

FRIENDS OF THE PUBLIC GARDEN

Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting May 19, 2020

The Board of Directors of the Friends of the Public Garden met via Zoom conference call on Tuesday, May 19, 2020 at 9:00am.

Members present: Allison Achtmeyer, Leslie Adam (Chair), Bear Albright, Jim Bordewick, Catherine Bordon, Jeanne Burlingame (ex officio), Gordon Burnes, Valerie Burns, William Clendaniel, Claire Corcoran, Linda Cox, Kate Enroth, Alexandra Hastings, Elizabeth Johnson, Abigail Mason, Frank Mead, Barbara Moore, Jeff Mullan, Beatrice Nessen, Katherine O’Keeffe, Margaret Pokorny, Patricia Quinn, Brent Shay, Sherley Smith (ex officio), Anne Swanson, Allan Taylor, Janie Walsh, and Colin Zick. Also present: Liz Vizza (Executive Director). Suzanne Battit from the Development Guild was also present.

Members absent: None.

Ms. Adam, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:00am.

PPP Funding

Ms. Adam recapped the process that the Friends undertook to apply for and receive \$145K in PPP funding when the program was made available. She thanked Mr. TenBarge for his hard work in managing this process. Mr. Zick, as a member of the Executive Committee and as a legal counsel to the Friends, further explained that at the time of the application for the funds, very little guidance was provided other than that the funds be “necessary” to support payroll expenses. While additional guidance has since been released in the form of FAQs, there is still uncertainty about the program. There is a clear argument to be made that the Friends would have met the legal intention of the program.

However, after consulting with other area non-profits, many board members, and others, it was felt be in the best interest of the Friends to decline the funds in light of available cash, unrestricted funds, and the long history of great financial support by our donors. Ms. Adam announced that the Executive Committee made the decision to return the funding on the safe harbor date of May 18, 2020.

Boston Common Art Installation

Ms. Adam referred to materials circulated prior to the meeting including a Financial Update report, dated May 19, 2020, and the talking points memo and information sheet about the proposed art project for the Common. She reminded the Board that the project was originally approved by board vote in October, 2019. She noted that the COVID situation has greatly impacted the project by halting fundraising and delaying the projected installation to Fall 2021, or later. Costs, however, are still being incurred, including design and engineering work, artists fees, and materials acquisition. Ms. Vizza and Ms. Adam have spoken with a mix of past Friends donors, foundation managers, other representatives from greenspace groups and arts groups to gather information about the changed landscape for fundraising and its particular impact on an

art project like the one planned. They found that interest in transformative art pieces, particularly ones that could be staged outdoors, is quite high. Organizations like the Greenway and the ENC both noted that their fundraising opportunities significantly broadened after they staged outdoor, temporary art projects. Ms. Battit, from the Development Guild, offered that other arts/culture organizations are exploring select, targeted fundraising for projects and are getting positive feedback.

Ms. Adam put forward for discussion that the Board approve spending up to \$75K, which represents approximately 20% of the budget, of Friends funds, on the art project. This would help cover costs incurred to date, as well as show a commitment to donors that the Friends is supporting this project at the same scale as the two capital projects that are part of the 50th Anniversary. The funds would also fill the gap currently faced by the pause in active fundraising by the Friends. Mr. Clendaniel noted that the funds are readily available between a small undesignated surplus as well as ample unrestricted funds. The overall budget for the project currently stands at \$377,500.

Several board members voiced concerns about the project concept, uncertainties around its launch timing, and it being perceived as too far from the core Friends mission of “turf and trees” and capital projects. Concern was expressed that public perception issues could veer negatively for those that view the project as not respectful of the dire frontline conditions that have been exacerbated by the COVID crisis. Some board members expressed skepticism that donors would commit to a temporary art piece during these uncertain times, however, others expressed confidence that some donors would look forward to supporting a project in the arts space. A direct contribution of funds by the Friends could be a significant and positive talking point for some donors. Others made the point that the project positions the Friends as a dynamic organization that engages with the public in creative ways, and that one of the project’s goals is to expand awareness of the organization and the work of caring for shared places like the Common.

