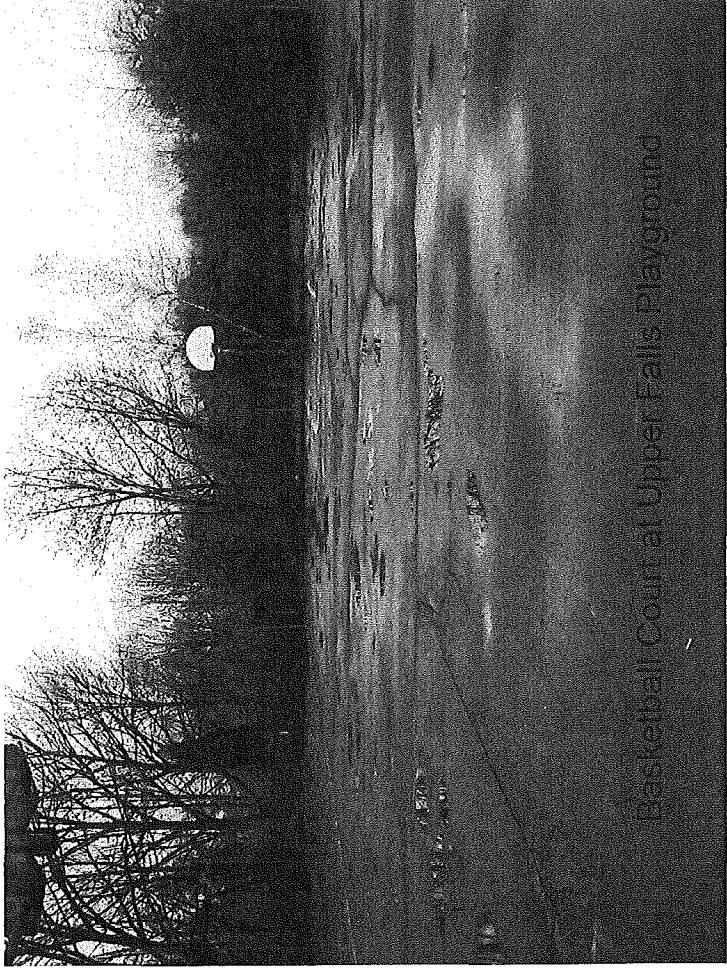
Storage Building at Upper Falls Playground



Baseball Field at Upper Falls Playground



Tennis Court at Upper Falls Playground



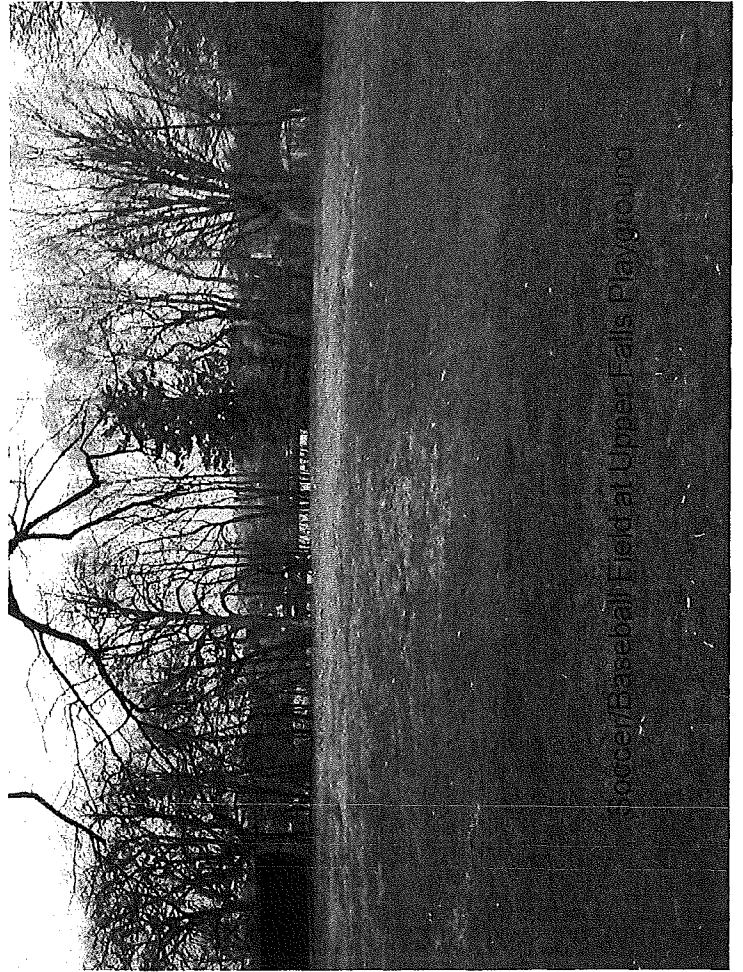
Basketball Court at Upper Falls Playground



