



City of Cambridge

Communication #5

IN CITY COUNCIL

December 14, 1998

COUNCILLOR DAVIS
COUNCILLOR BORN

RESOLVED: That the City Council go on record supporting the desire of the Riverside Neighborhood and the Martin Luther King School community to preserve "Putnam Park," the lot at the corner of Putnam Avenue and Kinnaird Street, as a permanent public park; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to communicate the City Council's position to the owner of the site and to report back to the City Council with a plan to acquire this lot as open space and to place this issue on the agenda of the new Green Ribbon Open Space Committee.

In City Council December 14, 1998

Adopted by the affirmative vote of nine members.

Attest:- D. Margaret Drury, City Clerk.

A true copy;

ATTEST:-

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "D. Margaret Drury".

D. Margaret Drury
City Clerk

HD

KB

Comm #5

Resolved: That the C-C go on record supporting the desire of the Riverside neighborhood and the Martin Luther King School Community to preserve "Putnam Park," the lot at the corner of Putnam Avenue and Kennard Street, as a permanent public park; ~~now~~ and be it further

Resolved: That the CM be + hb is requested to communicate the City Council's position to the owner of the site and to report back to the City Council with a plan to acquire this lot as open space and to place this issue on the agenda of the new Green Ribbon Open Space Committee

w/s

KK
assent

**Background on Putnam Park;
76 - 78 Putnam St.**

**Presentation to:
Honorable City Council
Cambridge, MA 02139**

December 14, 1998

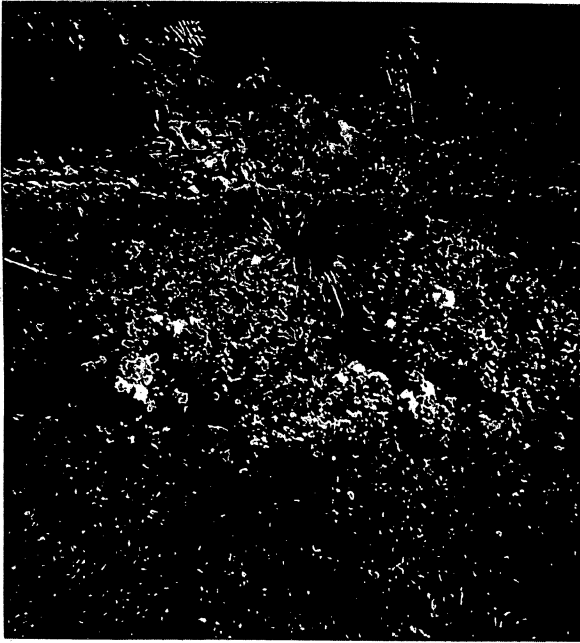


Friends, Neighbors and Visitors to Putnam Park are greeted as they enter by the wood Putnam Park welcome sign. The entrance is typically decorated with flowers of the season such as tulips in the spring or marigolds in the fall and has a welcoming presence that says Hello, enter & enjoy!



The center of the park is where all the paths meet. Dogs come together, neighbors share stories. A Sunday morning, weekday afternoon, anytime. The pink roses greet friends and encourage exchange.

PUTNAM PARK: A YEAR OF IMPROVEMENTS



A special pansy plot with colors that span the rainbow and a small pond in the middle.



A great Cambridge mural painted by students at the King Open School.



A Park Bench donated by local neighbors.
Mulch laid during a spring clean up day.



A flower display that brightens the north side of the park.