Ms. Vizza and Ms. Adam reassured the Board that the contract with the artist would consider “COVID-world” impacts on both the concept and its logistics, issues of ownership/storage/insurance of the piece, as well as having opt-out clauses at various points in the schedule. However, considerable work has been done to-date based on the original approval of the project, and stopping or pausing the project could irreparably impact its feasibility.

After extensive discussion, and upon a motion being duly made and seconded, it was, by a vote of 17 to 6, with 3 abstentions,

VOTED: to approve spending \$75K of Friends funds to support the Boston Common Art Installation.

Other Business

There being no additional business, Ms. Adam adjourned the meeting at 10:30am.

Respectfully submitted,
Catherine Bordon, Secretary

May 29, 2020

FRIENDS OF THE PUBLIC GARDEN

Financial Update from the Treasurer

This Update revises my report to the Board dated May 15, 2020, prepared for the May 19, 2020 Board meeting. There is no update at this time to the January-April Statement of Operations dated May 14, 2020 that was included with that report. There have, however, been two changes worth mentioning. One, we recently received a \$25,000 gift from the Lynch Foundation towards the Green & White, bringing the net income received to date for that cancelled event to \$386,000, well over the \$300,000 that we forecast in April. Two, following the Investment Committee's decision taken at its meeting of May 15, we took the first draw, \$201,000, of the 2020 budgeted withdrawal of \$804,000.

Until we can prepare the next Statement of Operations, we are now focused on our cash position, and Steve TenBarge has prepared a cash projection that is very reassuring.

We now have \$1,521,000 in available cash in three financial institutions:

Santander	\$ 230,000
Cambridge Trust	\$ 90,000
Fidelity	\$1,201,000.

This total includes the first draw of invested funds and the return of the PPP grant.

With an updated projection of new income (memberships, events, tree and bench sponsorships, mitigation payments) based on our assumptions in April:

\$800,000 (\$100,000 already received included in cash)

and adding three more invested funds draws:

\$603,000,

our cash available for use during 2020 is projected to be

\$2,924,000.

Set against that are the expenses for parks care, communications, personnel and overhead expenses we forecast in April, plus the additional expenses for the

Development Guild's work we discussed at our May special meeting, including a search for a new Development Director:

\$1,397,000

In addition we forecast expenses for four special projects totaling \$714,000:

\$200,000 for the Collins lighting on the Mall,

\$175,000 for the design of the Arlington Street Entrance to the Public Garden,

\$189,000 for the temporary art project on the Common (not including the \$166,500 that will be due in August, 2021), and

\$150,000 additional for the Shaw restoration project from a gift from the Pierce Trust that we received in 2018.

Total projected expenses:

\$2,111,000

Projected cash at year-end available for use in 2021:

\$813,000.

As of May 29, our invested funds are valued at \$21.5M, down only 7% compared to the value at December 31, 2019.

FRIENDS OF THE PUBLIC GARDEN

DIRECTOR'S REPORT BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

June 3, 2020

Prepared by Liz Vizza

Friends Remote Office

We continue to work productively from our respective homes, and it has been impressive how much work gets accomplished by the Friends team without being in the office. What is lost is that easy and casual interaction possible when we are all in the same place. Laura has been looking into what return scenarios might look like, and doing a great job supporting me and the Board and committees.

It was seamless bringing in Suzanne Battit to manage our development work, and Hannah as well as Amanda have been doing great work under her guidance. The communications staff is posting regularly on social media channels, supporting development and parks communication needs including Membership Month, and re-tooling events to be virtual (see Communications and Outreach Report).

Steve continues to be the only staff member working in the office, but he is now buying a new computer and working to make it possible to access the financial files and work remotely. Eric has been in the parks regularly photo documenting flowering plants, supporting start-up of elm preservation program and turf and soils work, and developing digital inventory of trees and border beds in GIS. Bob has been focused on Shaw 54th, King Boston review, Covid safety plans and essential work start-up support, and keeping 50th capital projects moving forward.

Work in the Parks

We got clearance right before Memorial Day to begin our essential parks care work, and contractors have begun to mobilize work on the four areas of critical need: Elm preservation program; soil improvements (including seeding, aerating, amending soil); fountain activation and maintenance; and irrigation system maintenance.

