



Programs & Services Committee Report

City of Newton In City Council

Wednesday, September 22, 2021

Present: Councilors Krintzman (Chair), Noel, Humphrey, Albright, Wright, Greenberg, and Baker

Absent: Councilor Ryan

Also Present: Councilors Bowman, Kelley, Oliver, Laredo, and Norton

City Staff: Josh Morse, Commissioner of Public Buildings; Luis Perez Demorizi, Open Space Coordinator; Carol Stapleton, Rec Program Manager; Jonathan Yeo, Chief Operating Officer; Jini Fairley, ADA Coordinator; Nicole Banks, Commissioner of Parks, Recreation and Culture; Lara Kritzer, CPA Program Manager; Marie Lawlor, Assistant City Solicitor; Linda Walsh, Deputy Commissioner of Health & Human Services; Nathan Giacalone, Committee Clerk

#310-21 Appointment of Nancy Kritzman to the Commission on Disability

HER HONOR THE MAYOR appointing NANCY KRITZMAN, 677 Winchester Street, #423, Newton as a member of the COMMISSION ON DISABILITY for a term to expire on September 20, 2023 (60 Days: 10/08/21).

Action: Programs & Services Approved 6-0 (Councilor Baker not voting)

Notes: The Committee invited Ms. Kritzman to introduce herself and describe her desire to join the Commission. Ms. Kritzman said that she is a 43-year wheelchair user who has suffered from Guillain-Barre syndrome and as such is familiar with the challenges facing the handicapped and is passionate about advocating for this community. She is also on the Family Advocacy Council at Mass General Brigham.

The Committee thanked her for her service in the community.

Discussion:

A Committee member said that they were recently in Seattle and saw more people out in public using wheelchairs than in Newton and asked if this may be due to a difficulty navigating or lack of accessible housing. Ms. Kritzman responded that it is likely a combination of the two, saying that while the sidewalks are improving for wheelchair users, they still have a long way to go. Additionally, she said that NewMo still needs a lot of work and The Ride is not adequate for the handicapped. She suggested that a trolley service around the villages could be examined.

Councilor Krintzman made a motion to approve which carried 6-0 (Councilor Baker not voting).

#311-21 Appointment of Cynthia Greene to the Human Rights Commission

HER HONOR THE MAYOR appointing CYNTHIA GREENE, 21 Garden Road, Newton, as a member of the HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION for a term to expire on September 30, 2024 (60 Days: 10/08/21).

Action: Programs & Services Approved 6-0 (Councilor Baker not voting)

Notes: The Committee invited Ms. Greene to introduce herself and describe her desire to serve on the Commission. Ms. Greene said that she has long been interested in human rights issues and has a background in business and international affairs. She said that working on a special project for Mayor Menino helped to solidify her understanding of some of these issues in her own community. Currently, Ms. Greene said that she sits on the boards of Families Organized for Racial Justice, Story Starters, and Cradles to Crayons. She also said that she has participated in the HRC for years. Acknowledging that her own profile does not need amplifying; she looks forward to helping to bring more voices forward for support.

The Committee thanked Ms. Greene for her service to the community.

Councilor Krintzman made a motion to approve which carried 6-0 (Councilor Baker not voting).

Referred to Programs & Services and Finance Committees

#281-21 CPC Recommendation to appropriate \$1,440,344 in CPA funding

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE recommending appropriation of one million four hundred forty thousand three hundred and forty-four dollars (\$1,440,344) in Community Preservation Act funds, with \$288,068.80 to come from the Open Space Prior Year Reserve (Act# 5840-3599) and \$1,152,275.20 to come from the Prior Year Undesignated Fund (Acct# 5800-3599), to the control of the Planning & Development Department for the implementation of the approved and permitted designs for Levingston Cove including the construction of new erosion controls, plantings, accessibility improvements and the installation of new public amenities including new pathways, benches and decks.

Action: Programs & Services Approved 6-0-1 (Councilor Wright abstaining)

Notes: The Committee was joined by Ms. Kritzer, Ms. Banks, Mr. Demorizi, and Dan Brody, Chair of the Community Preservation Committee.

Ms. Kritzer gave a presentation (attached) which described the location and details of the project. She said that Levingston Cove is a well-used area on Crystal Lake which has suffered from overuse in recent years. This CPA funding request would allow the construction of new accessibility improvements such as benches, terraced seating, and slope stabilization plantings. The funding request is for \$1,440,344, with 20% from Open Space and 80% from Recreation. CPA funding would cover construction costs, the city staff time would cover oversight and management, grants and state funding would cover design elements, and DPW would also contribute to the project for a total cost of \$1.6 million. Presently the project is under permitting review with construction scheduled to begin next fall.

Mr. Demorizi added that the river stone was replaced by stacked granite blocks.

Discussion:

C: This project has been in the works for about three years with a thoughtful public process that has continued moving forward. It both creates accessibility for those with disabilities and addresses the deterioration of Levingston Cove. The Friends of Crystal Lake and the Crystal Lake Conservancy have also been included throughout this process. There have been some concerns raised over the transparency of this project, but the Parks Commission has remained engaged throughout the process. Additionally, ADA Coordinator Jini Fairley and multiple Councilors have also written of their support. With an increased use amidst COVID, this resource needs to be open for all in Newton to enjoy.

C: This project will meet the goals of increased accessibility and is critical that it be completed.

C: The Council feedback received so far has been helpful as it will improve accessibility not just for those with disabilities, but other groups such as senior citizens.

C: Changes to the project have been made in response to public feedback and we should not miss out on the funding opportunities.

Q: When did the design on this project change and were people able to comment?

A: There have been minor changes made based on subsurface conditions in order to avoid higher contingency costs.

Councilor Albright made a motion of approval which carried 6-0-1 (Councilor Wright abstaining).

Referred to Programs & Services and Finance Committees

#347-21 CPC Recommendation to appropriate \$420,000 in CPA funding

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE recommending appropriation of four hundred twenty thousand dollars (\$420,000) in Community Preservation Act funds from the FY22 Budget Reserve (Account# 58R10498-579000) to the control of the Planning & Development Department for the completion of the Athletic Fields Capital Improvements Plan Design FY2022-2025 Project which includes the hiring of on-call consultants to complete the studies, plans, and design work necessary to construct new fields and restore four to six existing sites.

Action: **Programs & Services Approved 7-0**

Notes: The Committee was joined by Ms. Kritzer, Ms. Banks, Mr. Demorizi, and Mr. Brody.