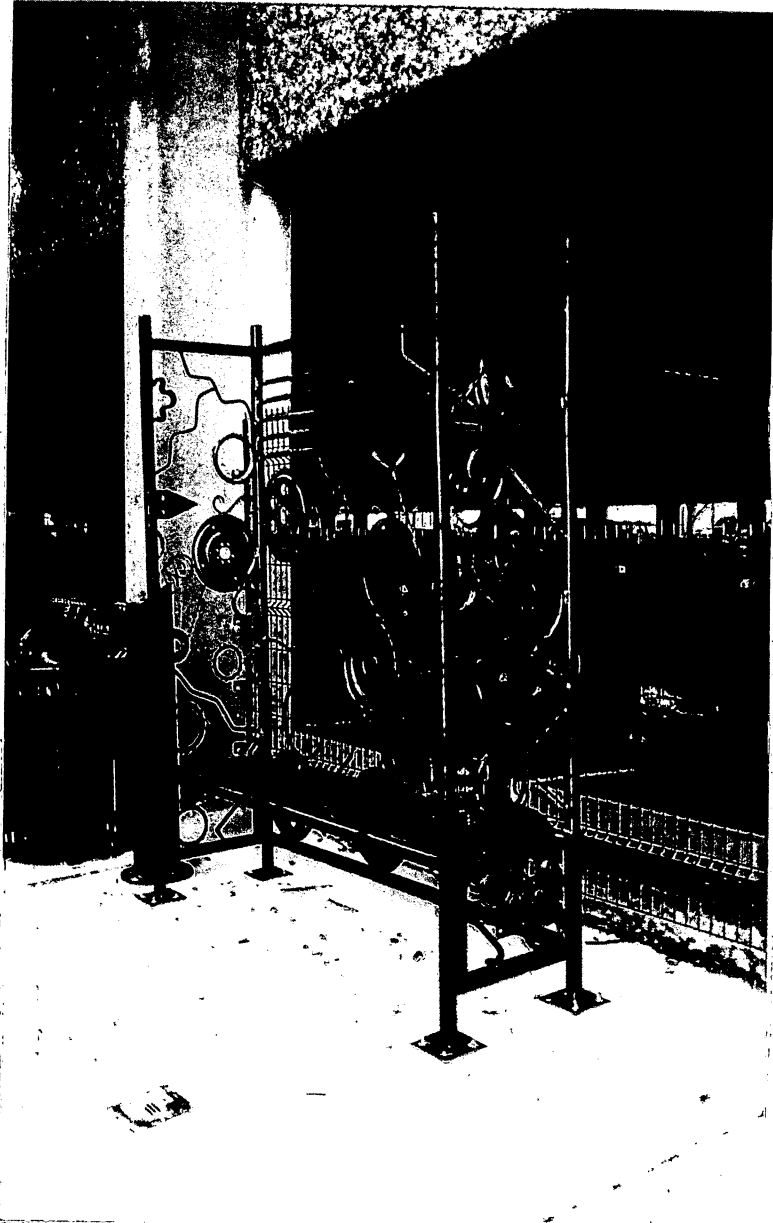
PUTNAM PARK: A YEAR OF IMPROVEMENTS



A picnic bench for neighbors to gather at and enjoy a peaceful day.



A grape vine planted in conjunction with Earthworks, a local not for profit.



"The Freedom Bench" - A steel bench that has been shown in numerous sculpture exhibit designed by local artist Alice Myers (coming October 10).

(Not Shown)

Two community garden plots started by local residents.

12 Laurel St.
Cambridge, MA 02139

23 November, 1998

Richard Valente
43 Allen St.
Arlington, MA 02174

Dear Mr. Valente,

At the most recent meeting of the Cambridge Greenspace Alliance, we had a presentation by the neighbors of 74 - 76 Putnam St., "Putnam Park." We want to thank you for allowing the neighbors to maintain the site and would encourage you to arrange a meeting with them or a local group such as ours to discuss your plans for the property.

At our meeting, the residents presented the exciting activities that are happening at the Park, even now as we enter the winter. The residents recently started a community compost pile to produce soil that will aid in next year's plantings. The students from the neighboring King School planted tulip bulbs which will be used in a science experiment to study the evolution of Spring. Finally, the residents also expect a large donation of tulip bulbs which will, as last year, bring a rainbow of colors to the community.


The Cambridge Greenspace Alliance represents a network of citizens, concerned and knowledgeable about open space in the City of Cambridge. We have landscape architects and planners that can work with you concerning your property. We are also aware of grant programs that can be accessed that can directly benefit you financially if your property is maintained as public open space.

