

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

City Hall Annex - Inman & Broadway - Cambridge, Mass. 02139

(617) 876-6800
EXTENSION 344

TO: John H. Corcoran, City Manager
R.A.B.
FROM: Robert A. Bowyer, Director DATE: November 20, 1972
SUBJECT: North Cambridge Skating Rink

In response to the City Council's request of November 13, 1972, we are submitting plans showing the approximate location of the proposals for the North Cambridge skating rink. The advantages and disadvantages of the two proposed locations, New Street and Sherman Street, are listed below:

New Street Site (MDC Preference No. 1) - Advantages

1. This site would be more appropriate for a regional facility because of its accessibility to users from other cities and towns under the MDC's jurisdiction. In addition, location of the rink on New Street would facilitate the MDC's maintenance and security activities.
2. The New Street site would be far enough from residential areas to avoid disrupting the residential neighborhoods of North and West Cambridge.
3. A rink at this location would be compatible with regional shopping facilities at the Fresh Pond Shopping Center, and would not conflict with nearby commercial uses.
4. Adequate access is available to this site from the residential areas of North and West Cambridge, particularly if new roads and/or walkways are built through the Dump and a pedestrian overpass is installed at the B & M Railroad tracks.
5. The New Street site would have a minimum traffic impact on local residential streets.
6. Provision of a new fire station in this area, as proposed in the Capital Improvements Program (page 56), would increase the rink's security.

New Street Site - Disadvantages

1. The New Street site occupies a portion of the Dump which has the least favorable subsoil conditions, due to the depth of refuse in this area. Thus, the site would probably add to the MDC's construction costs, since piles would be required through the refuse to the bearing strata below. In addition, there would be a small premium for methane gas control, and settlement might occur around the building, increasing the need for on-going maintenance. These extra costs would probably require that the MDC secure additional funds from the Legislature.
2. Construction of a rink at this location would increase the pressure on the City to accelerate restoration of the Dump as a whole.

Sherman Street Site (MDC Preference No. 2) - Advantages

1. The Sherman Street site would be more convenient to the residents of North and West Cambridge, both by foot and by car.
2. Subsoil conditions at this location are more stable than those at New Street. Although pilings probably would be required, the additional funding, which might be necessary, would be less than that needed to construct a rink at New Street.
3. The Sherman Street location is already established as a recreation facility.
4. This site has been recommended by the North Cambridge Skating Rink Task Force, and is consistent with the City's position during the past two years.
5. Construction of the rink at the Sherman Street location could be at a somewhat lower cost to the MDC and could be started sooner if reconstruction of the ball field it displaces did not have to be completed before displacement.

Sherman Street Site Disadvantages

1. Sherman Street is not readily accessible to MDC security cars or to users from other cities and towns under the MDC's jurisdiction.

2. This site is in the midst of a residential area, and would not be compatible with the surrounding neighborhood due to the noise, early morning and late night use, crowds of people, and bright lights associated with regional skating facilities. The rink itself is a large structure relative to the nearby residential buildings, and would be physically out of character in that location.
3. The rink would introduce additional traffic, including cars from out-of-town, on local residential streets such as Sherman, Garden, and Walden.
4. At least one ball diamond at St. Peter's Field would be dislocated by the rink.
5. A rink at this location would be adjacent to an existing City playground, a situation which conflicts with MDC criteria for selecting rink sites.
6. The MDC has made construction of the rink at Sherman Street conditional upon the City's development of five adjacent acres of recreation space.

Conditions Common to Both Sites

1. A rink at either New Street or Sherman Street would be unlikely to conflict with other development on the Dump since both sites are in a peripheral location.
2. Bus service is available within walking distance of both New Street and Sherman Street.
3. The rink would be compatible with other large scale recreation facilities which might be developed on the dump.
4. Present traffic loads at the intersection of Concord Avenue and Fresh Pond Parkway are extremely heavy, and a rink at either New Street or Sherman Street would increase the volume of traffic at this intersection.

Other Pertinent Information

1. The cost of the North Cambridge skating rink, wherever it is located, will be apportioned among all cities and towns under the MDC's jurisdiction, according to a complicated formula which is based essentially on population figures and taxable property valuations.

2. Approximately 20 parking spaces are sufficient for an MDC skating rink since the greatest automobile use is that of parents who drop off and pick up their children.

3. The present effort to plan for the future development of the Dump will be completed within three months. However, in my judgement it is NOT necessary to delay a decision on the location of the rink until the plans for the Dump have been finalized. The location of the rink at either New Street or Sherman Street will be considered as a "given" during the planning process for the Dump.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Taking into consideration the many factors mentioned above, neither the New Street site nor the Sherman Street site is obviously preferable to the other. Although Sherman Street is somewhat more convenient to residential areas, and the subsoil conditions at this location will cause less of a delay in construction, New Street appears to be a better site because of its greater general accessibility and its lesser impact on residential areas. In conclusion, we lean toward the location of the MDC facility at New Street because it could be better in terms of the long range development of the Dump, would have less of a negative impact on the nearby residential areas, and would provide the better combination of regional and local accessibility.

