

Mr. Garber explained that originally District One was much bigger, but as he looked at the proposal, he wanted East Cambridge to have more attention. Although District Three is much bigger, the largest park area, Danehy Park and Fresh Pond are not under the Department of Public Works. Mr. Garber noted that there is certainly room for fine tuning in the district layout plan. He went on to explain that Parks Supervisors will put together the daily maintenance schedule, and will be responsible for "riding herd" on private contractors. Certain functions will remain citywide with dedicated areas, such as rubbish maintenance, and irrigation repair.

Mr. Garber stated that the DPW has a landscape coordinator on board, Clara Spinelli, who is doing a great job. He is considering recommending a horticulturist and a seasonal planting crew.

Mr. Garber stated that once the personnel are in place, good in-service training is needed. He will want each district supervisor to earn certification from the National Playground Safety Institute and to have a Massachusetts Pesticide Applications License. All onsite personnel will get some training in athletic fields maintenance. All working foremen will get CPR certification.

Mr. Garber then reviewed the equipment augmentation plan. He concluded by noting that the implementation will take time; everything will not improve at once. Councillor Born thanked Mr. Garber for his presentation and invited Mr. Rossi to comment.

Mr. Rossi stated that another positive initiative under way is cooperation with the Mt. Auburn Cemetery Horticultural staff. They are very interested in working with the City on some traffic island improvements on Mt. Auburn Street and also are talking about cascading greenery over the fence to add significant greenery on Mt. Auburn Street.

Mr. Rossi stated that the City is trying to take a comprehensive view without sacrificing maintenance of large park areas.

Councillor Davis stated that she was concerned about the prior district map. She asked whether accessibility and responsiveness to the public by district personnel has been considered in this discussion.

Mr. Garber explained that the division was made based on the estimate of the time it will take to complete all of the tasks necessary to have well-maintained parks.

Councillor Davis asked what the park supervisors will do in the winter. Mr. Garber said that there is a great deal that must happen in the winter and described the tasks.

Councillor Davis asked how the Park Superintendent's position fits in with the Green Ribbon Committee. Mr. Rossi stated that Mr. Garber will be working with that committee.

Councillor Davis asked who will coordinate with the MDC on open space issues. Mr. Rossi stated that it depends on what the issue is. If it is recreation, it is Paul Ryder; if it is planning, it is Community Development Department; and if it is maintenance, it is DPW. However all of these departments work together on these issues and communicate. Mr. Garber stated that he has already worked with Paul Ryder on several issues.

Councillor Davis asked who is going to take political leadership over these issues. Councillor Sullivan noted that Representative-Elect Barrios has evidenced interest in the MDC issues.

Councillor Sullivan related complaints about human feces in the Cambridge Common tot lot. Councillor Sullivan stated that he would like to ensure that there is a run-through of every park for maintenance every day. Mr. Garber stated that he would like to have every district supervisor at every park in his district every day.

Councillor Sullivan requested signage at Corporal Burns Park to identify it as city-owned. He then asked about the parks maintained by private contracts. Mr. Garber stated that it will be the district supervisors' job to "ride herd" on the private contractors.

Councillor Sullivan asked if contracts are being prepared now. Mr. Garber stated that he is reviewing contracts now and the City is deciding whether to renew for one more year or re-bid them all.

Councillor Born asked if "Superintendent of Parks" is a new title. Mr. Dunphy stated that this position has been on the books for a long time but which has been vacant.

Councillor Born asked if there is any plan to review the distribution of what is done privately and what is done in-house. Commissioner Dunphy stated that Mr. Garber is trying to analyze the work on a task-oriented level to identify what the DPW's strengths are and what is best done by private contractors.

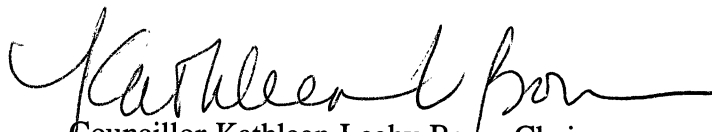
In response to a question from Councillor Born, Commissioner Dunphy stated that the budget implications of this initiative are being reviewed and will be reflected in the new budget request.

Councillor Born stated that if there are seasonal planting crews, this can be a training opportunity for residents. She also suggested publicizing this initiative, including using Cable TV.

Councillor Born stated that if there are seasonal planting crews, this can be a training opportunity for residents. She also suggested publicizing this initiative, including using Cable TV.

Councillor Born invited public comment. There was none. This portion of the meeting ended at 5:15 p.m.

For the Committee,



Councillor Kathleen Leahy Born, Chair



Response to Council Order #044

**Status Report:
Neighborhood Parks Initiative**

December 9, 1998

Ralph E. Dunphy
Commissioner

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Implementation of the Neighborhood Parks Initiative commenced in late September, with the appointment of Greg Garber as Superintendent of Parks. Mr. Garber had served previously as the director of the Park and Recreation Commission for the Town of Nantucket, as well as assistant director of athletics at Harvard University.

Within the first six weeks of his tenure, the superintendent visited every park parcel in the City, and began to develop a sense of the status quo operations of the Parks Division. He also began to contact key citizen advocates and parks user groups to assess their interests and concerns.

Within the last four weeks, the superintendent has begun to examine the key element of the Initiative, the parks district concept. The notion of a confederation of three parks districts, each with its own maintenance staff and administrative supervisor, is intended to promote streamlined communication, both citizen/Departmental and intra-Departmental. It is also hoped that the respective staffs will invest a healthy measure of pride in its "home turf," perhaps even a cultivating a friendly competitive spirit among them.

After reviewing the original district model proposed last year, and after his own examination of the City's parks inventory, the superintendent has suggested a redistricting as described below.

