

Tuesday, October 25, 2016 at 9:52 AM

Dear Acting-City-Manager Peterson,

Thanks so very much for your caring, thoughtful decision to enable further consideration to produce a more-natural historical restoration of Sacramento Field.

Yes, Phoebe [Sinclair, Community Liaison] and I will definitely share your wise remarks with our entire email list [...]

Yes, the members of our community who were the most upset by some expressed staff attitudes about development of the field now recognize that those represented intelligent, sincere, professionally-educated disagreements...and that any past misunderstandings were not really intentional.

We know that, whenever any statements made are misunderstood, both speaker and listener almost always share responsibility.

Please be assured that any seemingly-personal attacks in the past...are now out-of-order and well-passed.

Almost everyone in the Neighborhood will be extremely pleased with your assurance that lights will be turned off at 7 pm.

We also share a common goal with you in wanting to work hard to make Baldwin School parents feel more welcome at, and become more active in, our monthly ANC meetings. Parent representative Bob Neer and I are looking forward to have future meetings not just in our own Maud Morgan Arts Center, but also occasionally in the Baldwin School's cafeteria...also at an earlier time, say 5:30...which might well be a more convenient time for school parents than our past 7:30.

Stuart Dash just called me, minutes ago, about scheduling a November date for our planned joint city/ANC meeting for your upcoming latest proposal for the Field.

We'll both run that in the Baldwin School's cafeteria, not in our own Maud Morgan Arts Center.

Personally, I'm very much looking forward to the little trip Owen O'Riordan and I have discussed (in his kind phone call to me) to view (hopefully, with other city staff as well) nearby 'Hall's Pond Field and Sanctuary', just off Beacon Street in Brookline.

There, adjoining a vast open athletic field, is a separate restored-natural area, with footpaths reminiscent of own old dirt footpath here in Cambridge, in still-extant Sacramento Field.

Please see the ten recent photos (labeled 'HP') of this relevant example of tasteful path restoration by neighboring Brookline. (View photos online: http://bit.ly/ANC_photos_FredMeyer)

Also here for our consideration are three additional photos (labeled "LNHS") of less-paved paths within our nearer 'Longfellow House/Washington's Headquarters National Historic Site',

We all need to note that both these two restoration projects were publicly funded and performed after the enactment of the Americans with Disabilities Act, by the Town of Brookline and by the federal government.

Other Agassiz neighborhood really wants to create, immediately, full access to this athletic field and its accompanying views of untouched nature...as well as immediate better access for our school kids, both during and after school.

I've addressed our Disabilities Commission several times about my own personal strong wish to see our city to acquire a few 'Bobcat' snow plows...of the type Harvard uses so successfully for nearby sidewalks...to help all Cambridge residents citywide with a 'first pass' plowing of their adjacent sidewalks after any unusually-heavy blizzards.

Am looking forward to conversing with Michael Muehe and other Commission members about how to provide far-better access for all to our Field, while still preserving and protecting its natural and historic areas (as is beatifically provided at Hall's Pond).

Hope our city solicitor will also join our vital upcoming conversation at the Commission, to give us all essential legal advice about what can and cannot be done within current court interpretations of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Sacramento Field is unique in being so very essential to Cambridge's natural-history and commercial-history.

It's one of very few spots in our city been unbuilt-upon, ever since pre-historic time! Therefore, seeming-improvements there shouldn't be similar to those for ordinary city parks/playgrounds acquired/designed after building-demolitions.

Some research (view online at: http://bit.ly/ANC_photos_FredMeyer) for our Agassiz Neighborhood Council has revealed that Sacramento Field is the last remnant of the native-cedar swamp that once covered most of our neighborhood...before its mid- and late-1800s landfill and development.

This unique 1.2-acre area was spared from loss only by luck.

In the 1820s, it became a reservoir (with a small adjacent pumping station added later) for a huge textile-finishing plant, located just across the then-existing Miller's River and adjacent marshes, at the nearby Cambridge/Somerville border (since all landfilled).

Have met two different neighborhood residents who (or whose parent) once swam in this reservoir; one of them almost drowned there, scarcely able to climb up out of its once-slippery banks!

The site of the old factory used this site is now Conway Park, at the corner of Beacon and Sacramento Streets, in Somerville.

Though this factory's buildings no longer remain, some old brick walls and piping of its large industrial neighbor, a major pipe and tube manufacturer, can still be readily seen today... from Market Basket's parking lot (itself the site of still another mid-century industrial plant; which, together with other old factories, surrounded the still-visible small Milk Row Cemetery.)

So, as you've clearly recognized, Sacramento Field is indeed an extremely unusual site, well deserving of the special attention you've given it.

Our neighborhood is most grateful to you.

Sincerely,
Fred Meyer
Moderator, Agassiz Neighborhood Council