Ms. Kritzer gave a presentation (attached) which summarized the details of the project. The Parks, Recreation and Culture Department (PRC) has submitted this proposal to address the critical need for improvements to athletic field quality in Newton. This is a high priority for Newton residents as shown through a recent survey. Local sports groups and stakeholders have also been involved on this process. Two proposals were submitted to the CPC; the first is a three-year capital improvement plan which was proposed for Albemarle, Brown Oak Hill Fields,

McGrath Park, and the Burr School Fields. If additional funding remained after completing these projects the five-year plan would include Braceland and Forte parks. The current request is to hire an on-call consultant to complete the studies needed to move these projects along. Ms. Kritzer said that the current request of \$420,000 is recreation category funding which comes from the designated funds in the FY '22 CPA budget reserve account. There would be about \$2.5 million in funding left over in the account to use for other projects. For the timeline, Ms. Kritzer said that the City would like to begin contracting with the consultant in the fall, with public input and conceptual design taking place over the winter and construction being determined after more design and construction documents are obtained throughout 2022.

Discussion:

C: There is some concern over the framing on Braceland as it seems to make the park look like a last priority. All projects need to be balanced with each other and we need residents to not feel like their own park is being left behind.

A: Selected projects are a result of meeting with support groups and have been planned out. Our intent is to hold public meetings and collect feedback. We do not know how far the money will stretch so we need to have a discussion on this topic. We also need to be cognizant of the project order to not have every field under construction at the same time.

Mr. Brody added that this proposal is for design funding to figure out what to do.

Q: According to the schedule nothing will physically be done for over a year, can't some of these projects be done earlier?

A: Yes, some projects are more straightforward than others, but once the consultant is hired, we are going to take a look at all of these and refine the schedule.

Q: Is there a strategy about synthetic turf, and if not, when will it be developed?

A: Mr. Yeo answered that turf will be addressed through the CIP in October and will be discussed more. This particular request is more focused on quickly improving the athletic fields. Ms. Banks added that the plan identifies two sites to consider for turf conversion. There will be more details on the infill material and more time for public input as well.

Q: Has there been analysis to see that we have the right types of fields in Newton? If not, could this then be done in the future?

A: We have in-house data to show a shortage of field space, particularly multipurpose field space and are short on being able to complete fields schedules to meet the needs of our departments. The change of school schedule with later times is impacting the already tight schedule as events run later than what the lighted fields can accommodate. We always manage to put these schedules together, but it is a challenge as the sport programs increase.

Q: Weeks Field is critical for soccer, is there any thought to include the design sooner rather than later despite it not being in this item?

A: PRC is putting lot of work into the maintenance of its current fields. Some improvements have already been made and it is considered a premier field for our sports groups, however it is not currently on the list for redesign. PRC has been working with the Athletic Fields Subcommittee and gathering input. The fields that got the most attention from stakeholders were the ones

brought forward for this request and Weeks did not meet that level.

Councilor Albright made a motion to approve which carried 7-0.

#267-21 Request for a discussion on rodent control in Newton

COUNCILORS GREENBERG, ALBRIGHT, KELLEY, LEARY, BOWMAN, CROSSLEY, GROSSMAN, HUMPHREY, LAREDO, LIPOF, LUCAS, MALAKIE, OLIVER, RYAN, DANBERG AND WRIGHT requesting a discussion regarding rodent activity control related to construction activities and the creation of an ordinance that would require a pest control management plan for any application to obtain a building permit which includes demolition and/or excavation on public or private property.

Action: Programs & Services Held 7-0

Notes: This item was discussed alongside #341-21.

Councilor Greenberg made a motion to Hold which carried 7-0.

#341-21 Request for additional rodent control initiatives

COUNCILORS LEARY, GREENBERG, AND OLIVER requesting that the City Administration develop additional initiatives to its proactive and holistic approach to rodent control applicable to residential, municipal and commercial properties. Areas to consider potentially include, but are not limited to public education, enforcement, special permits and building permits, construction and excavation management, and assistance to private property owners of limited means.

Action: Programs & Services voted No Action Necessary 7-0

Notes: This item was discussed with #267-21. The Committee was joined by Mr. Yeo, Mr. Morse, Ms. Lawlor, and Ms. Walsh.

Councilor Greenberg read a short statement, saying that the recent increase of rodents has been a growing concern for residents, the causes of which are multifaceted. She complimented the administration's efforts so far, going on to suggest that the Council could require that demolition and excavation projects require rodent mitigation plans in order to acquire a building permit. Many neighboring communities have this requirement and an ordinance designed for Newton could limit rat activity.

Mr. Yeo then delivered a presentation to the committee to summarize the administration's rodent control efforts along with an update on this strategy (both attached). He said that over the last several years rats have been surging in all regions of the Boston suburbs and more attention has been drawn to this issue. There are a number of ongoing efforts by the city as it works to understand rat behavior. Site inspections and have been quite successful as well as working with homeowners. Mr. Yeo said that much of this strategy hinges on prevention by removing rats' common sources of food, water, and shelter. The Inspectional Services Department has also begun a new policy of requiring rodent control inspections and services for every full property demolition permit, even for by-right projects which do not require a special

permit. The Planning Department is implementing a new policy to recommend to the Council that rodent control measures be provided as a condition for special permits on projects of significant excavation. Along with the property of the demolition, rodent control measures should extend to abutting properties as well. Mr. Yeo said that the City will implement environmentally sensitive rodent control, as well as contacting owners and contractors of current demolitions to take rodent control measures. ISD is also providing rodent control advisory documents.

Mr. Yeo said that the City is committed to a non-poison approach using a fertility control method called Contrapest. Contrapest is a unique product that provides a sweetened liquid source to rodents which reduces their fertility and their numbers. A case-study from Washington, DC showed that this method led to a 90% reduction in rat activity. Working with rodent complaint maps and the GIS system, Mr. Yeo said that the administration targeted Contrapest sites to areas of city-land corresponding with areas of high rat complaints. He emphasized that it is only a pilot program but hopes that it will be a helpful process. The City has also been using carbon monoxide for targeted extermination on areas of city property with known burrow activity. Mr. Yeo said Contrapest and the targeted extermination approach minimizes the secondary impacts from poison on other animals in the food chain.

Mr. Yeo was thanked for the presentation. He was asked if the presentation could be made available on its own and Mr. Yeo said it would be and would send it to the Clerk's Office.

Discussion:

C: It is interesting to point out that this is a regional problem with a multifaceted cause. Smaller developments seem like they contribute to these conditions as well, along with causes unrelated to development. It is good that we are minimizing the use of poisons, but private owners can still use them. It is good to see financial assistance as well.

C: We need to establish how expensive these measures are, as well as how to limit the use of poisons. This is a very high public information opportunity.

C: While it would be a stretch to say Trio was successful at managing rodent activity, it managed this better than other developments in Newton.

C: There should have been some specific examples of strategies rather than more clearly states what contractors need to do. These measures should apply to additions as well as tear-downs.

A: We wanted to start with demolitions and large excavations. In one case, residents were demolishing a small garage which had known issues, and when they came to ISD they were informed of what they needed to do. As a municipality we don't have the ability to dictate what the specialists are able to do, this is done through state and federal law. Residents will likely want immediate results. For known burrows, use the carbon monoxide approach.

Q: What is defined as a significant volume of soil?

