



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

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EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

ROBERT W. HEALY

City Manager

RICHARD C. ROSSI

Deputy City Manager

October 5, 1992

To the Honorable, the City Council:

In response to Awaiting Report #20 regarding the condition and safety of playgrounds, please be advised of the following:

Within the past year, the City's Open Space Committee conducted an inventory and evaluated the condition of each of the City's 70 parks and playgrounds. Of the 70 parks, 57 were found to be in excellent or good condition, or to have minor problems; 13 were found to have serious problems. Of these 13 parks, over half of them are in the process of being rehabilitated or are in the planning stages. In the case of a dangerous or obviously unsafe play structure, it is the policy of the City to either dismantle the structure or temporarily fix it until such time as a new structure can be funded. As the Council is well aware, over the past years the City has had a very aggressive capital improvements program for its parks and playgrounds, a practice we hope can continue. Safety criteria has always been - and will continue to be - paramount in selecting playgrounds to be rehabilitated.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission recently issued safety guidelines for public playgrounds. These guidelines, intended to be voluntary guidelines rather than mandatory rules, extensively detail safety features for playground equipment and surfacing material. These guidelines are being taken into account as the City plans new playgrounds and renovates existing structures.

It is difficult at this time to report on the condition of Cambridge's parks in accordance with these guidelines. Since the guidelines are very specific - detailing fall heights, bar diameters, ladder, stairway and ramp slopes, platform and guardrail heights, etc. - the City would need to hire a professional park inspector to assess each of our playgrounds, at a cost of approximately \$30,000. We are currently assessing the situation and will put together a plan to systematically review each park for compliance with these guidelines.

Very truly yours,

Robert W. Healy

City Manager

CONSENT AGENDA ITEM #11

5-786

Awaiting Report Item No. 20 regarding
the condition and safety of playgrounds.

In City Council,

October 5, 1992

Placed on file