Safety

The Common in particular continues to feel less safe than it does when all of the positive park activities occur this time of year – at the Frog Pond, the playground, Brewer Plaza, the Earl of Sandwich. While plenty of people are using our parks, and over the weeks there has been an increase in the use of masks, in the absence of positive activation places have been occupied by folks that are challenged by mental health and drug issues, in particular Brewer Plaza. There has been police presence at Brewer, the Soldiers and Sailors Monument and elsewhere, but it is clear that normal large numbers of commuters and regular park users make the park safer. The Garden hasn't experienced problems to date, and the issues on the Mall are concentrated at the Charlesgate area, with homeless encampments that have been removed and individuals encouraged to use shelters.

50th Anniversary

With Board approval of support for the art installation on the Common, fundraising for that project is moving forward, working with Now + There.

The Garden and Mall projects are still progressing through the design process. We have plans to light the Collins statue this fall, but time will tell if the light fixtures will arrive in time, given supply chain issues. We will see where we are with fundraising for the Garden project at the end of the year, which will dictate when we are able to implement plans for that project.

Boston Common Master Plan

The design team of Parks, Friends, and Weston & Sampson have progressed exploration of design alternatives for various use nodes throughout the park, such as the Park Street station area and the Frog Pond/Tadpole Playground area, responding to input we have received online, in the many park engagements we had on the Common and throughout the city, and at two public meetings. We are planning on a virtual next public forum, and looking at a variety of tools and platforms to maximize engagement, including holding multiple forums to give adequate time for the great amount of information we need to convey and get feedback on and providing graphic and written information online for review and comment.

Shaw 54th Memorial

Reconstruction of the Shaw 54th has begun with the Governor's approval of outdoor construction work. The contractors have enclosed the Memorial with fencing as well as the large area of the Common necessary to prevent worn paths from forming on Liberty Mall over the 5-6 months of the project. Constructing scaffolding around the Memorial, investigating how the bronze is attached to the stone, and carefully dismantling it will take at least a month. We are excited about the museum-quality sign exhibit we will install on the fence for the duration of the project, giving the public easy access to the narrative of the story of the 54th Regiment and creation of the Memorial at a time when museums are out of reach.

King Memorial

We continue to offer input to King Boston and Mass Design Group on their evolving design for the Memorial and surrounding landscape. They are aiming for 60% design submission to the City by mid-June. Our feedback has included design-related maintenance concerns as well as the need to integrate this Memorial into the Common landscape. Given that the NAACP convention has moved to a virtual format, it will likely slow the schedule down. King Boston still needs to raise significant funds, and we have urged the City to make sure that they have an adequate maintenance endowment as well as plans for increased security support.

Sunshine Modeling and Downtown Plan

The Downtown Plan is on hold at the moment. We would like to schedule a meeting with BPDA staff to discuss our sunshine modeling, also proposed by their consultants NBBJ, which they have adopted in concept while ours allows a more fine-grained assessment of Downtown development that protects existing sunshine on the Common and Garden. The consultants are waiting on word from the City about moving the project forward.

