

Stuart Dash described the needs analysis in which the committee engaged. He noted some of the interesting/surprising findings. For example, there are areas in Porter Square with no open space within a quarter of a mile. The committee then established a list of top priorities for areas in need of particular type of parks and for uses for which additional space is needed. These recommendations were as follows:

Park Types

Recommended Area of Cambridge

Tot Lots

North Prospect Street
Porter Square

Neighborhood Parks

Area 4/Sennott Park area
Central Square
Porter Square
Prospect Street

School Parks

Fletcher Elementary
Graham and Parks Elementary
Longfellow Elementary
Maynard Elementary

Community Parks

Area 4/Sennott Park area
Mid-Cambridge
Porter Square/Northern Aggasiz
Upper Cambridgeport

Park Trails

Grand Junction railway pathway
Creating a direct connection between Fresh Pond Reservation and Danehy Park.
Advocacy of a rail and trail conversion of an older railroad line through Somerville that connects North Point and Linear Park at Cedar Street.

Park Uses

Recommendations

Soccer/Field Hockey/Lacrosse

The creation of 3 to 4 multi-purpose fields that would accommodate soccer, field hockey and lacrosse, equally. If possible, these fields should be located in the eastern half of Cambridge.

Baseball

One additional full-sized high school baseball field.

Informal Uses

More emphasis on passive uses through the city. If well designed, such uses can be accommodated in small spaces.

The Committee also recommended that the City consider the following next steps while pursuing open space acquisition opportunities:

- Establish a permanent committee dedicated to providing advice to open space acquisition and enhancement;
- Form or closely affiliate with an open space non-profit to facilitate open space acquisition;
- Expand resources for open space enhancement, maintenance and design, with a focus on facilities in priority areas and for priority uses;
- Continue the city's efforts to improve access to open space; and
- Incorporate review of open space into the permitting process for large development projects.

Councillor Born then invited comments from the members of the Committee.

Joe Grassi stated that he appreciated the opportunity of being involved in this committee. This committee really started with efforts at the high school to have adequate playing fields for the high school. He is concerned that the recommendation will not positively affect athletes at the high school. There is a need for a recommendation for one location at which there are several playing fields. The criteria were not fair, and gave too much weight to development concerns. East Cambridge should have come out as a priority and it did not. The use of census tracts was a problem. He stated that he will be submitting a minority report and he hopes that all can work together to get this back on track.

Robert Winters, 366 Broadway, stated that he observed the process as very objective. The maps can be somewhat hard to read. The maps clearly indicate that all of East Cambridge is in need of a large urban park. He emphasized the importance of moving swiftly to be able to acquire the land in this competitive real estate environment. The report presents an ideal, but some of the recommendation may need adjustment to the realities of the current real estate market.

Martha Eddison, Riverside, stated that she is very interested in small spaces as well. With relatively small amounts of money, we can make a tremendous improvement by reclaiming current parks through maintenance. The City can aim higher. Albany, New York and Portsmouth, New Hampshire are approximately the same size as Cambridge and have beautiful parks. She suggested taking the Parks Department out of Public Works. She stated that she has been very impressed with the work of the Community Development staff, but the City Council should be aware

that a committee composed of staff and citizens means that there are certain things that won't be said.

Don Harding, Area 4, stated that the committee work was very interesting. The staff was very good. He stated that he would recommend that city staff be staff to the committee, not members and that the chair be a citizen. His main object is to keep kids straight and sober. For this you need sports and coaching for 9-12 year-olds and follow-through activities at the high school level. He noted that this is a parochial city where kids don't want to leave their neighborhoods. A large urban park is needed right in or next to Area 4, East Cambridge.

Robert Lindemood, 1643 Cambridge Street, expressed his appreciation for the very competent staff. The committee tried to provide the City Council with a thoughtful, balanced view as a baseline from which to start.

Councillor Born then invited questions and comments from members of the City Council.

Councillor Davis stated that this is an excellent report. She applauded the use of the density of children as a criteria. She stated that she learned a great deal from the report. She also emphasized the finding of the need for playing fields in the eastern part of the city and noted the need for improved transportation to get kids to playing fields. Councillor Davis also noted that the Franklin Street Park would be a good one to reclaim. Finally, she emphasized the need for open space around schools. She thanked the Committee members and staff for their hard work.

Councillor Sullivan emphasized the importance of maximizing the use of current space, as was done with the Corporal Burns playground. The City is at a point where it just has to acquire open space. He asked what \$1 million of debt service would bring. Mr. Healy said with a ten-year bond, \$1 million of debt service would finance about \$7.5 million. Councillor Sullivan thanked the committee.

