

September 21, 2009

Bill McGonagle
Administrator, Boston Housing Authority
52 Chauncy Street
Boston, MA 02111-2375

Dear Bill,

We are writing you on behalf of Highland Park Neighborhood Association and Friends of Alvah Kittredge Park regarding the BHA residences at 50-68 Highland Street in Roxbury. This residence directly abuts Alvah Kittredge Park which is the subject of our grass-roots effort to restore this park. For the past two years our community has been working with Boston Parks & Recreation Dept. and multiple private and public funders on a project to restore this park. We've made great progress to date and hope to begin construction in 2010. Our accomplishments to date include the following. Please see the attached proposal package for further details.

- Granted pro bono landscape design services by Carol R. Johnson Associates (CRJA) - 2008.
- Held three community charettes and completed a conceptual design for the park - 2009.
- Awarded a \$100,000 grant by George B. Henderson Foundation - 2009.
- Awarded a \$3,000 grant by New England Grassroots Environment Fund - Boston Grants Initiative - 2009.
- Presented our case to the board of Edward Ingersoll Browne Fund in November 2008 for design-phase funding. Will present our case to the board on October 22 for construction-phase funding.
- Commissioner Antonia Pollak, Parks and Recreation Dept., plans to submit our capital improvement costs in the budget planning set for January, 2010.

We write you today seeking a more active participation by the Boston Housing Authority and your property management firm, United Housing Management, to

ensure that this valuable community resource is clean and safe. We are not asking you to assume these duties but rather to partner with our community and Boston Parks & Recreation Department (BPRD) to share in this responsibility. There are 26 units in your property with an approximate population of nearly 100 people I would imagine. When one factors in visitors, we have a significant density of residents and friends who use and enjoy this small park regularly. This is to be celebrated and encouraged as our goal is for this park to be used by everyone in our community. However, despite regularly scheduled maintenance by BPRD and volunteer clean-ups by community members this park is, more often than not, found littered with trash, garbage, broken glass, and abandoned belongings. Our community effort in conjunction with BPRD just can't keep up with the rate at which this park is being littered.

This week I sat down with Kevin Bynoe, Sr. Property Manager at United Housing Management (UHM) at his offices in Dorchester. Kevin was very helpful but felt constrained by his contract with BHA when I proposed that his maintenance team play a more active role in the care of this park. Kevin did offer to contribute to any scheduled community clean up, but the density of this BHA property has proven to require more frequent maintenance than that. At present, the UHM maintenance team schedules a bi-weekly maintenance of the front steps and sidewalk that abut your property. The frequency of this effort has ensured that these areas are generally found to be clean and pleasant. We believe that if UHM were to include the park (just steps away) in their bi-weekly maintenance that it would also remain clean and pleasant day in and day out. However, Kevin indicated that the park is public property and not subject to the UHM contract. This we do not doubt, but the situation we have now is unacceptable to this community. It's been our experience that a regularly scheduled maintenance sweep should take no more than 15-20 minutes to complete. Again, this contribution by the BHA would complement the maintenance already being done by BPRD and the community volunteers. One of the conditions of our receiving Browne funding is that all interested parties commit to a maintenance agreement to ensure that their investment is properly maintained. We believe that the Interested parties here include, but are not limited, to the following:

- City of Boston - Parks & Recreation Department
- Boston Housing Authority
- Highland Park Neighborhood Association and Friends of Alvah Kittredge Park

We visited the BHA web site prior to writing this letter to better understand your mission. We were happy to find that you remind potential residents that this property is "located in the Historic Highland Park section of Roxbury." It goes on to extol the "neighborhood parks nearby" in your list of amenities offered. Community members could not agree with you more on both points. Highland Park is a historic neighborhood and we do consider our parks to be amenities to be enjoyed by all. We respectfully believe that if the BHA promotes Alvah Kittredge Park as an amenity, you share a responsibility with BPRD and our community to ensure it's properly maintained.

An additional idea that we'd like you to consider would be for the BHA to promote our park project as one option for interested non-exempt residents to fulfill their monthly community service requirements. I expect there are residents who might share our interest in the park if this option were promoted by those who manage this program. We can help you do that. We've found this project to be a rewarding one. BHA residents might feel the same way if given the chance to help us restore and maintain what will soon be a beautiful park at their doorstep. Interested residents might freely elect to attend meetings and work with Friends of Alvah Kittredge Park to fulfill their community service obligation.

One final thought before closing. We are now fully engaged in our fundraising efforts. We've raised approximately \$175,000 to date and are well on our way of realizing this dream. However, as we present our case to potential funders it's important that the park be clean and well maintained. Foundations will often visit a site before awarding grant monies. If our park appears littered and neglected we are not likely to be successful. Raising funds is never easy so we want to be sure we put our best foot forward during these difficult financial times.

We are available to meet with the BHA and your property management firm to discuss our proposal further.

Sincerely,

Chris McCarthy, Friends of Alvah Kittredge Park

Willie Brown, Highland Park Neighborhood Association