



Diane Nichols Tradd
Assistant City Manager/DPD Director

Kevin E. Coughlin
Deputy Director

MEMORANDUM

TO: Kevin J. Murphy, City Manager 

FROM: Diane N. Tradd, Assistant City Manager/DPD Director

SUBJECT: COUNCIL MOTION OF 5/23/17 BY COUNCILOR LEARY
REQUEST CITY MANAGER REVIEW POTENTIAL GRANT OPPORTUNITIES IN
ORDER TO UPDATE THE CHRISTIAN HILL RESERVOIR ("THE REZ") GROUNDS IN
ORDER TO MAKE THE AREA A PASSIVE PARK, SIMILAR TO OTHER LOWELL
PASSIVE PARKS SUCH AS TYLER PARK

Previously the Department of Planning and Development worked with the Parks and Water Departments to respond to a motion request regarding the possibility of filling in the Christian Hill Reservoir to create new open space in the City. The following information is in relation to that motion response: On March 30, 2016 the Water Department reached out to Woodard & Curran and asked that they give the City a cost estimate to fill the reservoir in at two elevations. The first elevation would be an approximate elevation of 184' or the current top of the dam. The cost estimate for the current elevation would be \$2.9 million. The second elevation would be 175' or ten feet below the current elevation. Under this scenario, the gatehouse would require some maintenance to maintain the aesthetics but we believe with some sloping and landscaping the desired effect can be achieved. The cost estimate for this scenario would be \$1.7 million.

If grant funds were applied for the Reservoir area it would be in the City's best interest to try and secure funds to fill in the existing reservoir and improve the surrounding open space. The City could apply to the Massachusetts Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities (PARC) Program for up to \$400,000, which has helped fund the transformation of several local parks.

The Parks Department has worked on transforming large areas of overgrowth into landscaped areas, which all but eliminated the illegal activities at the site. Several hundred linear feet of chain link fence has been removed along Beacon Street, and black post and chain has been installed in its place. Partnerships with neighborhood groups and gardening groups have resulted in the planting of ornamental gardens and trees, and granite benches have also been installed. The Parks Department has a weekly maintenance schedule (cutting, cleaning, etc.), maintains regulatory signage (park hours, usage, animal control, etc.); and the Water Department has removed growth along the interior field and continues to monitor the water levels at the site. The ROTC cadets from Lowell High School are scheduled for dates to rake leaves, paint, and plant flowers during the fall season, and provide cornstalks, etc. during the holidays.

Residents of this neighborhood enjoy this passive recreational area, and if the Reservoir is to be filled and used for additional recreational space, neighborhood groups and gardening groups should meet with City departments to discuss.

DNT/ns
11/2/17
cc: Yovani Baez-Rose, Neighborhood Planner