



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
Strategic Planning and Community Development
JOSEPH A. CURTATONE, MAYOR

Office of the Executive Director

MEMORANDUM

TO: Joseph A. Curtatone, Mayor

FROM: Monica R. Lamboy, Executive Director 

DATE: December 16, 2010

SUBJECT: Request to dedicate Morse-Kelley Playground to open space and recreational use in perpetuity

The Office of Strategic Planning & Community Development (OSPCD) respectfully requests that you forward to the Board of Aldermen a request to dedicate Morse-Kelley Playground to open space and recreational use in perpetuity. This past June, the Board of Aldermen authorized the administration to apply for three (3) PARC grants in the combined amount of \$1,043,200. The City was successful in receiving all three grants, specifically \$216,000 for renovation at Morse-Kelley Playground.

BACKGROUND

The PARC Program (formerly the Urban Self-Help Program) was established in 1977 to assist cities and towns in acquiring and developing land for park and outdoor recreation purposes. Any town with a population of 35,000 or more year-round residents, or any city regardless of size, that has an authorized park /recreation commission is eligible to participate in the program.

On June 10, 2010, the Board of Aldermen authorized OSPCD to seek funding and enter into any understandings or assurances with the Commonwealth to receive funds to renovate Morse-Kelley Playground. On October 21, 2010, the City was notified that it had won this PARC acquisition grant. This was a highly competitive year for these grants; the State saw applications double from 2009 to 2010. Somerville was one of only two communities statewide to receive multiple PARC grants this year.

Morse-Kelley Playground construction costs have been estimated at \$600,000. As part of the requirements of a PARC renovation grant, the City needs to begin construction no earlier than July 1, 2011. The State will reimburse 64% of construction costs, or \$384,000. The City is responsible for the remaining 36% municipal share of the PARC grant, or \$216,000. All construction work must be

completed and closed out by June 1, 2012. As part of the PARC grant requirements, Morse-Kelley Playground must be dedicated to open space and recreational use in perpetuity, protected under Article 97 of the Amendments to the Massachusetts Constitution. As part of the grant requirements, the City must vote to dedicate Morse-Kelley Playground to open space and recreation in perpetuity. Two other Board Actions (appropriation of Morse-Kelley Playground renovation cost and accepting the PARC grant) are also required and being submitted to you for the Board of Aldermen's consideration on December 16. Attached please find a copy of the Board Order that encompasses these actions.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Board of Aldermen dedicate Morse-Kelley Playground to open space and recreation in perpetuity and adopt the attached Order.

Attachments:

A – Morse-Kelley Playground Board Order & Background