Respectfully submitted,
Elizabeth Vizza

FY 2020 Development Report Prepared May 15, 2020
Jan-Apr 2020

	2020 Actual Jan-Apr	2019 Actual Jan-Apr	2020 Budget	%	2020 Gifts	Annual Goal	2019
Membership							
New*	\$8,129	\$14,837	\$65,000	13%	39	300	92
Renewals	\$43,273	\$90,088	\$565,000	8%	138	1,300	246
Total Membership	\$51,402	\$104,925	\$630,000	8%	177	1,600	338
Other Contributions:							
<i>Designated</i>							
Boston Common:							
Common Canine	\$646	\$2,000	\$20,000	3%	7		2
Common Support			\$0				
Common Mitigation+	\$1,500		\$52,000	3%	2		
Total Boston Common:	\$2,146	\$2,000	\$72,000	3%			
Public Garden							
Garden Mitigation	\$27,303	\$54,606	\$134,000	20%	1		2
Garden Support		\$2,500					1
Child Fountains	\$100				1		
Total Garden:	\$27,403	\$57,106	\$134,000	20%			
The Mall							
Mall Support			\$10,000				
Mall Statue Lighting	\$6,700	\$14,866	\$0		6		22
Total Mall:	\$6,700	\$14,866	\$10,000	67%			
All Parks:							
Sponsored Benches	\$30,500	\$51,079	\$50,000	61%	2		3
Sponsored Trees	\$40,450	\$35,500	\$75,000	54%	23		6
Lees Sculpture Endowment	\$552	\$5,706			2		13
Total All Parks:	\$71,502	\$92,285	\$125,000	57%			
Total Designated:	\$107,751	\$166,257	\$341,000	32%			
Undesignated:							
Corporate	\$22	\$519	\$10,000	0%	1		2
Gifts	\$1,445		\$10,000	14%	4		3
Bequests	\$8,000		\$0		1		
50th Anniversary	\$10,500		\$0		2		
Total Undesignated	\$19,967	\$519	\$20,000	100%			
Total Other Contributions	\$127,718	\$166,776	\$361,000	35%			
Development Events:							
Green & White Ball**	\$332,900	\$444,225	\$700,000	48%	43		124
Summer Party			\$30,000				
Young Friends***		\$925	\$7,000		0		24
Total Development Events	\$332,900	\$445,150	\$737,000	45%			
Public Programs:							
Making History Day		\$1,250	\$10,000				1
Duckling Day	\$70	\$13,491		1%	2		170
Brewer Plaza activities/event			\$6,000				
Product sales	\$105	\$210			3		6
Temp Art Installtion on Common (50th)	\$5,000		\$350,000		1		
Total Public Programs	\$5,175	\$14,951	\$366,000	1%			
Total Events & Programs	\$338,075	\$460,101	\$1,103,000	31%			
GRAND TOTAL INCOME:	\$517,195	\$731,802	\$2,094,000	25%			

Notes:

*We have 52 new members toward our goal of 100; 2019 figures include some appeal responses.

**An additional gift of \$25,000 was received in May, and additional funds are still expected; this figure does not include the \$25K from the Achtmeyers 2019 G&W donation in January.

***We did not have a February Young Friends event this year.

FRIENDS OF THE PUBLIC GARDEN

DEVELOPMENT NARRATIVE REPORT

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

JUNE 3, 2020

Prepared by Suzanne Battit

Revenue Report:

See enclosed spreadsheet for detail of all 2020 revenue. In brief, the budget for 2020 is \$2,094,000, including public programs, and a total of \$517,195 (25% of goal) has been raised to date. For now, in light of the changing circumstances in the midst of COVID-19, we will continue to move forward where we can, and it seems premature to try to project what our future goals for the upcoming months may look like. We hope to evaluate progress and goals on a monthly basis moving forward.

Green and White Ball:

As you all know, we had to make the difficult decision to cancel the Green and White Ball for this year due to COVID-19. Due to the generous nature of our donors, we have been able to keep most pledges and gifts that were designated to the event. As of April 30, we have raised \$332,900, \$383,450 to date, with an additional \$10,000 expected in outstanding pledges.

Tree and Bench Sponsorship Program:

Our tree and bench sponsorship program is going well. Bench sponsorship opportunities begin at \$10,000. This year, we have received gifts for two new bench sponsorships, with 6 open bench inquiries. We have benches available along the Beacon Street border of the Public Garden. These benches were renovated last summer and offer multiple sponsorship opportunities starting at \$10,000 for a portion of a bench. On the Mall, there are two new bench opportunities in the Charlesgate block next to the Leif Eriksson statue, as well as new bench opportunities available in the Kenmore block, also for \$10,000.

We have received donations for 5 existing trees, with 11 open existing tree inquiries and 6 open new tree inquiries. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19, we will not be planting any new trees in our parks this year, but those 6 people are happy to stay on the waiting list! New tree sponsorships are \$5,000 for a 15-year term, and existing trees are \$10,000. However existing ornamental trees in the Public Garden are \$5,000.

We have received more tree sponsorship gifts this year as Doris Hearty is fundraising to sponsor a new tree in the Public Garden in honor of Fay Dabney. Over 20 people have come together to raise \$5,750 toward a goal of \$10,000 for a 30-year term.

