

Friends of Albemarle
c/o Cedar Pruitt
2 Wyoming Road
Newton MA 02460

February 16, 2021

To the Community Preservation Committee,

Thank you for considering an investment in our beloved Gath Pool. We advocate that now is the right time to move forward with this vital project which impacts all of Newton.

Our nonprofit organization, Friends of Albemarle, only recently launched with Gath Pool restoration as the leading priority, and within days the membership represented all 8 wards of the city. We now surpass 300 members and continue to evenly represent Newton, including nearly half of City Council, with members eager to champion Gath Pool as an indisputably city-wide asset.

Gath Pool has a significant impact on the daily life and health of our community, but after more than five decades, it is failing. If we don't address this issue now, the time may come when we can't use it at all. Today, Gath Pool has a 5% rate of water loss, totaling a staggering 18,000 gallons per day. While repairs and maintenance are continually made, it has been evident for years that repairs cannot be sustained for long.

In partnership with Newton Parks and Recreation, Friends of Albemarle is committed to replacing this 55-year-old pool, along with the bathhouse and field house, so that Newton can retain an outdoor pool that serves the community. As our current health crisis has helped demonstrate, even one season without the pool is one too many.

As temperatures rise, this valuable outdoor community resource plays a vital role in keeping users cool, healthy and engaged, especially our most at-risk populations. From our youngest toddlers learning to swim—a crucial life-saving skill—to our seniors who use the pool as a therapeutic and community space, this pool is a lifeblood for so many in Newton. What a treat to see a 3-month-old and a 90-year-old enjoying the same thing at the same time.

In addition, Newton's top-ranked championship swim team, the Newton Bluefish, would be unable to compete in the summer without the use of Gath Pool. A two-day regional competition for the Summer Suburban League has been held at Gath Pool for decades and is a summer highlight for many families from numerous surrounding towns.

Less tangibly, but perhaps more important, this pool is a pulse point of Newton. Friendships are made, connections formed, and community built all summer long. It provides a safe and

healthy outdoor recreation option for our community teens, not to mention jobs for many of them. As a low-cost facility that serves all members of our community, Gath Pool is an equitable feature of our town and a great equalizer, especially for those who don't have their own pools, or the ability to join private clubs.

Our neighboring town of Needham, a town one-third the size of Newton, applied CPA funds in part to build a spectacular complex with two pools that feature water walking lanes, diving areas, slides, a spray deck, bathhouses, and more.

The prevalence of outdoor pools in much smaller towns such as Norwood, Walpole, Westwood and Weston demonstrates their value. Several of these towns have both indoor and outdoor pool facilities.

Despite being just a fraction of the size of Newton, these towns developed and maintain indoor and outdoor pool facilities that enrich the lives of their residents.

We believe that Newton should have robust swim facilities that include all-day use of the Gath outdoor pool during the late spring, summer and early fall, as a renovation could potentially extend the season of the pool. A functional bathhouse could be an asset for the entire park all year round, from concession stands to bathroom facilities during sporting events.

An ideal funding strategy would, like those in surrounding towns, combine CPA funds, city funds and private donations. To that end, we've established our 501(c)3 status for Friends of Albemarle with the goal of supporting this work.

Given the age of the pool and its state of disrepair, it is a race against time to keep this vital community asset afloat. With careful planning and your financial help, it is a race we can win.

Sincerely,
Friends of Albemarle
<https://friendsofalbemarle.org>
304 Newton residents

Cedar Pruitt, President
cpruitt@gmail.com
2 Wyoming Road Newton MA 02460

Jacqueline Freeman, Secretary
freeman.jac@gmail.com
29 North Street, Newton, MA 02460

From: [Bob Jampol](#)
To: [Lara Kritzer](#); [Cedar Pruitt](#)
Subject: Gath Pool
Date: Tuesday, February 16, 2021 12:46:58 PM

[**DO NOT OPEN** links/attachments unless you are sure the content is safe.]

Laura: As an advocate for maintenance of our parks and green spaces, I wholeheartedly support the impetus to bring Gath Pool back up to speed. The effort is long overdue. These days, more often than not, I swim in Crystal Lake during the summer, but I used to take my kids all the time to Gath many moons ago (they are in their 30s!). Gath Pool provides convenient and safe recreation for thousands of Newton residents who live on the north side of town.