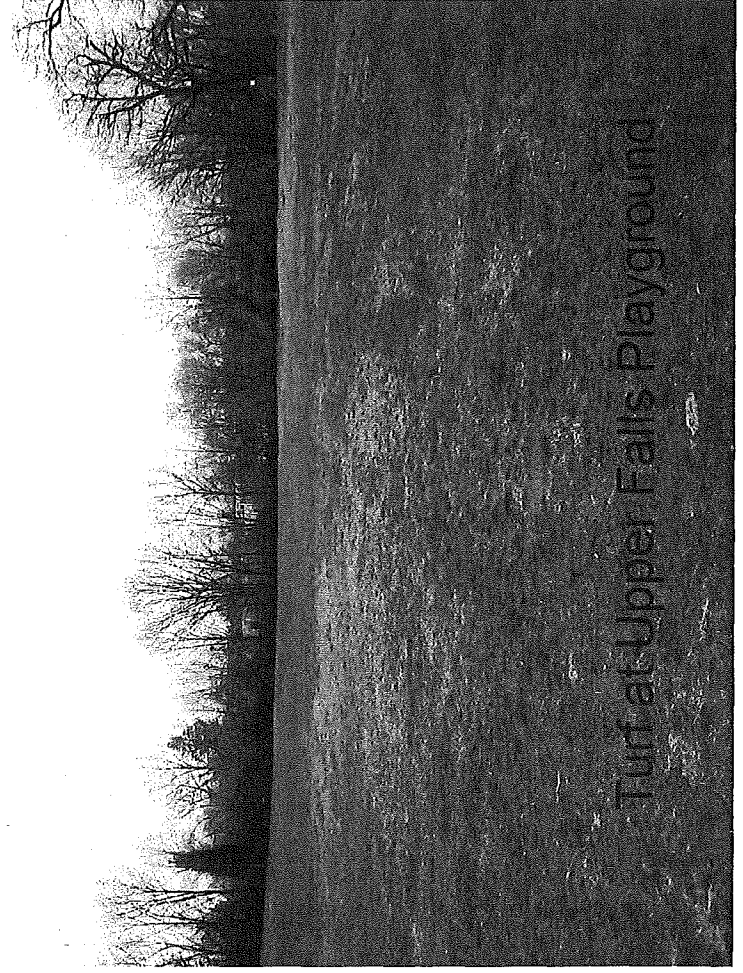
Tot Lot at Upper Falls Playground



Tot Lot at Upper Falls Playground



Baseball Field at Upper Falls Playground