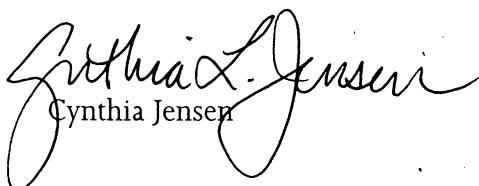
Please contact Debbie from the Cambridge Greenspace Alliance at 868.8481 or Michael from the Friends of Putnam Park at 868.9413 to arrange a short meeting to discuss how we can collaborate to ensure the future of the park.


Thank you again for your time. We look forward to talking to you.

Sincerely Yours,


Deborah Kershner


Karen Carmean


Cynthia Jensen


Marilyn Wellons

A History of Putnam Park

On the cross streets of Putnam and Kinnard Sts. lies Putnam Park, an 8000 square foot plot of flowers, raised beds, dogs, and gravel paths. The property, 74 - 76 Putnam St., however was once a three story residential home built in the 1860s. A bracketed-italianated style house with a mansard roof, the house was determined by the Cambridge Architectural Inventory in 1965 as of great importance to the neighborhood and noted to be one of the nicest in the area.

The house was over time converted into a six unit apartment and occupied until 1983. Frustrated with rent control, the landlord evicted the tenants in search of higher rents. The property remained vacant until December 1986 when it was demolished by the City of Cambridge. The house was not well maintained during the vacancy and after a couple of small fires and vagrant vandalism, the house was determined to be beyond rehabilitation and was a hazard to the local neighborhood.

The now vacant property sat for a few years and then evolved into a neighborhood jungle with overgrown weeds and grasses. In 1993, the residents, concerned about the look and feel of their neighborhood, began turning the property into a park. The grasses were cut and a plot plan was established to turn 74 - 76 Putnam St. into a park. Although the landlord has not participated in the creation or maintenance of the park, early on he generally supported the neighborhood's efforts.

Beds evolved, the park center was established, and an entrance way began to welcome local visitors. The neighborhood put in a gravel walkway. A local resident donated a wood bench. Trees were planted and flowers are planted annually.

Every year the park gets better and better. This past year residents planted over 250 tulip bulbs which were donated by a local garden store. The students from a King Open School painted a mural about Cambridge. The residents worked with a local not for profit, Earthworks, to plant two grape vines. Two residents started community garden plots and two residents started special flower plots, one with a beautiful array of pansies and another with a southwestern feel.

This fall two places for people to gather came to the park. A new picnic bench and "The Freedom Bench" - a steel sculpture bench designed by local artist Alice Myers were put at the park. The picnic bench is a great place to gather with local neighbors and the freedom bench has helped make the park more artistic and has made the southern part of the park more accessible.

In addition, this fall students from and the students from the Martin Luther King School planted tulip bulbs as part of a curriculum analyzing the relationship of the growth of tulip bulbs and the evolution of spring. Students from the King Open School also planted tulip bulbs as part of their efforts to become more involved in the local community.

Finally, the residents started a community compost pile that will make soil for the 1999 plantings.

450 Franklin St.
Cambridge, MA 02139

October 24, 1998

Richard Valente
43 Allen St.
Arlington, MA 02174

Dear Mr. Valente,

We are writing to you today to follow up on our letter sent in early October about 76 -78 Putnam St., "Putnam Park." As we head into the fall there is increasing excitement about the park. In October, a local artist placed a metal sculpture bench, "The Freedom Bench," on the southern side on the park. The bench was recently in a summer sculpture exhibit in Maine. The residents are also getting ready to start a compost pile that will make soil for the 1999 plantings.

We would like to get together with you for a short meeting to discuss your plans for the property. We are interested in the future of the site and want to discuss how we can envision a future that would be mutually beneficial. Please contact Michael at 498-6236 so we can arrange a time of mutual convenience.


We, again want to thank you for allowing the park to enrich the community.

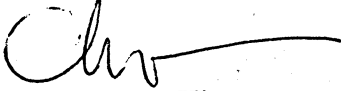
We look forward to talking to you.