Alas, the pool has fallen on hard times because of funding shortfalls for maintenance. The situation now is untenable and, frankly, unfair. The most immediate remedy to get the ball rolling is for the CPC to approve Parks and Rec's request to fund an outside assessment of the condition of the pool and the steps to renovate it. Now's the time, and I hope that the CPC steps up to meet the challenge.

Bob Jampol
Friends of Cold Spring Park
Friends of Newton Tennis
Bike Newton
Waban Area Council councilor

From: [Rob Moruzzi](#)
To: [Lara Kritzer](#)
Cc: [Cedar Pruitt](#)
Subject: Gath Pool
Date: Tuesday, February 16, 2021 9:03:31 PM

[DO NOT OPEN links/attachments unless you are sure the content is safe.]

Dear Ms. Kritzer,

I am writing to urge you and the CPC to fund the Gath Pool assessment project. Gath Pool is a Newton treasure which has been in a state of disrepair for some time. The pool is enjoyed by young and old and is truly an asset to our community. This fact was reinforced by the pool's closure last summer due to Covid-19. The void was felt by children and adults who were forced to miss a favorite healthy outdoor activity. The loss of the pool would negatively impact our community immensely. A city as committed to its residents and families should do the right thing and fund the reconstruction of our pool. Thank you in advance.

Best regards,
Rob Moruzzi
28 Albemarle Road
617-312-1144

From: [Maria Scibelli Greenberg](#)
To: [Lara Kritzer](#); [Cedar Pruitt](#)
Subject: Gath pool finding
Date: Thursday, February 18, 2021 9:45:22 AM

Dear Ms. Kritzer,

I am writing you in support of the request from Newton Parks, Recreation and Culture for \$60,000 of CPA funds to have an outside firm conduct an assessment of the Gath pool. The Gath pool is a beloved and vital amenity that our city offers our citizens. The pool has been in a state of disrepair for years and it's critical that we invest in the maintenance and preservation of this city asset.

Thank you for your consideration.

Maria Scibelli Greenberg
Newton Ward 1 City Councilor
Member of Friends of Albemarle.

From: [Melissa Prudhomme](#)
To: [Lara Kritzer](#)
Cc: [Cedar Pruitt](#)
Subject: GATH POOL
Date: Thursday, February 18, 2021 12:03:48 PM

[**DO NOT OPEN** links/attachments unless you are sure the content is safe.]

Good morning....

Please fund the assessment of Gath Pool! As Newton's only outdoor pool, it needs to be preserved for future use.

I have fond memories of bringing my son to the Gath for afternoon dips on hot summer days. It is aging badly and needs to be repaired so we can safely use it in the future.

Thank you!

Melissa Prudhomme

EMILY NORTON

★ Ward 2 Councilor ★

February 19, 2021

Mark Armstrong, Chair
Dan Brody, Vice Chair
Eliza Datta
Byron Dunker
Susan Lunin
Robert Maloney
Jennifer Molinsky
Martin Smargiassi
Judy Weber

Via email to lkritzer@newtonma.gov

Dear Members of the Community Preservation Committee,

I am delighted you are considering funding an evaluation of the Gath Pool facility as an initial step toward repairing and restoring this important community asset.

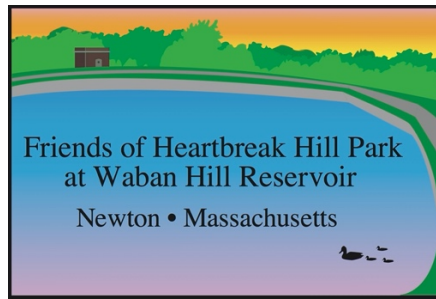
The Gath Pool has been an essential part of the summer experience for Newton families for decades. I have many happy memories of hanging out with my friends there as a child in the 1970s. I brought my own children to the baby pool, they took swim lessons there, and now as teenagers they meet up with their friends there (pre-pandemic). But the building and pool and deck are run down and it leaks thousands of gallons of water a day. Frankly a city our size in New England should have a year round pool so that our residents could enjoy it beyond just the few summer months. Investing in the Gath Pool is also an equity issue because it is an inexpensive way for all Newton families to access exercise, relief from the heat, and socialization. Families who cannot afford to have their own pools or club membership can afford to visit Gath Pool.