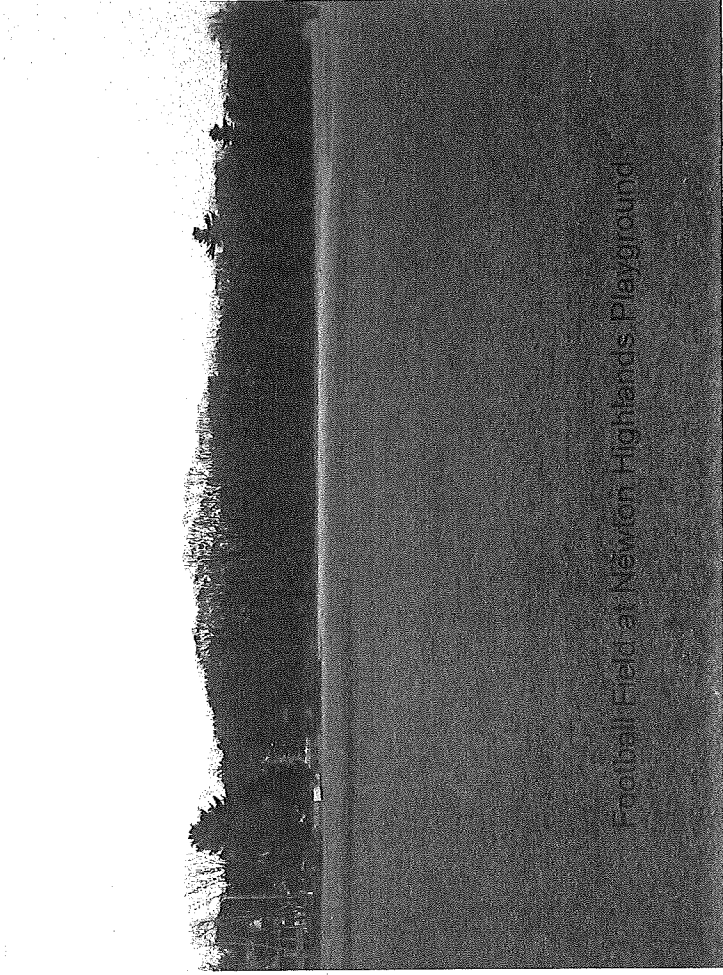
Turf at Upper Falls Playground

ATTACHMENT C

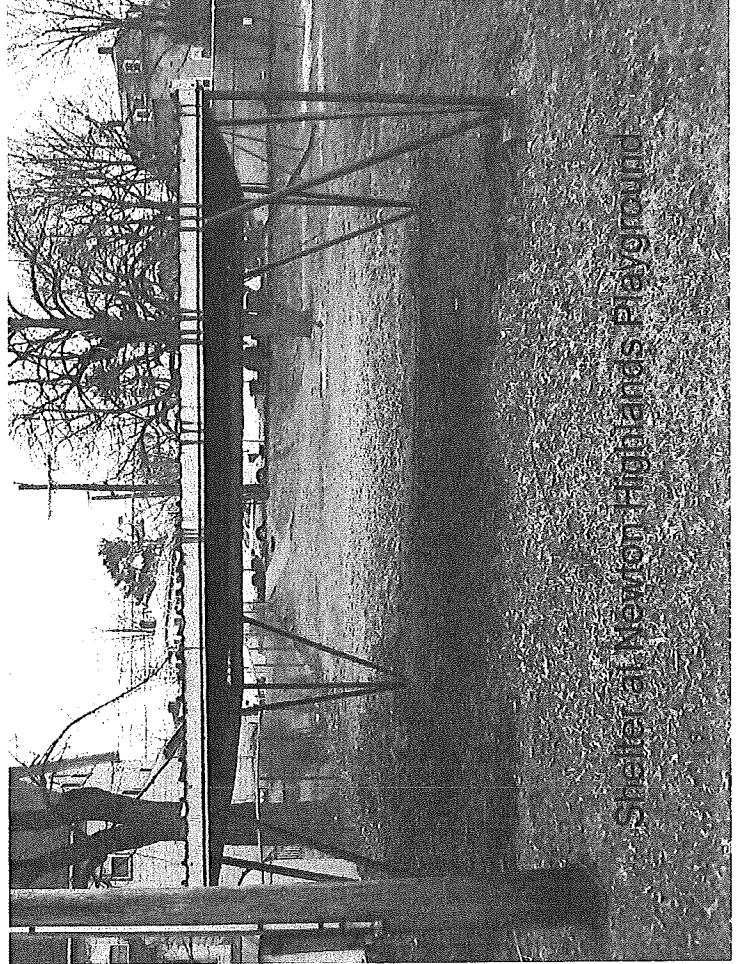
Newton Highlands Playground Photos