A: We have discussed this internally and will stick with the whole building demolitions for now.

Q: Has this pilot program been successful elsewhere?

A: Mr. Morse answered that Contrapest allows the city to limit rodent reproduction. The case study from Washington, DC supports this judgement, though it must be noted that the results are not immediate and known active burrows should be targeted directly (Mr. Morse also noted that residents should not attempt to use carbon monoxide to kill rats on their own and should contact a professional to do this). He also said that the rat map list is fluid and will match conditions as close as possible.

Q: Where are the legal implications for Newton's options?

A: the state sanitary code is a good place to start. Ms. Lawlor said there are several ways the city can deal with these issues, depending on the entity in which the problem lies. If it is a restaurant, for example, the public nuisance portion of the Health Statute allows the Commissioner of Health to issue an abatement order. The offending entity is given a reasonable window to correct the nuisance. If it continues past this date, then the entity faces fines every day. Specifically, for a restaurant or food establishment there are specific provisions within the state sanitary code. Ms. Lawlor said that for the proposed ISD Commissioner's requirement, when a policy is in place to require pest management plan for a project, if this is not complied with the Commissioner can issue a stop-work order. She noted that ordinance violations can have up to a maximum penalty of \$300 per day of non-compliance.

Q: We heard recently from a conversation with a rodent management consultant that it is important to monitor rodent activity before, during, and after construction. Has the City considered this approach in its strategy?

A: It should be noted that construction is not creating more rats, but rather disturbs the existing populations. Inspections should be done beforehand if possible. Ms. Walsh added that city personnel needs to be invited onto private property but can perform plan-view inspections to contact homeowners. While these letters are often not responded to, most homeowners comply. She added that these can sometimes be difficult conversations to have with residents. Ms. Walsh said that there is almost 100% compliance from restaurants. If someone is resisting the Law Department is contacted. Hard data is challenging to get as it requires residents to call in a rat and staff needs to verify. Mr. Morse then added that in school and municipal building projects there is a walkthrough pre-inspection. Projects can sometimes create rodent homes where none were before. With the Contrapest stations, non-rodenticide food can help give a visual observation on rat-activity. Rather than exact numbers, he said that the City is satisfied with general trends.

Q: How can the city make these rat maps more accessible?

A: The police have a house-break map that could be a model for this as it updates to show increase and decreasing trends.

C: It will be a while before we see good data as at first, the increase shown will be more due to increased reporting than rising numbers of rats.

Q: Is there a similar checklist for restaurants as for builders?

A: Yes.

Q: Could someone partner with the city on the pilot?

A: No as the city cannot make recommendations to contractors and other public/private separations. However, like with electrification the city approach can serve as a model for residents to emulate.

C: When the special permit is written, we should think about a provision to ban the use of rat poison.

A: Yes, this could work, but the City can only ban the use of poison, not a particular company. It should also be noted that Contrapest is not used more widely because it is a fairly new product.

The Committee thanked the administration for its hard work on this matter.

Q: Will the committee be seeing draft language for the new ordinance?

A: Yes, this will be sent out once it is finished. Commissioner Lojek and the Law Department believe he has the ability to require this.

Councilor Greenberg made a motion to Hold #267-21 which carried 7-0.

Councilor Albright made a motion to vote No Action Necessary on #341-21 which carried 7-0.

#308-21 Request for discussion on COVID-19 vaccination mandate

COUNCILORS GENTILE, KALIS, MALAKIE, OLIVER, LAREDO, MARKIEWICZ, NORTON AND WRIGHT requesting a discussion with the Human Resources and Health Departments about instituting a City of Newton policy mandating that all city employees be vaccinated against the COVID-19 virus.

Action: Programs & Services Held 7-0

Notes: Mr. Yeo said that the Mayor has discussed this issue in multiple updates over the past month and that a plan has been developed to see municipal employees fully vaccinated. Since there is currently ongoing collective bargaining with the unions over this, Mr. Yeo said there is not much the Administration is able to say on this matter right now.

A Committee Member asked if the discussion with the MTA was collectively bargained. Mr. Yeo answered that there were discussions and that there was an agreement.

Councilor Albright made a motion to Hold which carried 7-0.

(Continued)

Referred to Programs & Services and Finance Committees

#99-21 **Discussion regarding resources needed for a safe return to in-person learning**
COUNCILORS KRINTZMAN, GROSSMAN, LAREDO, WRIGHT, KALIS, MALAKIE, GREENBERG, LEARY, RYAN, BAKER, ALBRIGHT AND NOEL Requesting a discussion about the resources necessary for a speedy and safe return to in person learning, in compliance with the March 9, 2021 guidance from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and in anticipation of more than \$48 million in Federal Aid from the American Rescue Plan

Action: **Programs & Services voted No Action Necessary 7-0**

Notes: It was said that this item is no longer necessary as the students are already back safely learning in-person.

Councilor Krintzman made a motion to vote No Action Necessary which carried 7-0.

Referred to Programs & Services and Finance Committees

#156-20 **Request for comparison of dog license fines**
COUNCILOR ALBRIGHT requesting a comparison of Newton's fine for failure to license a dog to other communities. In addition, requesting an increase in the fine for failure to license a dog.

Action: **Programs & Services voted No Action Necessary 7-0**

Notes: This item was discussed with #157-20.

Councilor Albright made a motion to vote No Action Necessary which carried 7-0.

Referred to Programs & Services and Finance Committees

#157-20 **Request for review and changes to off-leash dog ordinance**
COUNCILOR ALBRIGHT requesting a review and possible changes to the off-leash dog ordinance to include:
a) raising fees required by dog walking companies in order to better maintain sites heavily used by dog walkers; and
b) requiring background checks on dog walkers to assure safety of dog owners and dogs; and
c) requesting the development of regulations for dog walking and dog daycare companies to assure appropriate care for dogs.

Action: **Programs & Services voted No Action Necessary 7-0**

Notes: This item was discussed with #156-20. It was said that these items were discussed earlier in the term before it was decided that the Off-Leash Taskforce would address these on its own. The Council will hold off until the next term to redocket these.

(Chair's Note: Items #156-20 and #157-20 were held in April, 2021 after concerns that the docket language was not sufficient to fulfill the Committee's intent. New items were docketed and later

passed by the Full Council with improved language to fulfill the intent of these items.)

A committee member said that these potential changes to the licensing process should be brought up with the new Clerk when she begins the job later this year.

Councilor Albright made a motion to vote No Action Necessary which carried 7-0.