I look forward to working with you on this important project.

Sincerely,



Emily Norton
Ward 2 Councilor



February 19, 2021

Susan Servais
President, Friends of Heartbreak Hill Park at Waban Hill Reservoir
4 Garrison Street
Chestnut Hill, MA 02467

Dear Community Preservation Committee,

We are writing on behalf of the Friends of Heartbreak Hill Park and our many Newton supporters to urge you to provide the necessary funding for the renovation and improvements of the Gath Pool. Gath Pool is a treasure for all of the residents of Newton but is in serious trouble.

Gath pool needs renovations and improvements to continue as a gathering spot for our residents. Especially after this long period of Covid isolation, we look forward to the summer opportunities to gather outdoors and socialize safely with friends and neighbors. The pool is 55 years old and the design and functionality is no longer safe, serviceable and practical, nor does it serve the needs of all the members of the community. The pool is leaking and Parks and Recreation can no longer afford the type of repairs and renovations that are necessary. As part of the renovation considerations, making the Gath Pool more senior friendly would add a greater participation by our growing senior community. There is a desperate need not only for the renovation of the pool itself which is leaking and failing, but there is a need for a redesign of the entire pool area to expand the patio to prevent overcrowding and to allow seniors to bring their own comfortable lounge chairs.

We are surrounded by communities that have wonderful outdoor swimming facilities for their residents, Needham is only one of the towns whose facilities far surpass what we have to offer. Funding is the reason we can't compete with their outdoor complex which has two pools that feature water walking lanes, diving areas, slides, a spray deck, bathhouses, and more. Funding from the CPC is critical to our ability to repair and improve the Gath Pool site.

Newton residents would certainly enjoy a top notch swim facility that includes a properly functioning Gath Pool with expanded deck, concession stand, and updated bathhouse.

We hope you will support the efforts of Newton Parks and Recreation and commit the necessary funding to move forward on the Gath Pool project. CPC funding is the answer. Please commit CPC to funding this initiative that will create an outdoor facility that will be a wonderful addition to our community for all of our residents to enjoy.

Sincerely,

Board of Directors
Friends of the Heartbreak Hill Park at Waban Hill Reservoir, Newton
<http://heartbreakhillpark.org/>

February 19, 2021

Laura Kritzer
Community Preservation Committee
Newton City Hall
1000 Commonwealth Avenue
Newton Centre, MA 02459

RE: Gath Pool Assessment

Laura,

I am writing in support of this initiative recommended by Newton's Parks, Recreation and Culture and the Friends of Albemarle.

Over the last 18+ months the public has become aware of the dire need to repair and update the facility. Significant loss of water (at a rate of roughly 18,000 gallons per day?), aging facilities and lack of regular maintenance are chief among the concerns I have heard.

Our community relies on our open spaces, athletic fields and recreational facilities for exercise, as a meeting place for friends old and new, for social interaction between neighbors. Activities from learning to swim to therapeutic activities, Gath can play a central role in the health and welfare of Newton residents. As a reminder, the public was informed in 2019 that the city was already committed to addressing improvements at Gath pool.

The time for the city of Newton to act is now; assess the needed repairs now and determine a plan of action to restore Gath pool as a community asset that everyone can enjoy for years to come!

Thank you for everything you do on behalf of our City. I look forward to your thoughtful responses to this measure.

Sincerely,

John Oliver
Co-founder, Newton Athletic Fields Foundation (NAFF)
14 Wyoming Rd
Newton, MA 02460

From: [Ariel Dunlap](#)
To: [Lara Kritzer](#)
Cc: [Cedar Pruitt](#)
Subject: CPC Funds for Gath Pool
Date: Friday, February 19, 2021 4:40:58 PM

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Dear Ms. Kritzner,

My name is Ariel Dunlap and I live in Newton Center and I am a member of the Friends of Albemarle. I am writing to urge the Community Preservation Committee to fund an assessment of Gath Pool.

A community pool is a vital resource for any community and we need to ensure that Newton residents have continued access to one. It is my understanding that Gath is leaking considerably and is in need of updates. Please fund the outside assessment so that our community can continue to enjoy the many benefits of a public pool.

Best,
Ariel Dunlap