Councillor Toomey thanked the committee members and the staff. He said that this report certainly is a beginning. He does have some questions and concerns, including the following:

1. Referring to page 26 figure 3.1, he asked whether the map takes into account private open space.
2. Are MIT fields factored into open space?
3. Why didn't East Cambridge get the same consideration as Area 4, since Ahern Field is even smaller than Sennot Field.
4. Donnelly Field is one of the most over-used park in the city. In figure 2.7 neighborhood frisbee tournaments should be added. Donnelly is used more like a large urban park although it is classified as a small neighborhood

park. Another community park like Donnelly and Russell would take the pressure off Donnelly.

5. Figure 2.10 on page 20 is somewhat difficult to interpret.
6. Figure 3.1 on page 26 inflates the amount of open space in East Cambridge. Centanni Way is not a park. Charles Park is hidden behind the Lotus Building, and First Park is similarly located. Lechmere Canal Park also fits in this category.
7. On page 47, the recommendation for tot lots does not fit the criteria. For example, the recommendation for tot lots at North Point, where there are no children and is the Agassiz area. He also questioned the recommendation for a large urban park at North Point. He recommends that it go south of McGrath Highway, which is a very significant barrier.
8. Councillor Toomey then emphasized the need for more playing fields in East Cambridge. He favors acquisition of the old Budweiser site for additional fields.

Councillor Born then moved to public comment.

Michael Sullivan, 144 Pemberton Street, stated that he would like to see some attention to preserving the wild spaces as well.

Stash Horowitz, 12 Florence Street, focused on page 42, the summary of recommendations for next steps. The first four recommendations speak for themselves. The fifth, to incorporate review of open space into the permitting process for large development projects is very important and should be incorporated into all development including as-of-right development. He urged consideration of the Guilford site as a place to create multiple playing fields. There should be open space linkage. The MDC Master Plan has some potential for adding open space. He noted the difficulty of accessing the open space along the river. He said that the development community has had its way for too long; it is time for residents to stand up for their quality of life.

Robert LaTremouille, 875 Massachusetts Avenue, stated the definition of open space FAR should change from .25 to .05. The needs assessment makes the Francis Avenue one of the neediest areas, which is ridiculous. There is no consideration of wild space. There is no mention of the area that was destroyed next to the BU Bridge. Alewife is not distinguished. One of the proposed priorities shows a path right over the nesting place of the white geese, on page 36.

Marilyn Wellons, 641 Green Street, stated that the \$1.5 million transferred to the MDC is a very big investment in land that the City does not own. The MDC plan will destroy a grove of mature trees. For those people who want to know that there are places for animals, habitats in this city, the destruction of the goose meadow is a real loss.

Donald Downs, 187 Otis Street, emphasized the importance of acquiring playing fields in the eastern part of the city.

Joe Buswell, 25 Berkshire Street, stated that he is involved in kids' sports leagues. Last year there were 100 kids trying out for 40 Babe Ruth spots. There are only two big diamonds in the city. He described his attempts to get a playing field for a new term. He finally had to go to Somerville, and Somerville found space for him.

Ellen Surow, Green Street, noted page 34, the first sentence under top priorities, which states, given the difficulties with acquiring enough land for a large urban park in eastern Cambridge, and the problem with devoting a high percentage of resources to a single need, such a park was not identified as a priority. She said that the report states a need to support the MDC's natural areas at Alewife and along the river. It is important to preserve wild space.

Ann Lynch, 72 Hooker Street, Allston, stated that she has spent most of her weekends at the goose meadow for the last four to five years.. She has spent time in close face-to-face contact with the geese. She never has seen them attack any human being. The Charles River has become a fatal attraction. It will attract development that will destroy the area.

Fred Yalouris, member of the Green Ribbon Committee, stated that the proposed path that has upset the supporters of the white geese was included there because there is a railroad track; it was not intended to harm the geese in any way.

Roger Frymire, Fairmont Avenue, spoke in support of bike paths to connect the existing pathways. He said that the Budweiser facility could be a site for open space next to MIT, alongside Simplex, is also a possibility.

Danielle Tersian, 14 Glendale Avenue, urged the City Councillors to visit the goose meadow which is now an eroded unhealthy eyesore. She requested that the geese be protected and that geological assessments be undertaken before work around waterways.

Kelly Schnede, 14 Glendale Avenue, stated that the acquisition and maintenance of green areas is a wonderful idea and the idea cannot be complete without consideration of wild areas. The MDC does not have a good track record for maintenance of its open space. The \$1.5 million payment to the MDC should be revisited.

Councillor Davis stated a concern about incorporating some concerns of Mr. Grassi and asked the City Manager what he would recommend as the next step. Mr. Healy said that the recommendations should go forward and that means forwarding this report to the full City Council for its consideration.

Councillor Davis suggested moving the report with a positive recommendation.