Sincerely Yours,



Michael Isenberg
Franklin St.


Josh Breslau
Putnam Ave.


Manuel Uribe
Putnam Ave.


Christopher Kim
Putnam Ave.

Jeff Bronski
Flagg St.



450 Franklin St.
Cambridge, MA 02139

Richard Valente
43 Allen St.
Arlington, MA 02174

Dear Mr. Valente,

We are writing you today in concern and interest in 76 - 78 Putnam St, "Putnam Park."
As neighbors that live around the property, we want to thank you and acknowledge your kindness for allowing the neighborhood to maintain the flowers, vegetables, and plants to beautify our community.

The park has become a real neighborhood asset. Students from the King School painted a mural on the back fence. There is a bench where residents can come together to enjoy a peaceful afternoon. There are community garden plots and two grape vines. The flowers make the neighborhood more bright and colorful.

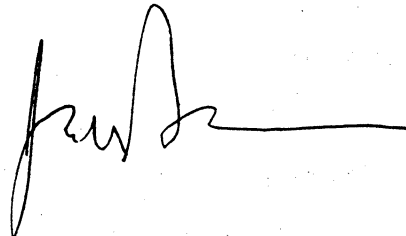
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Sincerely Yours,


Michael Isenberg
Franklin St.


Josh Breslau
Putnam Ave.



Manuel Uribe
Putnam Ave.


Lisa Santoro
Putnam Ave.




Todd Litton
Putnam Ave.


Jeff Bronski
Flagg St.



Dan Butterworth
Hews St.


Christopher Kim
Putnam Ave.

Putnam Park Facts

Year Founded	1993
Square Footage	8,495 sq. ft.
Assessed Value	128,800
Outstanding Taxes	\$2784.64 as of September, 1997
Yearly Tax Rate	1.35%
Owner	Richard & Elizabeth Valente
Owner Address	43 Allen St., Arlington, MA
Tulip Bulbs	225+
Benches Donated by Local Community	3
Community Compost Piles	1

Putnam Park

Help Preserve Putnam Park!!!

There is growing interest and concern about the future of Putnam Park, at the corner of Putnam and Kinnard. Although privately owned, the lot had fallen into disuse until neighbors began maintaining it several years ago. Neighbors are beginning to look for options to preserve this local green space and your ideas and participation is welcomed and needed.

Evolving Putnam Educational Park Concept Statement:

A neighborhood park and outdoor classroom where the Community of residents, students, and welcomed visitors can learn about and experience nature through interaction with native species, urban wilds, butterflies, birds, flowers, and fruit trees.

Potential Ideas for the Park:

- Outdoor Classroom
- Bulletin Board w/Ecological History of Species, Plants, and Trees and Poetry by School Kids
- Research & Identify Plants and Trees in Park
- Starting and ending point of tour of natural treasures in the Neighborhood
- Interactive Map and Community History w/Recognition of Landlord
- Butterfly Garden
- Cultural Garden
- Birdfeeders
- Fruit Trees - Pear, Berries, Grapes; Potential Nursery
- Labelling/Identification of Flowers
- Concrete Pathway for Disabled
- Compost Pile



NEIGHBORHOOD COMPOST

BRING YOUR *Leaves*
(and other compostable material)

TO PUTNAM PARK
(Corner of Putnam and Kinniard Sts.)

**DROP YOUR LEAVES IN THE
BROWN COMPOST BIN
IN THE BACK OF THE PARK**



Open Garden Day at Putnam Park!!

Open Garden Day is an event throughout the Boston area where Parks and Gardens are open to the neighborhood. Stop by Putnam Park and help spruce it up for the fall. Pick up/sign petitions to help protect the park.

**Saturday
August 15, 11:00 am
Putnam Park**

More Info: 868.8481



Putnam Park Meeting!!

Meeting for neighbors & friends to discuss strategies and approaches to protect, preserve and enhance Putnam Park.