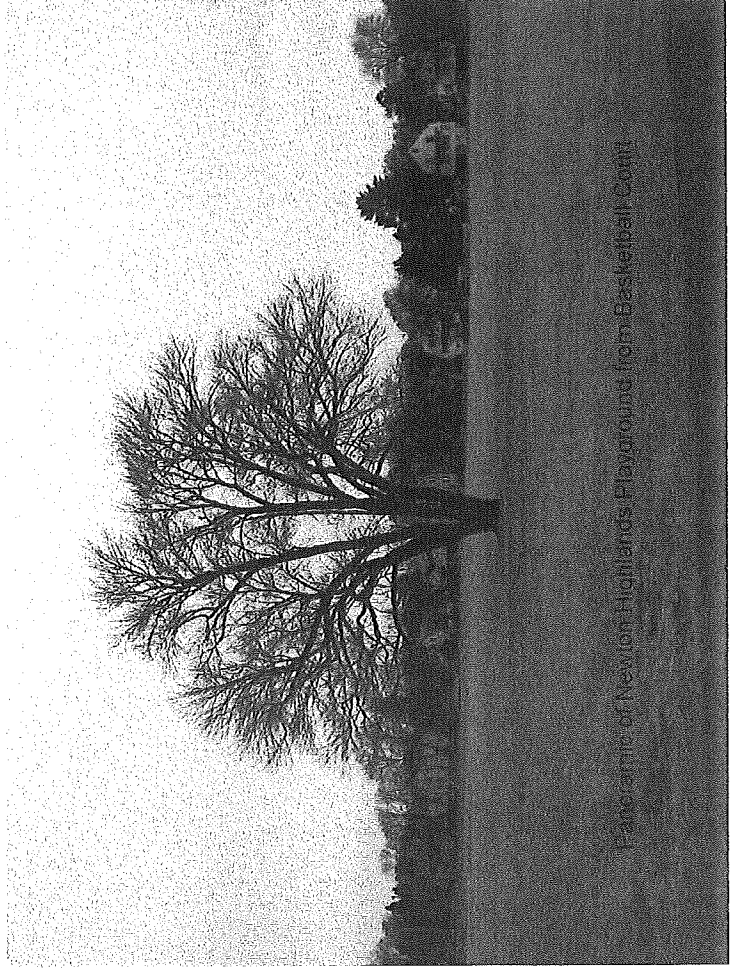
Tot Lot at Newton Highlands Playground



Football Field at Newton Highlands Playground



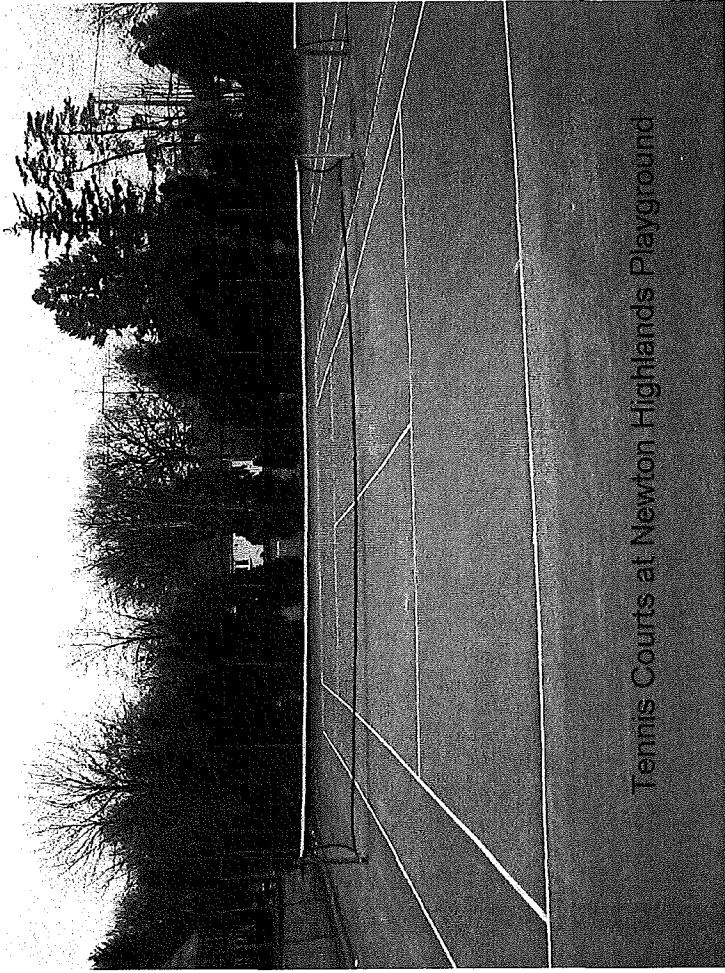
