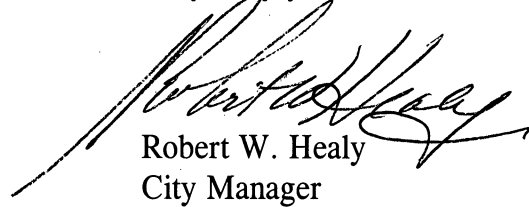


The City recently requested that the TPL explore the option of acquiring four parcels abutting the park at 82 Pacific Street. This purchase request was made to TPL so the City could exercise a future option to purchase these parcels from TPL and increase the publicly owned open space in Cambridge. The park at 82 Pacific Street, currently used as a soccer field, is abutted by four parcels. The park is 59,198 sq. ft. in area. The addition of four parcels would bring the total land areas to 92,915 sq. ft. or approximately 2.1 acres. The park and abutting parcels are bound by Pacific Street, Brookline Street, Tudor Street and Sidney Street.

(2) *Vacant land owned or controlled by the City.* A review of City-owned property finds no vacant land that could be converted to open space at this time.

(3) *Use of Volpe National Transportation Building for Open Space.* Director of Recreation Paul Ryder has been in communication with Lynn Murray, Chief of Communication and Technology Outreach Division for the Volpe National Transportation Building, to discuss the potential of Cambridge Youth Soccer utilizing the grounds of the Volpe Building for youth soccer games. A meeting is scheduled for early August to further discuss this matter.

Very truly yours,



Robert W. Healy
City Manager

RWH/mec



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21.

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
ROBERT W. HEALY
City Manager

July 27, 1998

RICHARD C. ROSSI
Deputy City Manager

To The Honorable, The City Council:

In response to Awaiting Report Item Nos. 4, 8 and 13, regarding (1) the feasibility of establishing an Open Space Acquisition Fund, (2) the conversion of City-owned vacant land for open space, and (3) the use of the Volpe National Transportation property for open space, please be advised of the following:

(1) *Open Space Acquisition Fund.* The Finance Department is currently in the process of finalizing FY98 year end results. As the City Council is aware, FY98 was another strong fiscal year for the City. Once a Free Cash number (fund balance) has been certified by the Massachusetts Department of Revenue in conjunction with the establishment of the FY99 tax rate, it is my plan to present a recommendation for a capital appropriation for the purpose of land acquisition for use as open space. Lacking a certified Free Cash amount from the state as well as final FY99 state aid amounts, I am hesitant to recommend an exact number at this time.

Also, at this point I would not recommend a pre-set formula such as a percentage of Free Cash as mentioned in the Council Order. The reasons for this are as follows: A.) the City already has an ambitious capital improvement plan for items such as a new police station, renovated fire stations and a new main library any of which, along with other smaller projects may require Free Cash; B.) the annual allocation of \$4,500,000 to the Affordable Housing Trust is 50% funded from Free Cash and I would not want to see that funding jeopardized; C.) the City will not always have large amounts of Free Cash and may need these balances for other pressing needs; and, D.) the City should work open space acquisition and development into its regular long term debt program (bonding), as well as identify other means of financing open space acquisition.

The recommended capital appropriation for open space acquisition will be just the first step in the process. An equally important and more complex issue will be the development of criteria and guidelines to be used to ensure geographic and use (passive/active) diversity so that all residences of the City can benefit from the addition of open space.

In addition, the City has begun discussions with the Trust for Public Land (TPL), a national non-profit land conservation organization, to assist in the acquisition process. The TPL assumes the risk of purchasing parcels of land which are intended to be sold to government agencies. In the event the sale to the public sector cannot be made, TPL sells to another willing buyer.

Consent Agenda #21

J Cal 3

560
Relative to AR #4, 8 and 13 regarding
the feasibility of establishing an Open
Space Acquisition Fund, the conversion
of City-owned vacant land for open space
and the use of the Volpe National Trans.
property for open space respectively.

In City Council July 27, 1998

CHARTER RIGHT
BY Councillor Toomey

9/14/98

Report Accepted.

Placed on file