Spring Appeal and Newsletter:

As you know, we pushed the appeal and newsletter to June and are finalizing the message in an effort to be sensitive to the impact of COVID-19. In addition, we have brainstormed a number of ways to promote June as membership month and work toward our goal of 100 new members. To date, we have 52 new members.

50th Anniversary Campaign:

Total Raised to Date: \$1,077,358 (*including the \$500,000 pledge; not including Friends donations*)

Boston Common Art Project: \$55,000

Mall Statue Lighting: \$492,706

Public Garden Arlington Street Entrance: \$507,100

Undesignated: \$22,552

We are very close to finalizing the pitchbook and related materials that will be used for meetings with prospects to walk them through the details of the campaign and each of its projects. Additionally, we have compiled a master prospect list that we will focus on prioritizing so that we are ready when the time comes to pursue campaign gift discussions. As you know, the decision was made to pause on individual or corporate solicitations until September, but monthly co-chairs meetings have continued to keep momentum and the work moving forward.

Summer Party:

Sadly, we have canceled the **Summer Party** that was to be held at The Fairmont Copley Plaza on July 22, 2020.

FRIENDS OF THE PUBLIC GARDEN

COMMUNICATIONS & OUTREACH REPORT BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

June 3, 2020

Prepared by Susan Abell May 26, 2020

Communications

Communications are now totally in a virtual world. We are communicating daily on social media; we will continue to send out the monthly e-news and we are working to create other more frequent dispatches telling people about our work. Working from home has both benefits and challenges for communications, and we are trying to maximize the former and minimize the latter through technology.

Marketing/promotion

E-news, e-blasts, and advocacy: As we have in the past two months of the shutdown, we continue to communicate about the importance of parks in our world today, how vital they are to everyone's wellbeing. The Shaw 54th Regiment Memorial Restoration Project has been permitted to proceed and we plan to create a regular electronic communication about the project and what is happening behind the scenes. We are still celebrating our anniversary, but our celebration will have to continue in the virtual space. We are working to be creative and innovative in our approach to connecting with our members and spreading the word to the world beyond.

Media: As we adapt to communications in the COVID era we have focused on the importance of our parks, and the pleasure they bring to people. In this new reality, the team at Denterlein has been very helpful with advice on messaging, event planning, social media promotion, and organizational positioning for the Friends. They secured an interview for Liz Vizza with [Curbed Boston](#) about the future of parks. #VirtualDucklingDay got great coverage in the local media thanks to Denterlein, securing four mentions in the Boston Globe alone, including this feature story: [Public Garden's Duckling Day will be held online amid coronavirus concerns](#). Other media coverage included [WHDH 7](#), [WBZ Radio](#), [WBUR](#), [Lynn Daily Item](#), and the [MassNonprofit News](#). The Shaw 54th Memorial Restoration project was greenlighted to proceed and the press release was sent out. Denterlein got Zoom interviews for Liz Vizza on three television news stations ([WCVB 5](#), Black News Channel, and WBZ-TV 4 for their online streaming service) as well as in the [Boston Globe](#), [Boston Herald](#), [Boston Business Journal](#), and [State House News Service](#). The press release also appeared on the [North End Waterfront News](#), [Boston Patch](#), and [Beacon Hill Patch](#) websites.

Publications: Since the spring appeal schedule was modified, we decided to create single page newsletter to be included in the mailing. Even a routine mailing has become more of a logistical challenge, so we remain more focused on communication electronically.

Social Media

Social media remains an essential tool for sharing the advocacy, mission, and programming of the Friends during these challenging times. We have swiftly responded to shifting trends in the digital

landscape, leveraging our social media presence to create strong engagement, increased activity, and a confident organizational voice. Our increased efforts to use social media as our main communication tool have led to some of the best metrics we've seen.

We launched an Instagram contest this March to run through June, the first half of our 50th Anniversary year. The contest is receiving more submissions with our continued promotion and the winners will have their photos displayed on the 50th anniversary light pole banners around the parks in August/September. We have also begun a "Steve the Squirrel" mascot and related branding opportunity. We hosted a Virtual Duckling Day on our Facebook page to success. As we continue to strategize during the COVID-19 outbreak, social media is the current most important and necessary conduit for sharing our message. Because of this, we'll share a few more details than usual.