Shelter at Newton Highlands Playground



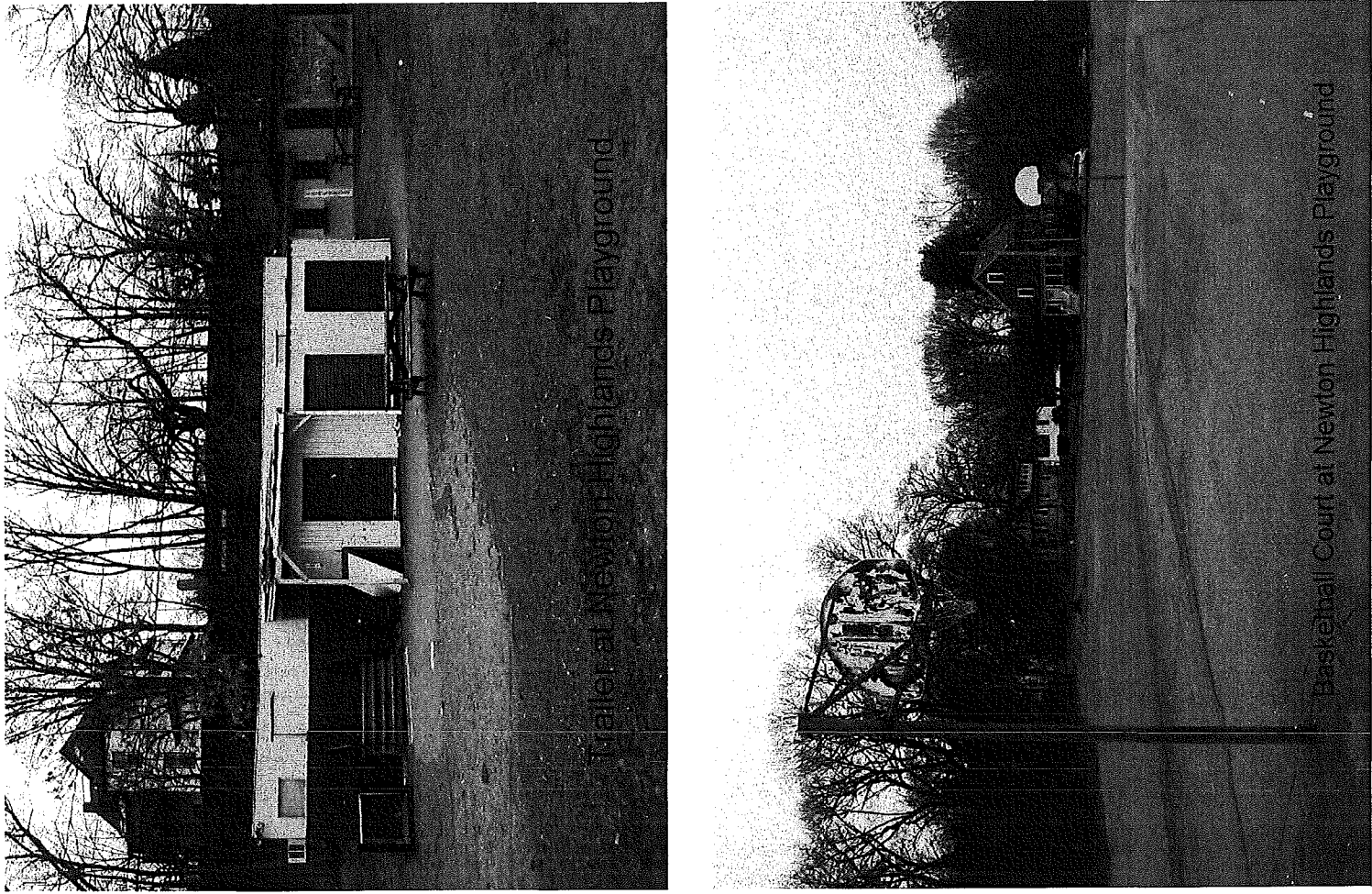
Football Field at Newton Highlands Playground from Basketball Court