Councillor Born said that perhaps another working meeting in committee could help to shape and give specificity to the recommendations that the City Council will consider. She is interested in more information about some issues raised, such as whether, in evaluating the needs of neighborhoods near institutional parks, the Committee took those into account.

Mr. Yalouris said that the Committee discussed privately-held space and MDC-owned space at great length. At the point of listing priorities, if a neighborhood was near private open space, the neighborhood did not become a priority. There was consideration that the long-term use of open space use areas not under City control could not be guaranteed. Mr. Yalouris also said that the Committee tended not to count public plazas like Centanni Park in its open space inventory.

Councillor Born asked whether the Committee considered what the composition of the permanent committee should be, and Mr. Yalouris answered in the negative.

Mr. Grassi stated his preference for careful consideration of the reports in committee.

Councillor Davis said that she is having a hard time understanding the problem that Mr. Grassi has with the report. Among the committee's top priority recommendations is a recommendation of the creation of three to four multi-purpose playing fields, located if possible in the eastern part of the city.

Mr. Grassi stated that the priority is not on a map. Committee Members Albe Simenas and Fred Yalouris explained that page 36 figure 3.6 represents a mapping of the data. It must be looked at along with the text recommendation for playing fields. The next represents the committee's actual recommendations. The committee did not identify any site; the committee steered away from trying to recommend specific sites.

Mr. McGowan said that the Committee looked at park types and park uses. Park types was a very geographical analysis. The uses are not represented on the map.

Councillor Davis suggested amending the text on the map page 36 to read "Top Priorities of Park Types" – does not include all priority park uses."

Mr. Yalouris emphasized that the text represent the recommendations of the committee; the maps are supplemental.

Mr. Grassi said that this report doesn't solve the high school's problem unless there are multiple fields in the location.

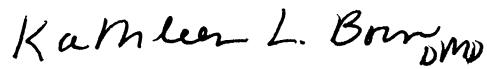
Councillor Sullivan stated that he believes the report should stay in committee for the committee to complete the discussion.

Councillor Sullivan agreed without objection that the report will remain in committee and there will be another working meeting.

Councillor Born thanked those present for their participation.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:35 P.M.

For the Committee,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathleen L. Born" with a stylized "DM" or "MD" at the end.

Councillor Kathleen L. Born, Chair

City of Cambridge

**PUBLIC FACILITIES, ART AND
CELEBRATIONS COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

*Councillor Kathleen L. Born, Chair
Councillor Henrietta Davis
Councillor Michael A. Sullivan*

In City Council July 31, 2000

The Public Facilities, Art and Celebrations Committee held a public hearing on June 7, 2000, beginning at 6:55 P.M. in the Sullivan Chamber for the purpose of considering the Report of the Green Ribbon Open Space Committee.

Present at the hearing were Kathleen L. Born, Chair of the Committee, Councillor Henrietta Davis, Councillor Michael A. Sullivan, Councillor Timothy J. Toomey and City Clerk D. Margaret Drury. Also present were the following members of the Green Ribbon Committee: Carol Bellew, Co-Chair, Nancy Coleman, Martha Eddison, Robert Lindamood, David McGowan, Fran Mastroianni, Albe Simenas, Anne Strong, Robert Winters and E. Fred Yalouris. City staff in attendance included Robert W. Healy, City Manager, Richard Rossi, Deputy City Manager, Lisa Peterson, Assistant to the City Manager, Beth Rubenstein, Assistant City Manager for Community Development and Co-Chair of the Green Ribbon Committee, Melaina Bowker, Deputy Director for Community Development, and Carleton E. Hart, Neighborhood Planner, and Stuart Dash, Director of Planning.

Councillor Born convened the hearing and explained the purpose. She invited a presentation.

Robert Healy began by thanking the members of the Green Ribbon Committee. He expressed his hope that the City can move forward to implement the recommendations of the committee.

Melaina Bowker then outlined the presentation and introduced Carlton Hart to describe the methodology used by the committee. He showed slides of demographics that the Committee looked at, including maps of population density, income distribution, age structure and distribution of children; current open space and park use and programming; recreation needs and adequacy of available fields for programmed uses and projected future recreation needs.

The committee went through a park categorization, starting with the National Park and Recreation standards with some adjustment. Using all of this information, the committee identified areas of need for each park type: tot lots, neighborhood parks, school parks, and community parks. The committee also identified underserved park uses, and recommended priorities in this area.

Committee Report #1

5254

A communicaiton was received from D. Margaret Drury, City Clerk, transmitting a report from Councillor Born, Chair of the Public Facilities, Art and Celebrations Committee, for a public meeting held on June 7, 2000 for the purpose of considering the Report on the Green Ribbon Open Space Committee.

In City Council July 31, 2000

Report Accepted
PLACED ON FILE