

I. PARK VISIONING: RESOURCES

Resources for starting projects

- **COG Design (cogdesign.org)** Nonprofit organization that provides pro bono landscape design services to underserved communities in eastern Massachusetts. Contact COG through their online application
 - GOOD FOR: Groups that need help with community-driven design, groups that need a conceptual plan to elicit capital planning funds
 - PROS: Relies on community input and builds in projects that with proven community support, yields a process that can dovetail with city capital projects, helps Friends and volunteer groups collaborate with community as park group forms
 - YIELDS: Conceptual plans, good understanding of park architectural considerations and community needs
- **BSA Foundation/Boston Society of Architects (www.architects.org)**
 - GOOD FOR: Community groups, NPOs, and individual artists and designers with interest in enhancing a program or project related to architecture, landscape, engineering, and/or community development and the built environment
 - PROS: Serves all age groups, supports workshops, hands-on planning and design opportunities (does not fund design fees, but can support community meetings and charettes)
- **New England Grassroots Environment Fund (grassrootsfund.org)** Nonprofit organization designed to inspire, connect, and support community-based environmental projects throughout New England. Small seed grants for volunteer driven groups, operating budget under \$100,000 (no deadline). Contact NEGEF through their online application
 - GOOD FOR: Groups that are embarking on small improvements, with matching volunteer commitments
 - PROS: Helps groups that are just starting off to provide capacity for small projects that can be performed with owner input. Builds track record with community group and collaboration among Friends, can result in visual improvements that can be used for next steps and other applications
 - YIELDS: Small project improvements, collaboration between Friends representatives, communication and collaboration

FRIENDS OF SYMPHONY PARK

How Residents Can Play a Role in Improving City Parks

Boston Park Advocates Workshop March 11, 2017

with park owners.

II. PARK VISIONING: PROCESS

Tips for community visioning

- Public meetings: Communicate meetings through *every* available resource—local papers, community groups, city and state representatives, and nearby institutions, and flyer within local park vicinity. Make sure meeting locations are close to the park to optimize stakeholder involvement.
- Advance work: Send out surveys (Survey Monkey has free online surveys available) to gather information- How often do people use the park? What do they like the most? What is the biggest problem? What would they like to see? Also, perform site surveys to see how the park is used (circulation throughout the day), what types of use it receives, what the conditions are (light, wind, etc), and how this may impact future design considerations.
- During meetings: Bring visual tools to help discuss the park and enhance collaboration. If you are discussing a playground, bring several styles of playgrounds for a reference. If you are discussing different design themes (formal, informal), bring visual representations. Follow presentations with break-out discussions. Facilitate meetings and hot button topics with a ‘we’ attitude, addressing potential conflicts early on. Encourage everyone to have a voice, and serve food and refreshments. Make sure to have sign in sheets to collect participant information

III. BUILDING SUPPORT: MOVING TOWARDS YOUR GOAL

Programs: Concerts, exercise classes, community events

- Programs can start concurrently to the planning process, and help build momentum and maximize advocacy. Pick programs that reflect your park user base—senior exercise classes for seniors, or child-friendly activities for families. Find funders through talks with stakeholders, put together volunteer-led activities, or talk with city representatives about healthy movement sponsorships. Once you have run a successful program, you can use this to build support for your projects and elicit funding or sponsorship for them.

Stakeholder communication: Report on progress and elicit collaboration and support

- Collect letters of support at each step, reporting on progress to each organization. For elected officials, report periodically and ask for help identifying funding resources as needed. Make sure to keep the property owner, elected representatives and the Mayor informed!
- Identify grant opportunities that may be available. DND, Parks Department (sporadically), BPDA, NEGEF, Cabot Family Charitable Trust, Surdna Foundation, and more! If you have funding, consider hiring a professional grant writer to help hone a ‘boiler plate’ application

Multiple processes: Keep your progress towards capital improvement going

- Remember to ask for the park to be included in a capital restoration, and include this in formal requests made to the department as well as to the Mayor.
- Include any call to action items identified through the community process- unsafe conditions, physical hazards, etc

IV. ARTWORK: FUNDING AND CONSIDERATIONS

Resources for projects:

- **Edward Ingersoll Browne Fund:** Fund administered by the City's Treasury Trust Fund, available for "the adornment and benefit of (Boston) by the erection of statues, monuments, fountains for men and beasts and for the ornament of its streets, ways, squares and parks in such manner as will promote the pleasure, comfort, education, patriotism and good taste of its citizens."
https://www.cityofboston.gov/images_documents/Browne%20Fund%20Application.pdf
 - GOOD FOR: Planning and implementation- a Phase I grant will help with artistic design development and artist selection, a Phase II grant will help fund fabrication and implementation
 - PROS: Well suited for park improvements that transform space, impact large numbers of people, complement other improvements, and are supported by the community
 - CONSIDERATIONS: Requires approval of owner and the Boston Art Commission as well as all relevant city departments; requires maintenance agreement with abutters and local organizations.
- **New England Foundation for the Arts: (nefa.org)** Nonprofit organization that cultivates and promotes arts in New England and beyond. The Fund for the Arts grant funds public art works (permanent and temporary)
- **George B. Henderson Foundation:** Fund devoted to enhancing the physical appearance of the City of Boston and preserving local cultural and historic values. Funds "shall be devoted solely to the enhancement of the physical appearance of the city of Boston including projects concerning parks, city streets, buildings, monuments, and architectural and sculptural works. Each project shall be visible by the public, preferably from a public way." http://thehendersonfoundation.com/2017_RFP.pdf
 - GOOD FOR: Implementation funding- public art requests must be made for permanent public art. Projects on property owned by the City are required to have submitted applications to the Boston Art Commission before being considered for review.
 - PROS: Well suited for park improvements within the city that are long lasting, accessible to the public, and for projects that have already received community and funding commitments.
 - CONSIDERATIONS: Requires approval of owner and the Boston Art Commission as well as all relevant city departments, requires maintenance proposal and commitment.