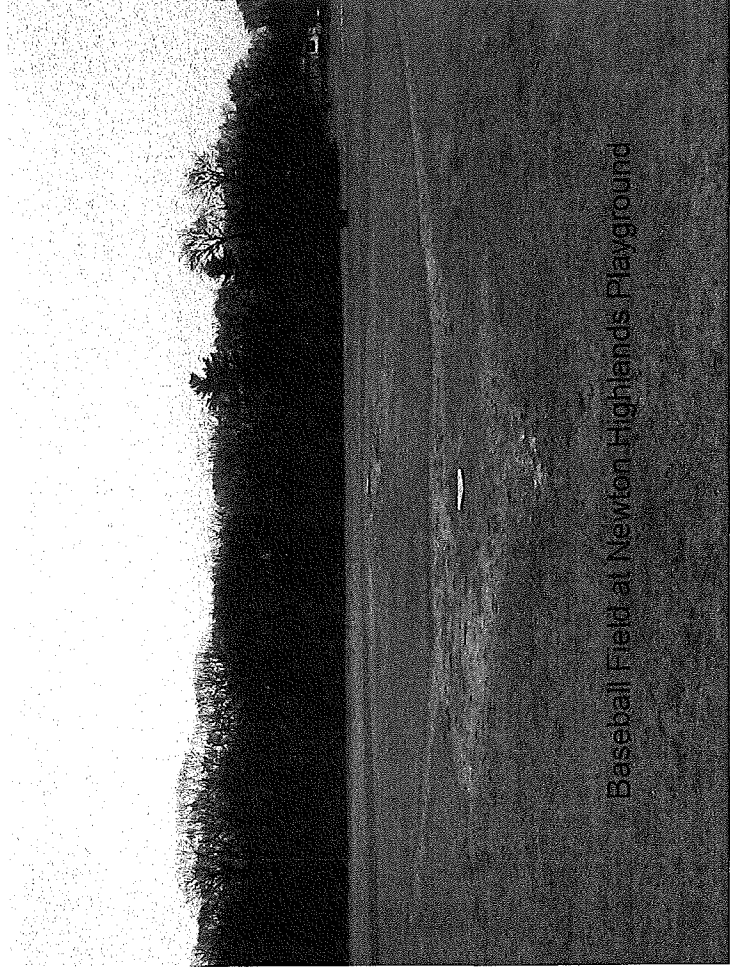
Trailer at Newton Highlands Playground



Tennis Courts at Newton Highlands Playground



Basketball Court at Newton Highlands Playground



Baseball Field at Newton Highlands Playground

ATTACHMENT D

Letters of Support

Newton Upper Falls Community Development Corporation
P.O. Box 84
Newton Upper Falls, MA 02464

January 5, 2006

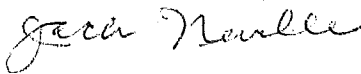
Ms. Fran Towle, Commissioner
Newton Parks and Recreation Department
70 Crescent Street
Auburndale, MA 02466

Dear Fran,

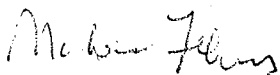
The Newton Upper Falls Community Development Corporation (NUFCDC) endorses enthusiastically your proposal to seek CPA funds in order to improve the Bobby Braceland Playground, located on Chestnut Street and known in the neighborhood as "the lower playground." This playground has long been a resource not only for the residents of Newton Upper Falls but also for all citizens of Newton. The regulation baseball field is used by Newton South High School as well as by community permit holders. In the winter, the playground is used by cross-country skiers and sledgers. The tennis courts are full year round, weather permitting. The children's play area needs to be replaced.

The NUFCDC is eager to work with the Parks and Recreation Department in improving the Bobby Braceland Playground.

Sincerely yours,



Jack Neville, President
NUFCDC



Michael Fleming, Treasurer
NUFCDC

NEWTON HIGHLANDS NEIGHBORHOOD AREA COUNCIL

Brigham Community House, 20 Hartford Street, Newton Highlands, MA 02461

January 8, 2006

Jennifer Goldson
Newton Planning Dept
Newton City Hall
1000 Commonwealth Ave
Newton, MA 02459

Re: Community Preservation Committee

Dear Ms. Goldston:

The Newton Highlands Neighborhood Area Council would like to greatly support the application by the Newton Parks & Recreation Department to the CPC for funds to renovate the Newton Highlands playground.


The Newton Highlands playground, due to limited City funds, has not been renovated for many years and is quite worn. This playground is actively utilized by various teams for soccer, football, and baseball and for general recreation by parents and their children. Additionally, there is a very active tot lot used by local parents and a nearby daycare and school. In 2005, a team of community residents organized themselves to begin to try to raise money to improve ONLY the tot lot area and make the equipment and space more children friendly and safe. The NHNAC has been in support of their efforts and tried to raise awareness of the need, but this is a very long and challenging process and very expensive for neighborhood fundraising.