The meeting adjourned at 9:01pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Josh Krintzman, Chair

Levingston Cove Improvements Project Funding Recommendation

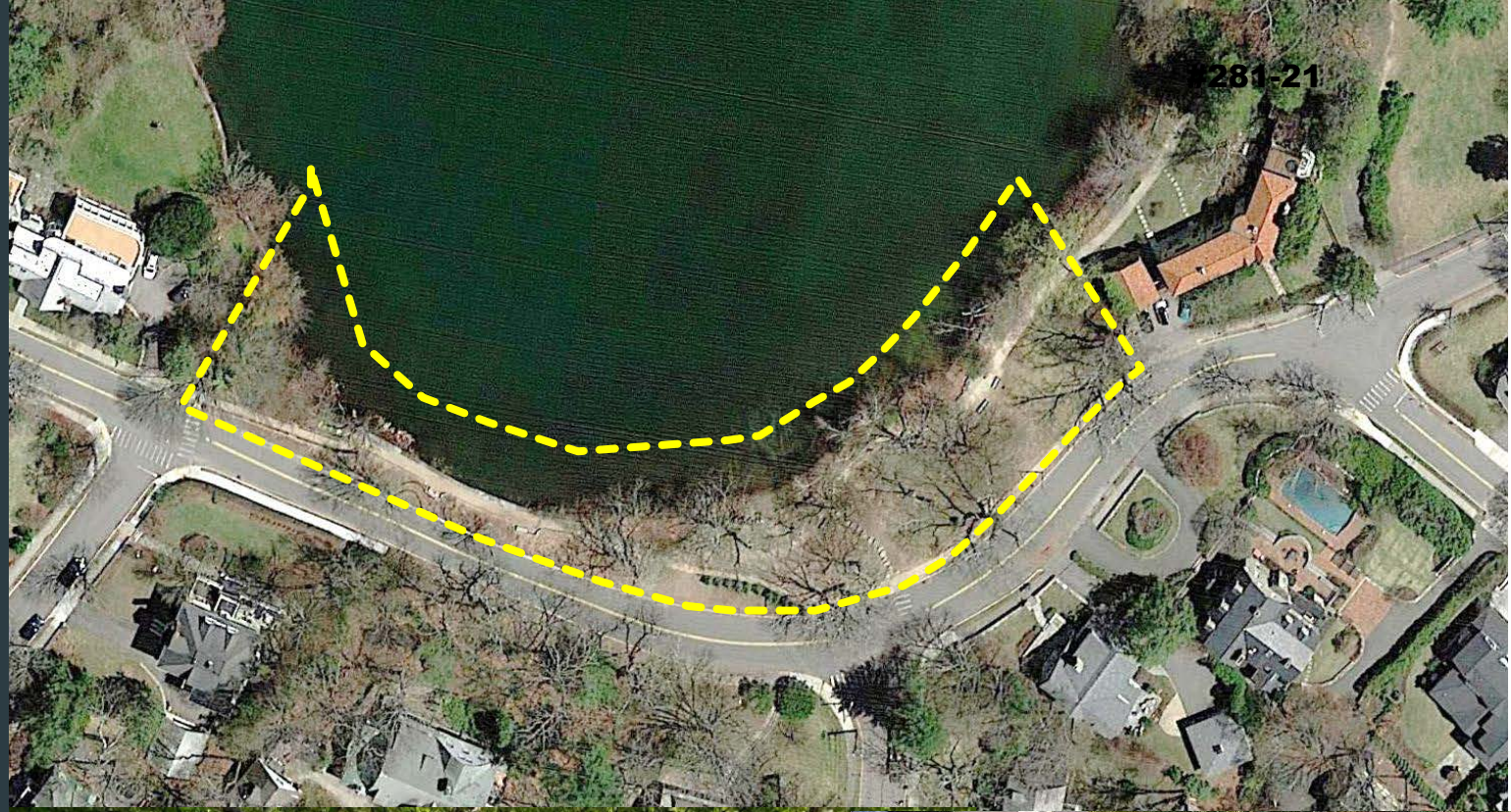
Community Preservation Committee

Presentation to Programs and Services Committee

September 22, 2021

Project Overview

- ▶ Levingston Cove is one of four public open space parcels surrounding Crystal Lake
- ▶ Popular and well-used site for fishing, water access and views, and passive recreational activities
- ▶ Crescent shaped parcel is approximately ½ acre of land with a steep grassy slopes and inaccessible pathways
- ▶ Existing Landscape badly eroded with soil and contaminants flowing into Crystal Lake
- ▶ Crystal Lake suffers from overuse and extreme stress, with erosion from this site adding to those problems



Current Funding Request

CPA funding is requested to construct new accessibility, erosion and passive recreation improvements throughout Levingston Cove including:

- ▶ Fully accessible pathways and ramps
- ▶ Cantilevered deck with safety railings and terraced seating
- ▶ New benches and on-grade deck with terraced seating
- ▶ Slope stabilization plantings and rain gardens and strategic pruning to improve views
- ▶ River stones and reused granite blocks to stabilize and improve water access points

Recommended CPA Project Funding

#281-21

| CPA Funding Accounts | Amount |
|---|-----------------------|
| CPA Open Space Prior Year Reserve Funds | \$288,068.80 |
| CPA Prior Year Undesignated Funds | 1,152,275.20 |
| TOTAL CPA PROJECT FUNDS: | \$1,440,344.00 |

CPA Funding is recommended to be divided between Open Space (20%) and Recreation (80%) category funds.

Project Funding Sources

| Funding Sources | Amount |
|--|--------------------|
| CPA Recommended Funding | \$1,440,344 |
| City Staff Time - oversight and management | 24,255 |
| Grant and State Funding (2016-2021) - conceptual design, design development and permitting, and construction oversight | 163,000 |
| Newton DPW (topographic survey) | 8,295 |
| TOTAL CPA PROJECT FUNDS: | \$1,635,894 |

Timeline

- ▶ Project Permitting anticipated Fall 2021- Summer 2022
- ▶ Construction Documents anticipated to be completed after permitting and comment review - Winter 2021 pending state permit approval
- ▶ Project Bidding and Contract Award anticipated Summer 2022 - Fall 2022
- ▶ Construction anticipated to begin Fall 2022

Questions & Discussion

▶ Thank you!