Instagram: Instagram is the visual identity of the three parks online, personifying the beauty and history of the three parks on a high-profile, interactive, engagement-driven platform. As of reporting time, we have surpassed 5,970 followers, gaining 360 new followers, triple the amount of last reporting period. Impressions totaled 129,482, up 189%, and the account netted 9,926 direct engagements (likes, comments, follows, clicks), quadruple last report. Our account reached over 1,134 individuals daily, growing 136% over the last reporting period. Our Instagram stories, added this past year to catalog events and happenings in the park, totaled 4,949 impressions this period, with an average viewership of 235 users per individual story.

Twitter: Twitter remains the voice of the organization on the web, sharing news, advocacy updates, and related community events to a large network of government officials, reporters/journalists, non-profit organizations, and members of the public. Twitter has continued to be a resounding success this reporting period, further establishing us as a trusted authority. As of May 22, we are up to 4,662 followers, a 53% growth from the last reporting period. Organic impressions totaled 115,898, nearly double the last reporting period, and the account netted 3,673 direct engagements (retweets, quotes, favorites, and link clicks), tripling our engagements last report. We doubled our posting, sending 89 tweets through the last reporting period, with a healthy 3.2% engagement rate. The engagement rate has nearly tripled during this period. Link click rate, which shows how many people actually click the links in our tweets, increased 167%.

Facebook: Facebook is pivotal in sharing event updates and announcements, along with photo recaps of past events. As of reporting time, we have 3,493 "likes" on our Facebook Page, with a gain of about 181~ individuals to our network since the last reporting period, an increase of 48% over the last reporting period. Impressions totaled 40,570, and the Facebook page generated 3,932 direct engagements (likes, shares, comments, link clicks). We reached about 654 individuals daily with our posts, down from ~3,500. We did not have another viral "Swan Boats" article as in the first quarter of 2020. That post went surprisingly viral, spiking our numbers radically high. The numbers in this report represent growth and engagement up from our usual performance and we are always looking for another viral post!

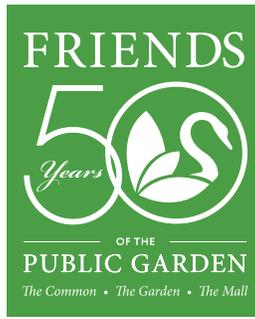
Outreach

Video: We have paused the 50th Anniversary video, although it is almost completely finished, and are strategizing how to modify the donor message and when and how we will release it. We are also working on a video telling the story of Making History to be part of a Making History at Home virtual

event we are creating. The video is an opportunity to share how much the kids enjoy and are engaged by the activities of our program partners making the history of the Common come alive.

Events:

We had a very successful Virtual Duckling Day on Facebook, on Mothers Day. Previously recorded individually at their homes, Liz welcomed everyone, then wonderful words from Mayor Marty Walsh. We shared our video of Duckling Days past, and then WCVB's Rhondella Richardson read the classic "Make Way for Ducklings" for everyone. People shared photos and we had very creative crafts to share with the attendees. We reached over 1000 people, and over 30 families shared their Duckling Day photos. Engagement up 145% to 1,286 engagements related to virtual DD content. According to the instructions from the City, we sadly had to cancel Making History on the Common, Summer Celebration at Brewer Plaza and the Summer Friends Birthday Party as in-person events. As with Making History, we are working on ideas to bring the Birthday Party to people virtually.



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May 13, 2020

Councilor Kenzie Bok, Chair
Ways and Means Committee
Boston City Council
One City Hall Square
Boston, MA 02201

Re: Boston Parks and Recreation Budget

Dear Councilor Bok,

As one of the oldest parks advocacy groups in the nation, the Friends of the Public Garden is an essential partner with the City of Boston in our mission to renew, care, and advocate for the Boston Common, Public Garden, and Commonwealth Avenue Mall. In January, we recognized 50 years of partnership and shared expertise by signing a formal Partnership Agreement (MOA) with the City, which will strengthen our working relationship on behalf of Boston's iconic downtown parks.