Tuesday
July 28, 7:00 pm
83 Putnam St., Apt. 2

More Info: 492.0817

The Somerville Community Growing Center, A Potential Model For Putnam Park

On Vinal Ave, in Somerville lies the Somerville Community Growing Center, a wonderful urban oasis that provides a small green refuge in the middle of an urban neighborhood outside Union Square. This half acre garden is home to not only a wide array of plants, flowers, vegetables but also has a performance area, green house, urban orchard, and peace pole.

The garden was originally a vacant lot owned by the City of Somerville. Beginning in 1993, the neighborhood came together for a rich collaboration of city officials, agencies, schools, non-profits and local residents. The residents came together to conceive a space as an environmental education garden and learning center. They also wanted it to serve as a training ground for local youth for community service skills and stewardship.

Local schools maintain many of the garden plots. The school kids have designed bird feeders that are being hung all over the Growing Center. Earthworks, a local not for profit holds classes on urban orchards. The calendar of special events is packed with a wide array of innovative programs. In May there are composting workshops, a community potluck, and a full moon labyrinth walk. In June there is an evening planned with Celtic music, a drum circle and educational forums. In July there is a celebration of the Dalai Lama's birthday celebration, Shakespeare performances, and neighborhood film presentations. The Center makes everyday special.

The Growing Center is now run by a local friends group in collaboration with the City of Somerville. The group is in the process of becoming a not for profit. So if you are ever in Union Square, stop by and think of the potential this could have for our local neighborhood at Putnam Park.

For More Information, contact Lisa at 776.4160.

CAMBRIDGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. OPEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



100 PUTNAM AVENUE
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139
(617) 349-6567

December 14, 1998


Dear Honorable City Council Member,

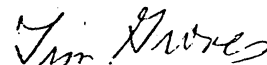
Many of the faculty at the King Open School feel very strongly about Putnam Park's remaining a public, open space. As one of its closest neighbors, we see it not only as an important and refreshing piece of open, green land, but also as a usable educational space for all of our students. We believe that the relationship between the park and our school benefits both our students and the surrounding community.

As you may know, we are already beginning to make strides in helping to maintain and beautify the park. Last spring, as one of our annual community service projects, students from ages five to fourteen joined together to paint a mural on the park's fence. The students and teachers involved enjoyed contributing something to the park and as a result, the park looks even more attractive. One of our Kindergarten classes has also recently planted 150 tulips, and we all look forward to watching them bloom in the Spring.

Many of us at the school envision Putnam Park becoming an outdoor classroom of sorts. Not only can our students help to maintain it, but they can learn a tremendous amount about gardens, plant life and our natural world. It is also an invaluable opportunity for children to make a lasting, positive impact on their community. We at King Open hope to see Putnam Park's status as a public, open space secured for the future of our community and for our local students.

Sincerely,


Jason Smith, Teacher



Tim Groves, Principal

December 7, 1998

Dear Honorable City Council,

I am writing to you as the Cambridge Public School Garden Science Coordinator regarding Putnam Park. The King and the King Open Schools are 2 of 8 Cambridge Public Elementary Schools that host educational garden programs where students participate in integrated curricula around indoor and outdoor gardening. My role entails offering curriculum support to teachers, maintaining the school garden sites, securing and distributing materials and supplies to classrooms. Several schools, such as the King and King Open, that are interested in school gardening do not have outdoor space on school property for gardening. The King and King Open Schools are privileged to have access to the Putnam Park just a few doors down from the school building to participate in gardening projects.

This fall three classes, Grades 2, 3, and 6 prepared a new garden bed at the Putnam Park site and planted Red Emperor Tulip bulbs as part of a special project called Journey North. In Journey North, students from Georgia to Maine are conducting scientific experiments with their bulb growing and are communicating with one another via the Internet. It is a creative opportunity for students to learn botany, biology, geography, science inquiry, weather patterns, technology, and writing skills all in one project.