Athletic Fields Capital Improvement Plan Design FY2022-2025 Recommendation

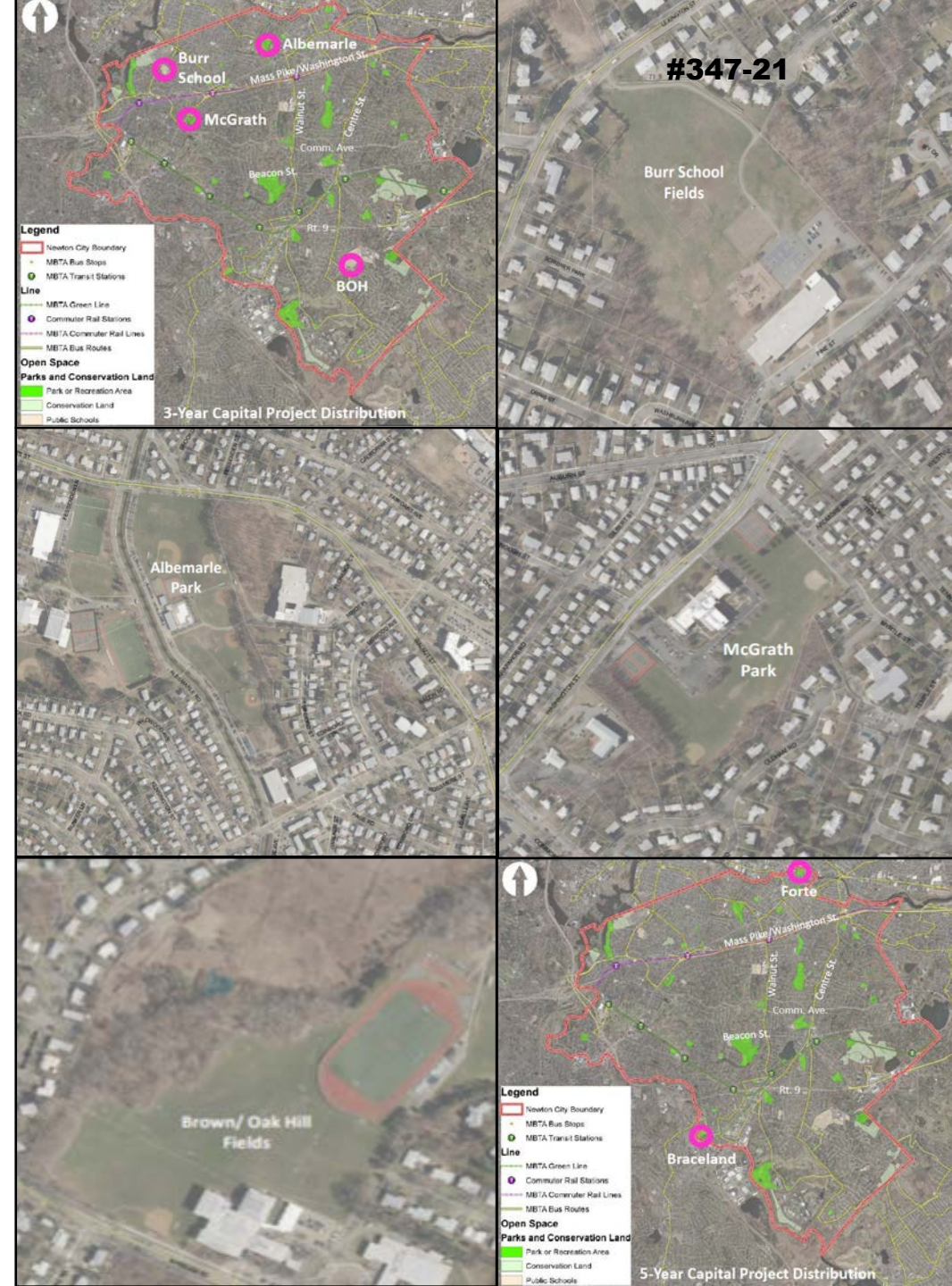
Community Preservation Committee

Presentation to Programs and Services Committee

September 22, 2021

Project Overview

- ▶ Newton has a critical need for high quality athletic fields to meet the growing demands of Newton residents and sports community
- ▶ A recent Parks and Rec community survey listed playing fields as second in terms of urgency and need and athletic fields as third in terms of greatest demand
- ▶ Project is proposed in cooperation with local team stakeholders and sport organizations
- ▶ Project will meet the following goals at each project sites:
 - ❑ Improve quality and quantity of multipurpose fields
 - ❑ Improve accessibility in Newton parks
 - ❑ Standardize park construction details for better/more efficient maintenance and site management
 - ❑ Invest equitably in Newton's parks and athletic fields Citywide



Current Funding Request

CPA funding is requested to hire an on-call design consultant to complete the studies and design work necessary to take the project from initial design development through construction and project completion.

This process will consider four sites: Russ Halloran Sports and Recreation Complex at Albemarle Park, McGrath Park, Burr School Fields, and Brown/Oak Hill Middle School Fields.

Any leftover funding would be applied to the same work at two additional sites: Braceland Park in Upper Falls and Forte Park in Nonantum.

Recommended CPA Project Funding

| CPA Funding Accounts | Amount |
|---|------------------|
| CPA FY22 Budget Reserve (Undesignated Funds) | \$420,000 |
| TOTAL CPA PROJECT FUNDS: | \$420,000 |
| <hr/> | |
| Total Currently in FY22 Budget Reserve (Undesignated Funds) | \$2,957,003 |
| Total Funding Remaining in FY22 Budget Reserve <u>IF</u> project is approved: | \$2,537,0030 |

Project Funding Sources

| Funding Sources | Amount |
|---|------------------|
| CPA Recommended Funding | \$420,000 |
| City Staff Time - oversight and management | 236,670 |
| Forte Park Artificial Turf Feasibility (Athletic League Funding) | 17,000 |
| McGrath Park Accessible Path (CDBG Funding) | 92,000 |
| Forte Park Lighting Upgrades (Developer Mitigation Funds) | 200,000 |
| Athletic Lighting Structural Assessment (Forte Park, Albemarle and Newton South Tennis Court) | 21,875 |
| TOTAL CPA PROJECT FUNDS: | \$987,545 |

Timeline

- ▶ Consultant Contracting Fall 2021
- ▶ Task 1: Multi-Site Topographical Surveys, Public Input and Conceptual Design Winter 2021- Spring 2022
- ▶ Task 2+3: Design Development through Construction Documents Spring 2022 - Fall 2022
- ▶ Task 4: Construction TBD

If funding available, work on Braceland and Forte Parks would begin once construction complete at above sites (anticipated mid-late 2023)

Questions & Discussion

▶ Thank you!

Nathan Giacalone

From: Nadia Khan
Sent: Thursday, September 23, 2021 10:26 AM
To: Nathan Giacalone
Subject: FW: Rodent Control Update
Attachments: Rodent Control Update 9.21.21.pdf

From: Jonathan Yeo <jyeo@newtonma.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, September 22, 2021 11:02 AM
To: City Council <citycouncil@newtonma.gov>
Cc: Nadia Khan <nkhan@newtonma.gov>; Danielle Delaney <ddelaney@newtonma.gov>; Linda M. Walsh <lwalsh@newtonma.gov>; John Lojek <jlojek@newtonma.gov>; Barney Heath <bheath@newtonma.gov>; Joshua R. Morse <jmorse@newtonma.gov>; Samuel Nighman <snighman@newtonma.gov>
Subject: Rodent Control Update

Honorable Council,

Please see the attached update on rodent control activities. We will discuss in more detail tonight at the P&S meeting.

Thank you,
Jonathan

September 21, 2021

Honorable City Councilors,

We have learned that discouraging rodents from living in our City is most successful as a community effort. We're so glad to work with the City Council on our rodent control efforts.