Newton Highlands is a vibrant village, perhaps the most active of all the villages. Many new and young families have moved to this area and are in need of improved recreational facilities. Many other neighborhood parks have been revitalized and renovated of the past several years and we agree with the Parks and Recreation department that it is crucial that our playground be improved this year.

Your financial support, through the Community Preservation Act, will be in complete alignment with the mission of the Act and will ensure that ALL of the playground will be improved under the experience management of the Parks & Recreation Department and in a time frame that allows for maximum enjoyment.

Please approve the request by the Newton Parks & Recreation Department for funding to improve the Newton Highlands Playground. On behalf of this community, we thank you for considering our needs. Please contact me if you have any questions regarding this recommendation.

Sincerely,


Janice Bourque

President

Newton Highlands Neighborhood Area Council

Cell: 617-967-0797

M A S S A C H U S E T T S P R E M I E R S O C C E R



NEWTON BUILDING LEADERSHIP PRESIDENTS UNION ON RENOVATIONS
85 CENTRAL ST. SUITE 204, WALTHAM, MA. 02453
PHONE: 781-891-6900 FAX: 781-891-6910

3/4/2005

To Whom It May Concern:

Mass Premier Soccer is the largest soccer organization in Massachusetts and continues to grow in size. We are a non-profit association dedicated to the on-going development of soccer in Mass. MPS runs an active program in Newton and is fully supportive of any project to improve the condition of the fields in Newton.

Please feel free to get in touch with any further questions.

Regards,

Justin Capell
SOE Director
Mass Premier Soccer
781.891.6900 ex20
jcapell@mpsbr.com

NEWTON BABE RUTH LEAGUE BASEBALL
Elliott M. Loew, Director
c/o LAW OFFICES OF ELLIOTT M. LOEW, P.C.
51 Winchester Street - Suite 205
Newton, MA 02461
(617) 969-2660 - (617) 964-8676 (FAX)

January 6, 2006

Newton Parks & Recreation Department
70 Crescent Street
Newton, MA 02466

ATTN: Commissioner Towle

RE: Newton Babe Ruth League

Dear Commissioner Towle:

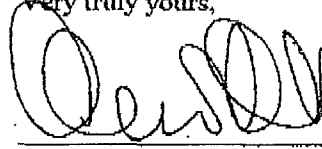
I am pleased to be writing to you as a director of the Newton Babe Ruth League in support of the currently pending plans to renovate the baseball fields at the Bobby Braceland Park at Newton Upper Falls Playground, as well as the plans to renovate the baseball field at the Newton Highlands Playground. As you know from the recent discussions relating to the NewTurf proposal, the baseball fields in Newton are in desperate need of renovation and rehabilitation, and the diminishing source of municipal funds and the difficult choices regarding the allocation of your resources have placed the baseball fields in various states of disrepair.

The Newton Babe Ruth League utilizes these, and other baseball fields from the middle of spring through the summer months. We provide a program in which attracts hundreds of children each year. It is most important to provide proper and adequate venues, especially during those months when the children are out of doors in the evenings and need safe and secure places to congregate and play.

Your efforts in these renovation plans are most appreciated and well-timed. Please be assured that the Newton Babe Ruth League supports these efforts.

Thank you.

Very truly yours,



By:

Elliott M. Loew

EML:ss

cc: Board of Directors



Newton Youth Soccer
P.O Box 610308
Newton, MA 02461
www.newtonsoccer.org

January 5, 2006

To Newton Community Preservation Committee
Newton Planning and Development Dept
1000 Commonwealth Ave
Newton, MA 02459
Attn: Jennifer Goldson, CPA Program Manager

Subject: Recreation Department Proposal for Upper Falls and Highlands field renovation

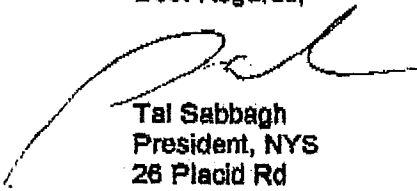
Dear Ms Goldson,

Newton Youth Soccer has been actively supporting the plans for the renovation of recreational sport fields in Newton. We're much excited to support the Recreation Department in their proposal for renovation of the fields at Upper Falls and Highlands.

NYS has been providing the Rec Dept with yearly financial contributions going into the maintenance of the fields used for soccer in the city. This enabled us to maintain a level of quality offered to more than 2000 families annually.

