

December 3, 2019

Regarding the requested funds Somerville's Central Hill Campus plan

Hello Honorable Councilors

Tuesday, December 3rd at the finance committee meeting, [agenda items](#) 20, 28, and 30 request the approval of \$400,000 in funds and \$4,351, 000 in bond to construct the Central Hill Campus. In general, I support the plan, but I ask that the below concerns and questions regarding sustainability and climate resiliency be resolved before approval.

- Increase as much as possible the natural area of the playground and the use of natural elements of rocks, logs etc .for exercise and exploration. Limit, to the extent possible the amount of poured crumb rubber.
- Imagine using parts of campus space, particularly the area around the memorials, for Victory Gardens. During the world wars many civic spaces were required to have food gardens. We are again in a time of crisis. Being self-sustaining and ensuring equity to healthy food are Somerville goals. It makes sense to build community gardens where if you need a tomato, you take a tomato. I ask the city to support the library in its efforts to do this. If the historic society says boo, I counter that these gardens would have been historic to the teens and 40s. See attached historic info on Somerville Victory Gardens.
- Plant alternative lawns using hardy native groundcover instead of non-native turfgrass. Using low growing alternative groundcover comprised of native sedges, grasses and rushes will create biodiversity, be sustainable by requiring fewer mowings and using plants that are drought tolerant, withstand traffic, and embrace Somerville's commitment to innovation and green infrastructure

Questions

- Do the storm water bioswales allow for infiltration, or does the water drain into a pipe that goes to deer island? We should start focusing on green infrastructure that allows for infiltration into the earth. Since water seeks it level, I do wonder about the success of the 'tupperware container send the water into the ocean/river' storm water plan. This is a conversation we need to start having.

I would have had these comments to you sooner, but I received the details of the campus plantings on November 21st at the Urban Forestry Committee meeting, and just saw the request for funds on the agenda for the finance committee meeting.

Thank you,

Tori Antonino