Our Health and Human Services Department (HHS) works with residents, business owners and other City departments to better understand rat behavior and teach us how to minimize their presence and impact on the community. They conduct site assessments/inspections based on reports of rodent activity and have been quite successful in working with homeowners and businesses to complete remedial actions. Click [here](#) for more information. (Some of the tips include picking up pet feces and cleaning up spilled birdseed, tightly closing trash containers, keeping grills clean, maintaining/covering compost piles, and covering openings greater than a ½ inch in diameter so they don't have a place to live.)

The Public Buildings and School Departments assess city owned buildings for pest issues, taking pest control steps when needed.

We use the special permit process by the City Council to require developers and owners of properties to have a rodent remediation plan when called for.

Next Steps:

We pulled together staff from across our Departments to look for additional rodent control efforts to compliment the ongoing site inspections, assessments, public outreach, and actions of our Departments.

On August 26, I announced a series of multipronged prevention, correction, and enforcement initiatives the City would move forward with:

- Newton's Inspectional Services Department will implement immediately a new policy requiring rodent control inspections/services for *every* full property demolition permit, including "by-right" projects that do not move through the special permit process.
- Newton's Planning & Development Department will implement a new policy to recommend to the City Council routinely and consistently on all special permit projects involving excavation that rodent control services be provided as a condition of approval and embedded in the Construction Management Plan. (This has historically been required only on larger projects.)
- The City of Newton will implement an environmentally sensitive rodent control program on City properties in areas experiencing issues (see below for new details).

- The City of Newton will be contacting the owners and contractors of all currently active demolition or construction sites involving excavation with information on rodent control best practices and resources.
- The Inspectional Services Department will provide rodent control advisory documents each time someone applies for a building permit.
- The City of Newton, led by the Chief Operating Officer Jonathan Yeo, will explore a rodent control financial assistance program/ service for residents with lower resources.
- The City of Newton will collaborate with the City Council on analyzing additional ways to strengthen and expand actions allowed under state laws to better enforce rodent control actions.

Rodent Control Program on City Properties

We have already developed an environmentally sensitive, safe rodent control program on City properties in and near areas that are experiencing issues. This is based on our integrated pest management program (IPM) and applies a data-driven approach to controlling the rat population here in Newton.

With input from Newton residents like you, our Health and Human Services Department has been tracking all rat sightings on a live city map. Using our geographic information mapping system, we overlaid the rat sighting maps with our city-owned parcels. This yielded a geographical method to deploy our IPM efforts on city-owned property in areas where Newton residents are reporting rat sightings. The following are the eight locations where we are targeting our efforts with a licensed certified pest control service company specializing in IPM techniques:

- Forte Park
- Pelligrini Park
- Sterns Park
- Boyd Park
- Coletti Magni Park
- Upper Falls Greenway
- Homer Street
- River Street Playground

The primary method we are using to control the rat population is ContraPest, a rodent fertility control liquid solution specifically designed for rodents. It is placed in secure bait stations. It is non-lethal and is simply birth control for rats. The bait stations are quite small. Potentially other rodents could go in and out of the bait station. If a bird or another predator ate one of the rodents after it ingested the ContraPest, there is no impact on the predator. Rats can go a lengthy amount of time in between feedings, but they drink roughly two ounces of water a day, and they typically will travel short distances in search of food and water. ContraPest is not only

a drinking source for rats, but it contains a high fat content and tastes sweet which draws them to return to the station. (Rats live 1-2 years in the wild, and female rats can have 6 litters a year, consisting of 5-10 rat pups.) ContraPest drastically reduces the fertility of rat populations which results in a sharp decline in population. Furthermore, this approach does not create the risks and secondary impacts to predators often seen when using rodenticides so other species will not be harmed.

This program will remain fluid and the locations we treat will adjust based on observations at the bait stations and based on feedback from the community.

To learn more about this method of rat control, please click [here](#) to check out an extremely successful program implemented in Washington, D.C. where this approach yielded a 95% reduction in reported rat activity.

The City's IPM contractor has also recently been deployed to City property with rodent burrow systems for targeted extermination measures; the contractor uses carbon monoxide, which is a best practice because of its ecological sensitivity.

Thanks go, in particular, to City Council President Susan Albright and Ward 1 City Councilors Maria Greenberg, Alison Leary, and John Oliver for their help on this challenging issue. We look forward to working closely with the Council as we look for additional effective strategies and/or changes to city ordinances and special permit conditions.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Yeo

Chief Operating Officer

City of Newton

Rodent Control Measures

Programs & Services Committee

September 22, 2021

Rats suddenly surge in Boston suburbs

By [Dugan Arnett](#) Globe Staff. Updated October 22, 2018, 12:00 a.m.



City of Newton Rodent Control Program

Ongoing Efforts

Our Health and Human Services Department (HHS) works with residents, business owners and other City departments to better understand rat behavior and teach us how to minimize their presence and impact on the community. They conduct site assessments/inspections based on reports of rodent activity and have been quite successful in working with homeowners and businesses to complete remedial actions. Click [here](#) for more information. (Some of the tips include picking up pet feces and cleaning up spilled birdseed, tightly closing trash containers, keeping grills clean, maintaining/covering compost piles, and covering openings greater than a ½ inch in diameter so they don't have a place to live.)

The Public Buildings and School Departments assess city owned buildings for pest issues, taking pest control steps when needed.

We use the special permit process by the City Council to require developers and owners of properties to have a rodent remediation plan when called for.



HISTORY



Rats have been a part of the Massachusetts ecosystem since the area was originally settled in the early 17th century. They are commonly found in most urban areas, including Newton and other neighboring communities, due to readily available food sources.

Rats are a known public health issue and tend to move freely around neighborhoods. Therefore, preventing rats will not be successful unless everyone works together.



For professional advice and/or possible treatment options, contact a **licensed pest control company**.

To report a rodent sighting, please visit:
www.newtonma.gov/rodentreport

This helps us track pest control issues and trends.

Newton Health & Human Services Department
1000 Commonwealth Ave
Newton, MA 02459

617-796-1420

www.newtonma.gov/health

City of Newton, MA



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Oh, Rats!

Let's work together to prevent rodents.



Discouraging rats from living in our city will be most successful as a community effort.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

RAT BURROWS: These are holes in the ground 4-6 inches in diameter where rats may be living. Look for burrows under fences, buildings, homes and cement slabs surrounding structures. You can test whether the burrow is active by filling in the hole with dirt and checking to see if it is cleared quickly.



RAT TRACKS: In the winter, you may be able to spot rodent tracks leading to or from a burrow.

DROPPINGS: Rats can leave 40 -50 droppings per day and are larger than mouse droppings (approx. ¾ inch in diameter)

SMUDGE MARKS (body oils) on walls

SOUND of movement in walls and attics

FAMILY PETS staring intently at a blank wall

TIPS ON PREVENTION

MAINTAIN YOUR PROPERTY

- Keep grills clean
- Store woodpiles neatly with a 12-inch ground clearance
- Remove dog and cat feces promptly
- Thin vegetation and keep grass and shrubbery cut short.
- Pick up fallen tree fruit.