These three parks are the neighborhood parks for over 5,000 people in five neighborhoods - but they are much more than neighborhood parks. They are used intensively by the entire city and beyond, with over 7 million people visiting them every year. The Friends invests over \$1.5 million of private dollars annually directly into the parks. However, it is critical that private support not be seen as a rationale to not adequately fund our partner, the Parks Department.

The vital role that our parks play in the physical, social, and mental health of our community and every member of it has never before been so clear. Parks are not amenities, they are necessities. People who are forced to work from home, who are managing the challenges of caring for children out of school, or who are facing the loneliness of isolation and financial fear after losing a job are, in the depths of this pandemic, all appreciating the importance of public greenspaces as havens in a hard time. Every other element of civic infrastructure and community connection has closed down, but our parks are open, free, and available to all.

While capital projects for our city's parks are always well received, without maintenance support those investments cannot be sustained. Therefore, we are very pleased that the Mayor has recommended a budget for Parks with significantly increased resources for operations. We support the addition of four staff positions to allow for a second maintenance shift, operating out of Franklin Park. Given the importance of our urban natural systems, it is also heartening to see an additional staff position to support the work of the Urban Wilds program, which now rests on the shoulders of only one person in the Department. And, we urge you to support the critically important proposed \$1 million increase for trees, which will allow the city to increase annual tree planting from 1000 to 2000 street trees. As we know, trees play a vital role in the beauty and environmental health of our city and its residents.

We applaud the inclusion of funding for renovations to the block of Commonwealth Avenue Mall known as Kenmore Mall, in the heart of Kenmore Square. This park space serves a growing neighborhood including many seniors as well as students, and is in great need of improvements. Over the past two years the Friends funded a master plan for the space, and the funding proposed to come from the City will be critical in moving this project forward to construction. This project is a wonderful example of the Friends partnership with the City. Working together, we can make these improvements a reality.

The Friends has also been working closely with the Parks Department and consultants Weston & Sampson on the master plan to re-imagine Boston Common, through a collaborative process that has included input from over 6000 community members, interaction with people from around the city through a series of mini Commons pop ups in many neighborhoods, and two public working sessions. We are pleased to see \$1.5 million in the FY21 budget to continue this process and move forward Early Action projects that come out of the plan.

The Mayor's budget for the Parks and Recreation Department reflects the critical needs of our parks and every resident of Boston who seeks them for respite and recreation. We urge the City Council to look favorably on this proposed budget.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Vizza
Executive Director

cc: City Council President, Kim Janey
City Councilor Ricardo Arroyo
City Councilor Frank Baker
City Councilor Liz Breadon
City Councilor Andrea Campbell
City Councilor Lydia Edwards
City Councilor Annissa Essaibi-George
City Councilor Michael Flaherty
City Councilor Ed Flynn
City Councilor Julia Mejia
City Councilor Matt O'Malley
City Councilor Michelle Wu



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Elizabeth Vizza
Executive Director

May 13, 2020

Councilor Kenzie Bok, Chair
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One City Hall Square
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Re: Boston Landmarks Commission Budget

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Nina Doggett
Barbara Hostetter

EX OFFICIO

Jeanne Burlingame
Jim Hood
Sherley Smith

Dear Councilor Bok,

As one of the oldest parks advocacy groups in the nation, the Friends of the Public Garden is an essential partner with the City of Boston in our mission to renew, care, and advocate for the Boston Common, Public Garden, and Commonwealth Avenue Mall. These parks have been an integral part of Boston's identity for generations, in many ways the souls of the city, sites of countless events, public gatherings and private moments, and are called upon to serve the recreational and restorative needs of millions of people. Each of these three parks have historic designations both locally and federally. The Boston Landmarks Commission (BLC) is vital to protecting these historic resources.

The BLC staff serves to provide the professional expertise essential for the effectiveness of the Commission in meeting its mission established through state law in 1975. The Friends takes great pride in being one of the advocates for this critical legislation. The Friends relies on the BLC, both staff and commissioners, to protect the Common, Garden, and Mall from internal proposals and external initiatives that would adversely affect the historic qualities of these three parks. The Friends also often, through our collaboration with the Parks Department, petitions the BLC for approval of proposed improvements to the three parks.