We'd like to ask the committee to strongly consider the application for a funding of these two fields at Upper Falls and Highlands in order to meet the growing demand of our city youth. Newton Youth Soccer has been committed to Newton's fields for the past 30 years and we, at NYS are very proud to be part of such improvements in the city infrastructure. All sports are essential to the well being of our youth and as an entirely volunteer board, we each contribute individually and care about our city.

Best Regards,



Tal Sabbagh
President, NYS
26 Placid Rd
Newton, MA 02459
Tel: 617-559-0903
Email: Tcup94@aol.com

CC:

Members of the CPC: Doug Dickson, Judith Jacobson, Ken Kimmell, Steve Fauteux, Charles McMillan, Joyce Moss, Jeff Sacks, Andrew Stern, Claudia Sauerma Wu



Post Office Box 620275
Newton Lower Falls, MA 02462
~~(617) 965-8504~~
e-mail: president@newtongirlsoccer.org
website: www.newtongirlsoccer.org

January 5, 2006

To Whom It May Concern:

Re: Upper Falls and Newton Highland fields' improvement

I am writing to convey the support of Newton Girls Soccer to the Park and Recreation proposal.

By background, Newton Girls Soccer is the largest all-girls town soccer club in the Northeast. With the participation of 1500 girls and their families each season, NGS also represents the most active youth soccer organization in the City of Newton.

As I am sure you are aware the condition of Newton fields has become very poor – and unsafe – due to many factors such as overuse, lack of maintenance, and the fact that many fields were constructed in wet areas.

As a soccer club, NGS is committed to seeing the improvement of soccer fields throughout the City of Newton. We therefore ask that the Community Preservation Committee approve this project. The improved fields will greatly benefit our youth and our adults

Sincerely


Guy Rordorf
President

January 9, 2006

Newton Parks and Recreation Department

Attn. Fran Towle

Dear Fran,

I am writing on behalf of the Newton South Little League to express our whole hearted support of the Recreation Departments proposal to improve both the Upper Falls playground and the Highlands playground. At our board meeting tonight, I told our board members about your wanting to improve these two playgrounds, both of which are in our Little League district. They were all very excited and in fact, many wanted to also write letters in support. Our Little League has long wanted to assist the City in developing these two sites, to accommodate the growing needs of our league. I have spoken with representatives from the other little leagues as well as girls softball about perhaps building a field at each playground that everyone could enjoy, and they have all supported it.

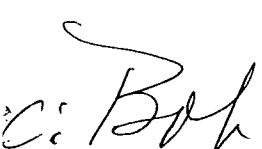
I have lived in Newton my entire life, and have always felt that these two locations could really be improved to benefit the entire community. Because of the poor drainage, much of Highlands's playground can not be used for much of the spring, yet it is a vast area which, for that reason, is greatly underutilized. The same thing can be said for Upper falls. In this case, the fields, both upper and lower, just need to be leveled out. So much benefit to the community could be attained by fixing up these 2 locations.

Both our league as a whole and myself individually are very excited that something may be done to these two locations. Please let me know what I can do to move the process along. I look forward to hearing from you in the future.



Buzz Dunker
10 Southwick Rd.
Waban, MA 02468

Received
JAN 10 2005
RECREATION DEPT.





Newton South High School
140 Brandeis Rd, Newton Centre, MA 02459
Home of the Lions!
Ron Lanham, Athletic Director
Office Phone: 617-559-6599 Fax: 617-552-5570

To: CPA Committee

From: Ron Lanham, Athletic Director Newton South High School

Date: January 6, 2006

To Whom It May Concern:

Please accept this letter of support for the Newton Parks and Recreation proposal for improvements to the Newton Upper Falls and Newton Highlands Parks. Newton South High School uses various off campus sites for its many sports teams and Upper Falls and the Highlands are an integral part of our athletic program at South. Any time we can improve our fields and park conditions that our student athletes utilize, we should take full advantage of the opportunities. We work closely with Tom Cahill, Fran Towle and the rest of the Newton Parks and Recreation Department and are in full support of this proposal for these improvements. These improvements are much needed and welcomed by our program.

Thank you for time, consideration, and support.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ron Lanham". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Ron Lanham
Athletic Director
Newton South High School
617-559-6599