ELIMINATE FOOD SUPPLY

- Do not leave pet food out at night
- Remove birdfeeders that rodents can access
- Remove water sources
- Make sure your compost is maintained and covered.



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RODENT-PROOF STRUCTURES

- Don't give rats a place to live. Cover openings that are greater than ½ inch in diameter with concrete, sheet metal or wire mesh.
- Keep trash containers and/or dumpsters closed at all times, tightly sealed and emptied frequently



Share this information with your neighbors. Rodent problems are a community issue. Working together will help reduce this problem.

City of Newton Rodent Control Program

New Steps

- Newton's Inspectional Services Department will implement immediately a new policy requiring rodent control inspections/services for *every* full property demolition permit, including “by-right” projects that do not move through the special permit process.
- Newton's Planning & Development Department will implement a new policy to recommend to the City Council routinely and consistently on all special permit projects involving excavation that rodent control services be provided as a condition of approval and embedded in the Construction Management Plan. (This has historically been required only on larger projects.)
- The City of Newton will implement an environmentally sensitive rodent control program on City properties in areas experiencing issues (see below for new details).

City of Newton Rodent Control Program

New Steps

- The City of Newton will be contacting the owners and contractors of all currently active demolition or construction sites involving excavation with information on rodent control best practices and resources.
- The Inspectional Services Department will provide rodent control advisory documents each time someone applies for a building permit.

Contrapest Rodent Fertility Control

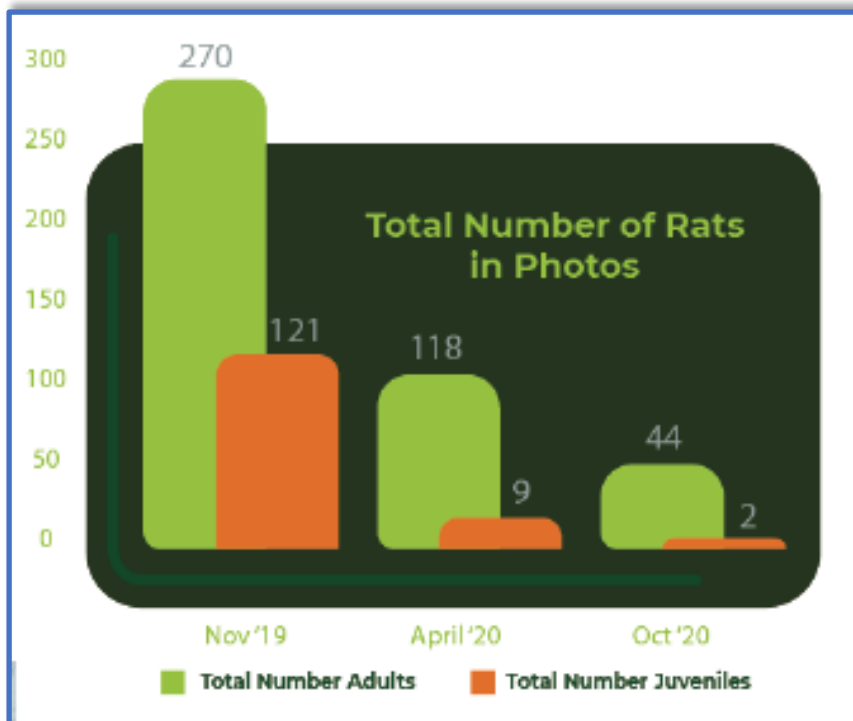
contrapest

SENESTECH LAUNCHES SUCCESSFUL CAMPAIGN IN NATION'S CAPITAL



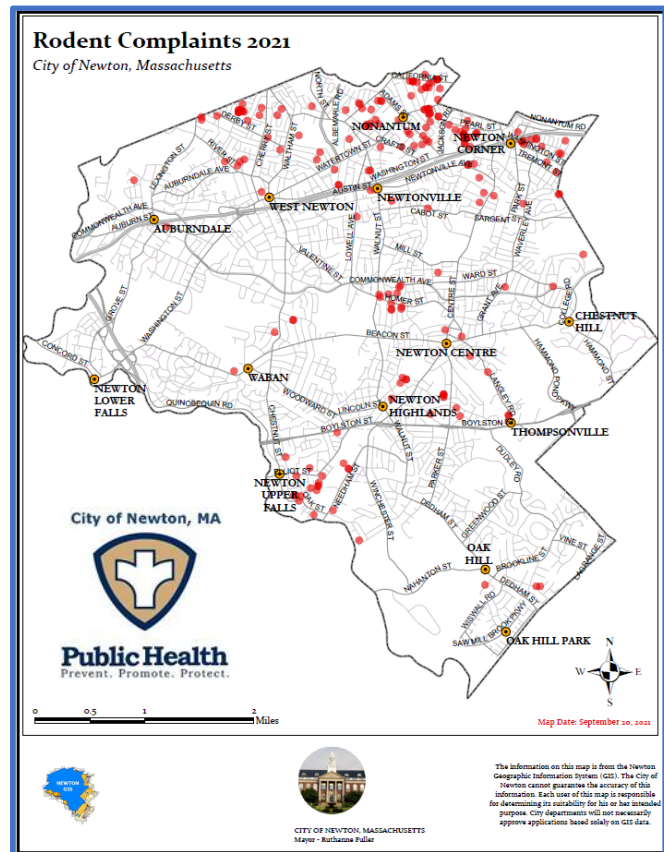
SENESTECH

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Contrapest® is registered federally as a restricted use Product when used as directed. However, in some states, due to applicator registration it is a Restricted Use Product. Please check with your local state regulatory agency for determination regarding status. Read and follow all label instructions for target species Norway and roof rats.