- District 1, or "East," is comprised of Neighborhoods 1, a portion of 2, and 3 and 4. It is bounded by Prospect Street on the west, and on the south by Massachusetts Avenue from Central Square to the Charles River. It contains 11.6 parks acres not currently under service contracts, including nine tot lots.



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December 9, 1998

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- District 2, or "Mid," is comprised of Neighborhoods 5, 6 and 7, plus a portion of 2. (Also included is a sliver of Neighborhood 3, to incorporate Vellucci Park at Inman Square.) It lies west of Prospect Street, south of Mass. Ave. between Central Square and the Charles River, and east of Kirkland and JFK Streets. It contains 7.3 parks acres not currently under service contract, including ten tot lots.
- District 3, or "North," is comprised of Neighborhoods 8 through 13. It lies north and west of Kirkland and JFK Streets. It contains 9.5 parks acres not currently under service contract, plus Neville Manor. It includes ten tot lots.

This redistricting is based on the principle of task time required to adequately service each district, including but not limited to the cleaning of labor-intensive tot lots and the mowing of large grassy areas. Although District 3/North is geographically much larger than the other two, its two largest open space parcels (Fresh Pond and Danehy Park) are not under Parks Division jurisdiction, and features fewer of the compact, concealed, "grittier" parks that are prevalent in the other districts.

Once the districts are crystallized, it will be incumbent upon the superintendent to give critical thought to personnel needs. As is already known, interviews for the three parks district supervisors have been completed, and recommendations have been forwarded to the City Manager's office. Those appointments are imminent. The district supervisors will be counted upon to develop a daily maintenance schedule, ensure service contract compliance, and represent the Division to the residents of that given district.

Soon to be appointed is an additional working foreperson (discussions are underway for adding yet another, which would bring the division total to three, one for each district). These personnel will directly supervise the field personnel in the discharge of their duties.

More evaluation must be done to determine the optimum number of field personnel required. In addition to the three general maintenance crews, a handful of functions will be maintained City-wide in the interest of efficiency (e.g. irrigation repair, field marking). Also under consideration is the addition of a horticultural specialist to provide technical expertise, as well as a seasonal planting crew to support the existing landscape project specialist.

① → future foreperson
② → prioritized parks
③ → positions

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These personnel need and deserve in-service training to ensure quality performance. It is the superintendent's intent to have each district supervisor earn certification from the National Playground Safety Institute (already held by the superintendent), as well as a Mass. Pesticide License. Arrangements are being made for all field personnel to receive specialized on-site training in the care of athletic fields from the head groundskeeper at the 1996 Olympic Games. All working forepersons will acquire Red Cross certificates in first aid and CPR.

In addition to training, parks maintenance staffs must have appropriate and sufficient equipment to properly execute its tasks. A new leaf vacuum has been purchased to replace a failing one that is more than 15 years old. Equipment trailers and side-mount tool boxes have been ordered for each district crew cab, ensuring that no matter what the task, the right implement will always be on hand.

Naturally, augmentation of staff, skills and equipment is incremental, and it will be many months before tangible results are evident. However, as the Initiative progresses, the Parks Division will be more assertive in preventative maintenance, turf care, and basic cleanliness of its inventory.

City of Cambridge

In City Council January 11, 1999

The Public Service Committee held a public meeting on December 9, 1998, beginning at 4:12 p.m. in the Sullivan Chamber for the purpose of discussing the status of park management and maintenance.

Present at the hearing were Councillor Kathleen Leahy Born, Chair of the Committee, Councillor Henrietta Davis, Councillor Michael A. Sullivan, Councillor Katherine Triantafyllou, and City Clerk D. Margaret Drury. Also present were Deputy City Manager Richard Rossi; Commissioner of Public Works Ralph Dunphy; Superintendent of Buildings, DPW; Greg Garber, Superintendent of Parks, DPW; Lisa Peterson, Assistant to the City Manager; Paul Ryder, Director of Recreation, Human Service Department; Stuart Dash, Director of Community and Neighborhood Planning, CDD; and Carlton Hart, CDD.

Councillor Born convened the hearing and explained the purpose. She invited Mr. Rossi to begin the discussion. Mr. Rossi introduced Ralph Dunphy, Commissioner of Public Works, who distributed a written status report on the Neighborhood Parks Initiative (Attachment A). He introduced the DPW staff present, including Greg Garber, the new Superintendent of Parks. He reported that the assignment of three parks supervisors has almost been finalized. Each district will also have a working foreman. Mr. Garber has evaluated the equipment and made recommendations as to what is needed. Mr. Garber is also evaluating the current maintenance contract. Mr. Dunphy then introduced Mr. Garber.

Mr. Garber introduced himself and described his previous experience, which includes Director of the Parks and Recreation Department in Nantucket and four years as Assistant Director of Athletics Operations at Harvard University.

Mr. Garber said that he has visited every park in the City and has contacted some of the key users and advocates of the park. Within the last month, he has begun to focus on the parks district concept. He has made some changes to the original district layout. District One is bounded by Prospect Street, Massachusetts Avenue, and the Charles River. It contains 11.6 parks acres which are not currently under service contracts. District Two is a portion of Neighborhood Two, Vellucci Park at Inman Square and Neighborhoods Five, Six and Seven. It contains 7.3 parks acres which are not under service contract. District Three includes Neighborhoods Eight through Thirteen. It has 9 ½ acres plus Neville Manor open space which are not under service contract.

Committee Report #9

S43

A report from Councillor Born,
Chair of the Public Service
Committee, for a hearing held
on December 9, 1998, for the
purpose of discussing the status
of park maintenance and management.

In City Council January 11, 1999

*Report Accepted
Placed on file*