DUMP SITE

8 ACRES BOUNDARY FOR
MDC JURISDICTION

RINK

Parking for 20 cars

TENNIS

Fresh Pond
Shopping Center

NEW STREET

BAY STATE ROAD

BIRCH STREET

FERN STREET

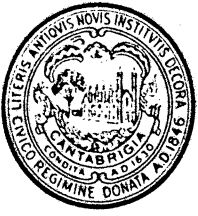
FIELD

CONCORD AVE

New Street Site



Sherman Street Site



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

57 INMAN STREET, CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139 • TEL. 876-6800

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Robert C. Thompson
Chairman

Mrs. Garrett Birkhoff
Vice-Chairman

John E. Gregory

Miss Nancy Page

Wilson H. Rains

J. E. Robinson

Mrs. Jacek von Henneberg

Mr. Paul E. Healy, City Clerk

Re: North Cambridge Skating Rink Location

We would like to give you opinions of the Conservation Commission as to the North Cambridge Skating Rink proposal now under consideration by the Council.

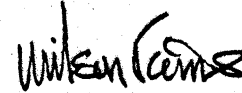
The Commission strongly recommends that no specific location be assigned for the rink until the master planning now under way for the area is complete. Thus we oppose any vote as to either the St. Peter's Field location or the New Street area at this time.

By way of assuring the local citizens and interested groups that a rink will indeed be provided, we recommend a vote guaranteeing to the MDC that space for its rink and appurtenant parking will be allotted within the overall planning area.

We believe that, at this time, the Council might appropriately agree to provide the 2.2 acres previously requested by the MDC solely for the rink. However, we believe that the MDC's goal of providing further recreational opportunities at its sites may well prove to be in harmony with Cambridge's own needs and desires in this area. Therefore, it is likely that further facilities can be worked out between the City and the MDC during the planning process for the area; these would of course be subject to a further vote of agreement in Council.

As to the relative virtue of the two sites, St. Peter's Field and New Street, the Commission at this point favors the latter for reasons of regional access, minimum disruption to the neighborhoods and the probability that the New Street location will offer the most potential for further MDC facilities consistent with the City's needs.

The Commission believes that a specific location for the facility in accord with an agreed master plan can be determined by this Spring. Since we do not think that a Fall, 1973 date is realistic for occupancy of the Rink at either location, we therefore believe that the short delay occasioned by waiting for the master plan will not unduly compromise the construction schedule for 1974 occupancy.


Wilson Rains



CAMBRIDGE CIVIC ASSOCIATION
2 ESSEX STREET
CAMBRIDGE, MASS. 02139
(617) 876-9176

November 27, 1972

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: David Harris, President
423-5725 X177 days
547-4141 evenings

CCA POSITION ON MDC RINK SITE

The Cambridge Civic Association supports the MDC commissioners in their selection of New Street as their first choice for location of the proposed MDC skating rink.

The CCA believes there are several clear-cut advantages of New Street over St. Peter's Field for the site of the rink:

First, the new rink will be a regional facility whether it is located on St. Peter's Field or on New Street. Use of the rink by patrons from Medford, Arlington and Belmont, as well as from Cambridge, would lead to traffic and parking concentrations detrimental to the residential neighborhood abutting St. Peter's Field.

Second, accessibility of the New Street site for most Cambridge residents is almost equal to that of St. Peter's Field, and when the dump has been developed will in all likelihood be equal.

Third, St. Peter's Field provides an open space amenity that enhances the surrounding neighborhood.

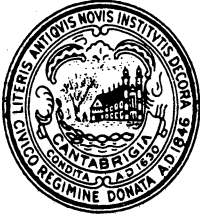
Fourth, St. Peter's Field at present is a city park and recreational area heavily used by Cambridge residents for a variety of activities. This intensive, varied and local use could be lost for some time, under present plans, until an alternative facility is available.

The Cambridge Civic Association believes that the proposed MDC rink can be located on the New Street site without interfering with future development of the city dump.

For these reasons, the CCA urges the City Council to accept the New Street site.

#

S. -262



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139
Tel. 876-6800

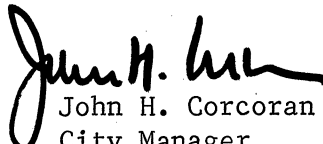
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
JOHN H. CORCORAN
City Manager

November 27, 1972

To the Honorable, the City Council:

I transmit herewith self-explanatory communication
from Robert A. Bowyer, Director of the Planning and Development
Department, dated November 20, 1972, relative to the
North Cambridge Skating Rink.

Very truly yours,


John H. Corcoran
City Manager

JHC/b

~~#9~~ 262
Agenda #1.

Location of the Skating Rink in the North
Cambridge Area.

In City Council

November 27, 1972

TABLED FOR 1
WEEK

Dec 4 1972
Order Adopted
FOR NEW STREET
LOCATION

Sund 12