Contrapest Rodent Fertility Control

City Property Deployment



Deployment Locations Based on Sightings

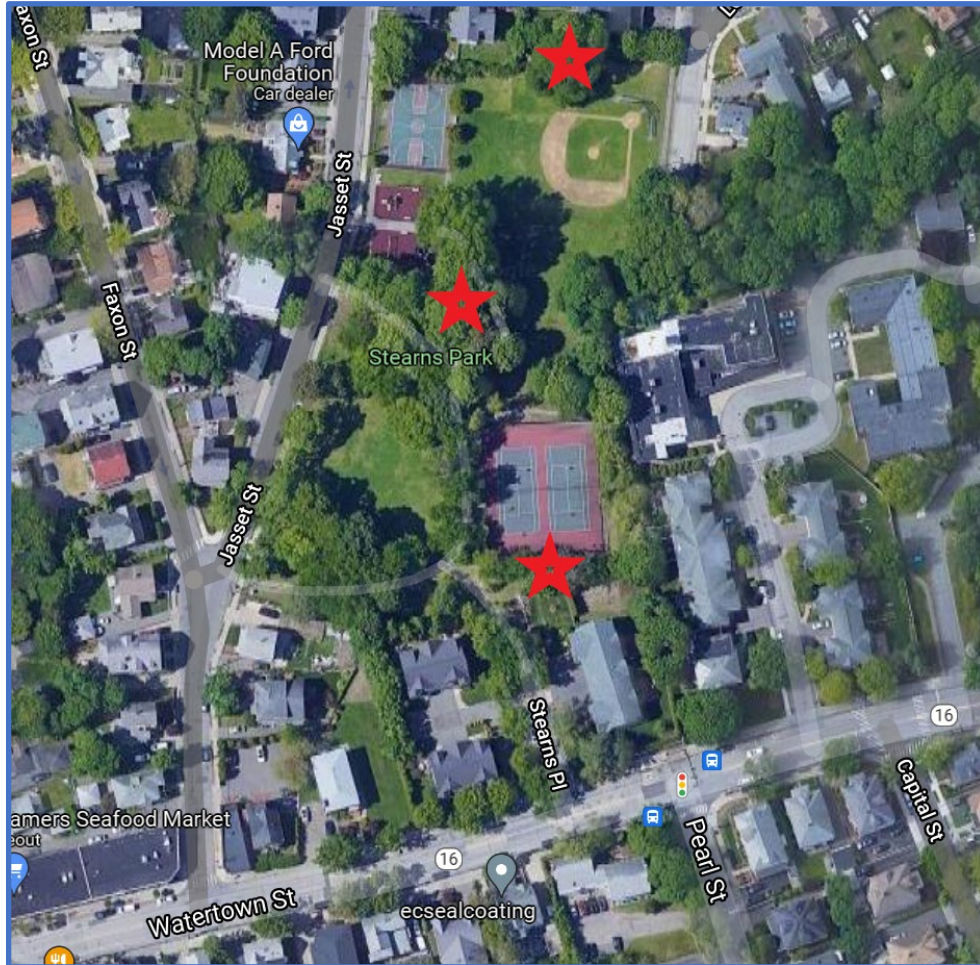
- Forte Park
- Pelligrini Park
- Sterns Park
- Boyd Park
- Coletti Magni Park
- Upper Falls Greenway
- Homer Street
- River Street Playground

Contrapest Rodent Fertility Control

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City Property Deployment

Stearns Park Bait Station Locations

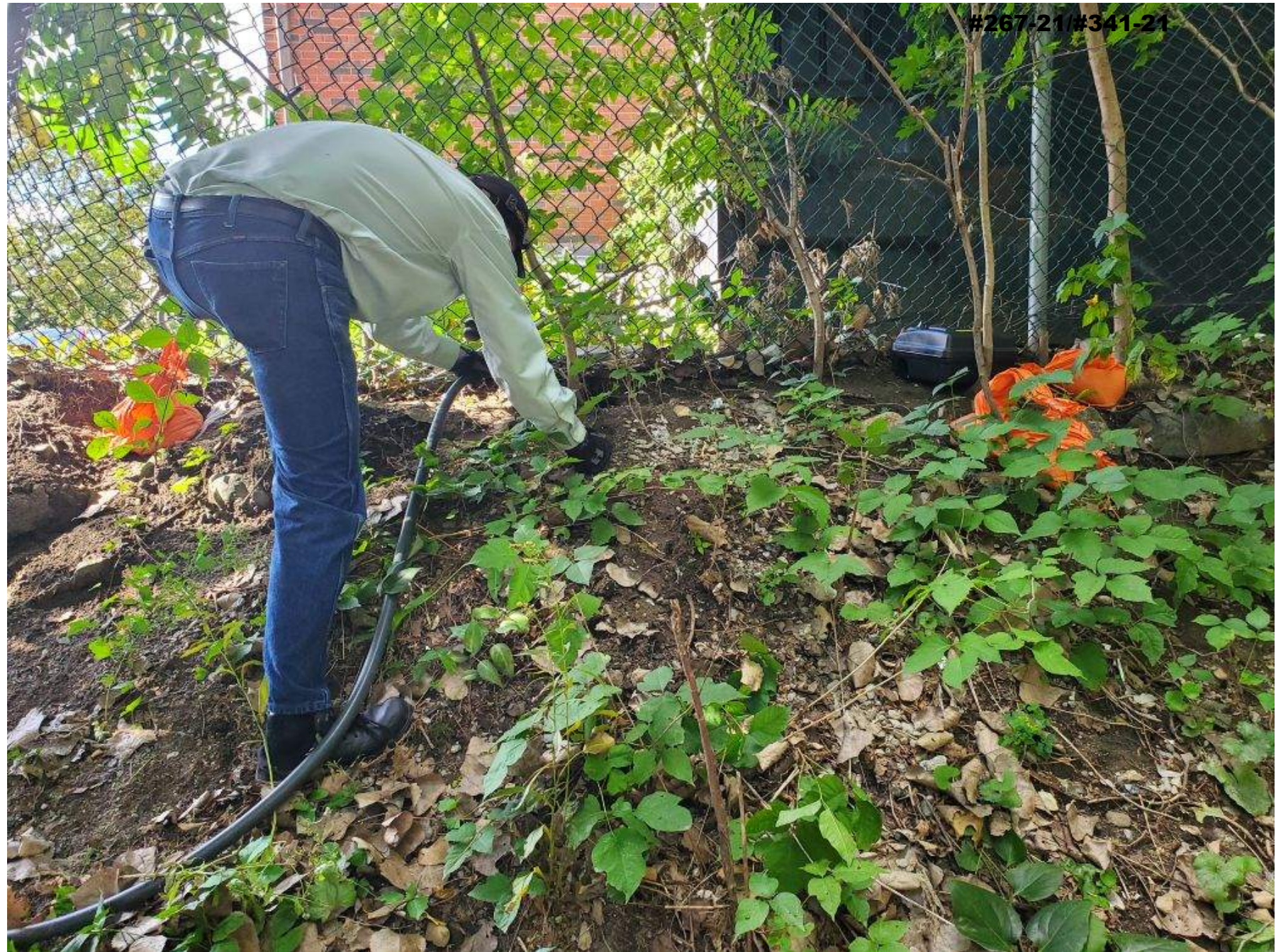


First Deployment – September 21



Targeted extermination
measures at burrows with no
secondary impacts

Photo from 9/21/21



Next Steps

- Financial Assistance: The City will explore a rodent control financial assistance program/service for residents with lower resources
- Strengthen Enforcement: The City will collaborate with the City Council on analyzing additional ways to strengthen and expand actions allowed under state laws to better enforce rodent control actions

City Coordinating Team

- Jonathan Yeo, Chief Operating Officer
- Linda Walsh, Deputy Director – Health & Human Services
- John Lojek, Commissioner – Inspectional Services
- Josh Morse, Commissioner – Public Buildings
- Marie Lawlor, Law
- Moses Barmonyallah and Brianne Gray, HHS Environmental Health Specialists
- Assistance from Planning and Parks, Recreation & Culture