Unfortunately, the BLC is hampered in its role by inadequate funding. Its professional staff is dedicated but the salaries they earn are not commensurate with their professional qualifications, often resulting in high staff turnover. The City needs qualified staff to interact effectively with project petitioners, and enough staff to handle the workload demands of our City which is experiencing exponential growth. The BLC Commissioners, all volunteers, rely on staff reports and recommendations. To carry out their responsibilities, the Commissioners need to be supported by adequate staff capabilities.

We therefore urge the Council to increase the budget for the Landmark Commission. Their worth and value to the City should be monetarily recognized so that it can work as effectively as possible.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Vizza

cc: City Council President, Kim Janey
City Councilor Ricardo Arroyo
City Councilor Frank Baker
City Councilor Liz Breadon
City Councilor Andrea Campbell
City Councilor Lydia Edwards
City Councilor Annissa Essaibi-George
City Councilor Michael Flaherty
City Councilor Ed Flynn
City Councilor Julia Mejia
City Councilor Matt O'Malley
City Councilor Michelle Wu

13 May 2020

Dear City Councilors,

During these challenging times, we recognize the importance of green spaces in Boston as mental and physical health and respite. The research is clear: trees are a critical part of a city's infrastructure, providing economic, social, and environmental benefits such as reducing summer temperatures, protecting neighborhoods from local flooding, relieving stress, slowing traffic and decreasing pedestrian and bicycle accidents, and reducing violence. We thank Councilors for their long-standing interest and support for the protection and improvement of Boston's trees.

That's why we are grateful that the Walsh Administration FY21 budget request includes:

- \$1,000,000 increase in annual street tree planting and care, and
- \$500,000 to develop an urban forestry master plan to create a comprehensive and long-term approach for preserving, protecting, and growing the city's forest.

These funds are in addition to the \$1,000,000 designated in the 2018 state Environmental Bond for tree planting in South Boston, Dorchester, Mattapan and Hyde Park.

Together these measures would greatly improve Boston's current and future tree canopy.

In order to improve the urban forest in a sustainable and equitable way, we believe that a master plan is needed now more than ever. As we watch inequities playing out in the daily lives of Boston's residents during this pandemic, we see how gaps in our tree canopy carry grave health implications. We view a master plan as a critical piece in expanding tree coverage in ways that provide benefits of trees in a more equitable way. We ask that you support the Administration's recommendation for a community-informed and data-driven plan that can provide a blueprint in building a healthier and more resilient urban forest, especially in lower-canopied neighborhoods of Boston such as East Boston, South Boston, and areas of Dorchester, Mattapan, and Roxbury.

The Mayor's request is following the lead of other cities across the region and country. Urban centers such as Pittsburgh, Charlotte, and Cambridge, are producing urban forestry master plans that take a holistic approach, engaging stakeholders in an analysis that allows them to critically assess gaps and meet needs due to historical issues, current development, and climate change. While we all support more trees in our city, we recognize that the process of growing our urban forest needs to be guided by a master plan. We see such a plan as providing guidance, metrics, and benchmarks that allow city agencies, developers, NGOs, and residents, to work in tandem for planning and building a more resilient, healthier, and greener Boston for the future.

Additionally, we strongly encourage the City to connect tree protection and expansion with youth education, job creation and outdoor experience, in partnership with local schools and community-based organizations, such as the Arnold Arboretum, The Emerald Necklace Conservancy, and Speak for the Trees, Boston.

In closing, we, the undersigned, see our urban forest as a city-wide asset that requires careful planning and care. We hope you approve the Mayor's request for \$500,000 for the master plan as well as his request for a \$1 million increase in capital projects to increase tree plantings and care.

Guiding Principles for Working During Covid-19 Pandemic
Sent by the Canadian Government to all who work for it

1. You are not "working from home," you are "at your home, during a crisis, trying to work."
2. Your personal physical, mental, and emotional health is far more important than anything else right now.
3. You should not try to compensate for lost productivity by working longer hours.
4. You will be kind to yourself and not judge how you are coping based on how you see others coping.
5. You will be kind to others and not judge how they are coping based on how you are coping.
6. Your team's success will not be measured the same way it was when things were normal.