Putnam Park is an invaluable resource for the school community as an outdoor classroom. All our school garden programs will only be enhanced by Putnam Park becoming a permanent public park. A tremendous amount of student exploration can occur in a rare corner lot in an urban setting, and that exploration would only be a model for other schools to discover the outdoor classrooms in their own neighborhoods. The Cambridge Science Department, along with Cambridge's Gravestar Foundation, the Cambridge Garden Club, National Gardening Association, and Eisenhower grants have supported garden program endeavors in the Cambridge Public Schools. On behalf of their efforts, I am asking for your support in assisting the community surrounding Putnam Park to secure this land as a City of Cambridge Greenspace. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Maria Rader
Garden Science Coordinator for
Cambridge Public Schools

Cm # 5

December 7, 1998

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Sincerely,



Maria Rader
Garden Science Coordinator for
Cambridge Public Schools

Date: 12/14/98
To: Cambridge City Council Members
From: Diana Goldfarb
Address: 95 Kinnaird St., Cambridge, MA
Subject: "Putnam Park" Preservation

Good evening. I am a resident of the Riverside area of Cambridge, at 95 Kinnaird St., not far from Putnam Ave. At the corner of Kinnaird and Putnam is a plot of land, an abandoned lot for quite some time. I'm here tonight to ask you to help the residents of Cambridge to procure and preserve this open lot, to help us turn it into a green park for the benefit of all Cambridge residents.

Recently, people from the neighborhood, including residents, students and teachers of the Martin Luther King Elementary School, and students and teachers of the King Open School have been coming together to clean up the empty lot and turn it into an inner-city park. We have, initially with some amount of tongue-in-cheek, dubbed the lot "Putnam Park." When it got this moniker, about three or four years ago, Putnam Park was still more of an abandoned lot than anything approaching a city park. Over the past few years, this piece of land has become very important in a number of ways:

- In a city where diversity is prized, but rarely really achieved, a grassroots community effort has brought together a truly diverse group of neighbors. It has brought neighbors together who might never have met because their cultures and their lives don't otherwise intersect. It has enabled us to begin to talk and build community in a very special way – while working to improve the land, what we hope can become *our* land. The ever-changing group of volunteers has been motivated to put their sweat equity and real equity (through in-kind and financial contributions) into cleaning up the lot. It is *that* important to us that the lot at Putnam Ave and Kinnaird St. be a park we and our children can use.
- In a neighborhood where the only other city park (on Franklin St.) is made of cement, and never used by residents, the lot at Putnam Ave. and Kinnaird St. provides the last open green space. Neighbors and children from the school have been making use of the space to garden. Some of the gardens are ornamental, some are vegetable gardens. Having access to this kind of green, growing land is a treasure for the city of Cambridge as well as for the residents in the area.
- Perhaps most important is the important role the lot has played in the educational experience of the children in the local public schools. The children and the teachers of the Martin Luther King Elementary School and the King Open School use the lot as an outdoor, live natural sciences lab and also as a live lab to learn about becoming responsible members of the city. Teachers have been able to use the lot to develop science lessons that really get our children's attention. The children have been able to plant and watch things grow, learn about weather, observe the lives of insects in their natural habitat, learn about ecology and habitats. Teachers have been able to develop real lessons on civics. Children have been involved in class projects to clean up the park and to beautify it. My own two eight-year old boys, who attend the neighborhood school, have, for the past 4 years, benefited from science lessons by planting flowers with their class, learning about the cycles of a plant's life, the ecology of recycling and the land. They have been involved in clean up, and one of my sons participated in painting the back fence of the park. There are important lessons that these children and future children can learn "in the field" as it were, if we can maintain the lot as a community park.

For these reasons, I implore you and the city of Cambridge to help the friends of "Putnam Park" to procure land and protect it as a park for the benefit of the neighborhood children and all the residents of Cambridge.

Thank you very much for your time and your support.

Este Honorable City Council:

We, the undersigned, enjoy and support Putnam Park. We care about the future of this neighborhood greenspace that has been and can be a great asset for the neighborhood, local schools, and welcomed visitors. We strongly support efforts to preserve and enhance Putnam Park.

