

share the benefits of community greens with their communities and neighborhoods. They also provide guidelines and design principles for successful projects, as well as fundraising techniques and sources.

To begin the process of creating a community green there must be a group of interested home or building owners who agree to its creation and would like to work with Community Greens. Once an agreement is reached a deed mechanism is created; in many cases an easement has been used. The legal mechanism that binds the property is determined on a project by project basis with the guidance of Community Green. It is important that the mechanism ensures that the community green remains in place as the property changes hands.

### **Benefits**

According to Community Greens the following benefits are associated with creating an open space:

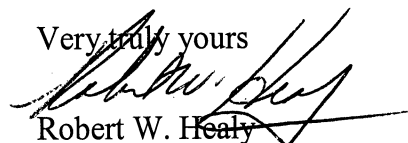
- Easily accessible and safe play space for children;
- Building of strong communities through neighbors enjoying and managing their garden space together;
- Improvement of users' quality of life through increased casual interactions and new friendships; and
- Visually unifying the block by providing a substantial green space.

Surrounding neighbors may also benefit from the creation of community greens, through the rise of property values, and increased safety and security of the area due to neighbors looking out for each other. The environment may also benefit from increasing the city's tree canopy on these newly planted spaces.

### **Application to Cambridge**

We expect there to be limited opportunities in Cambridge for the creation of community greens. In many neighborhood yards are small and often not contiguous, making it difficult to create meaningful shared yard space. However, we will make information about Community Greens available on the City's web site and make literature from Community Greens available as appropriate at community meetings for those circumstances where creation of a community green may be possible. In such cases, we will provide technical assistance to interested parties. We will also work with developers to ensure that the feasibility of creating community greens be explored whenever larger areas of land are being developed.

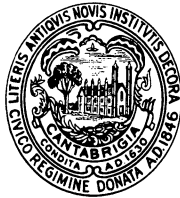
Very truly yours



Robert W. Healy

City Manager

RWH/dls



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CITY OF CAMBRIDGE • EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

*Robert W. Healy, City Manager*

*Richard C. Rossi, Deputy City Manager*

July 29, 2002

To The Honorable, The City Council:

In response to Awaiting Report Item Number 02-44, regarding Community Greens Program and its possible implementation in Cambridge neighborhoods, Beth Rubenstein Assistant City Manager for Community reports the following:

**Community Greens**

"Community Greens" is a concept that involves creating shared neighborhood space. This idea is promoted by a newly created national organization, based in Arlington, Virginia, called Community Greens (<http://www.communitygreens.org>), which is a partnership between Ashoka: innovators for the Public and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Community Greens encourages the development of shared space inside urban blocks in cities across the United States. Its focus is on collaborating with local organizations and providing resources and services to assist these organizations in creating community greens.

Community greens can be created through three different approaches including private parties aggregating small private parcels into larger, shared community space through the use of easements; developers taking the initiative to incorporate common areas in multi-family residential projects; or by privatizing public ways, such as alleys, and converting them into landscaped, shared open space.

Shared spaces that are created through community greens are generally not open to the public, but are used by participating neighbors who enter into legal land agreements with each other. The spaces are usually fenced to protect against liability, and are privately maintained by its user. Typically, a fee is paid by all owners/users which is used to maintain the space. The fee is determined by the needs and constraints of the residents, the amount of land to be maintained, and the amount of time the community is willing to volunteer.

**Resources available from Community Greens**

Community Greens is a national organization that does not approach communities directly, but instead work with local partners such as non-profit organizations and local government. They recommend that local organizations and local governments

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**Consent Agenda #29**

**Awaiting Report Item**  
**Number 02-44**, regarding  
Community Greens Program  
and its possible  
implementation in Cambridge  
neighborhoods.

**In City Council July 29, 2002**

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