NAME	ADDRESS	PHONE
Cynthia Jensen	95 Trombridge St #3	499-9986
Nancy Novak	494 Mass. Ave. #3	354-0393
Paula Cortes	25 Newell St.	441-9353
Sheila B. Cook	34 Follen St	547-1123
Elizabeth Rogers	4 Antrim St	441-2838
Dekorah Kershner	12 Laurel St.	868-8481
BARBARA MODEL	46 CHILTON ST	661-0846
Juanita D. Spinks	17-B Bigelow St., 02139	547-8755
Jannan Temple	854 Mass Ave #6	576-3514
Rebecca L. Ramsay	5 Everett Park Camb.	497-9035
Steve Gillies	23 Lee St. Camb.	866-3764
Joseph Pella	266 Western Ave #1 Camb.	354-3623

Kiralee B. M. Cawley 266 Western Ave, #1 Cambridge 354-3623

OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK
CAMBRIDGE, MASS.
UNIFORM COMMERCIAL
CODE NUMBER
DEC 10 8:00
1998

To The Honorable City Council,

We, the undersigned, enjoy and support Putnam Park. We care about the future of this neighborhood greenspace that has been and can be a great asset for the neighborhood, local schools, and welcomed visitors. We strongly support efforts to permanently preserve the park as public open space.

NAME

ADDRESS

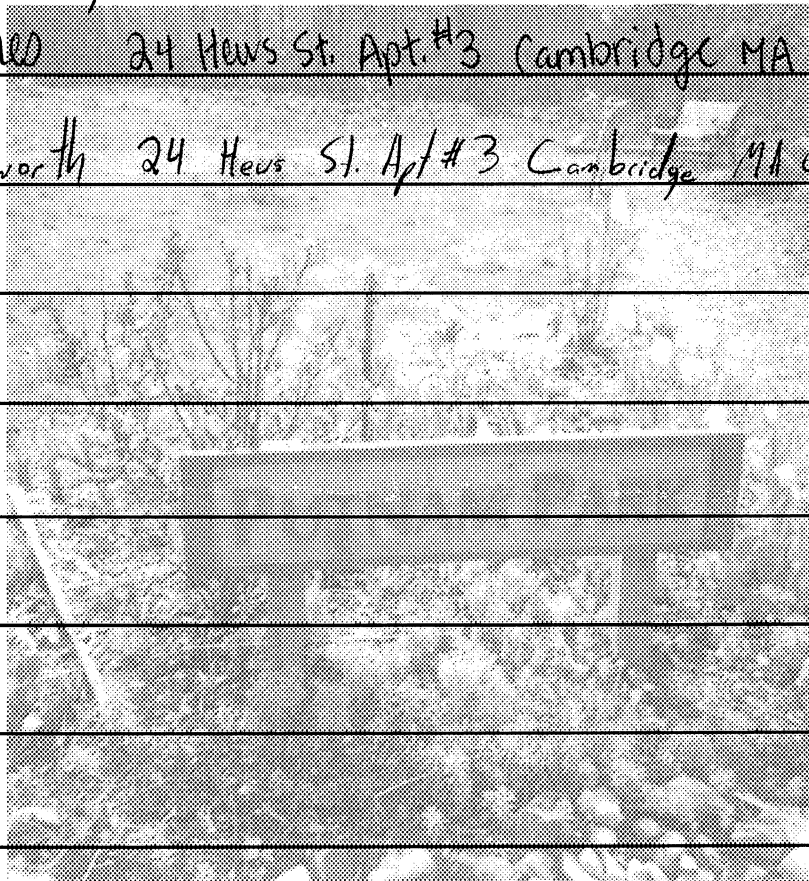
PHONE

Jeff Snyder 108 Kinnaird St. 547-1106

Mike Plushy 108 Kinnaird St. 547-1106

Katja Rhodes 24 Hews St. Apt. #3 Cambridge MA 02139 864-1012

Dan Butterworth 24 Hews St. Apt. #3 Cambridge MA 02139 864-1012



Consent Communication #5 8/35

A petition was received from Cynthia Jensen, et al., in supporting efforts to preserve and enhance Putnam Park.

In City Council December 14, 1998

**PLACED ON FILE
ORDER ADOPTED**