

THE CITY OF CRANSTON

**RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL
SUPPORTING THE CREATION AND EXPANSION OF OUTDOOR
SPACE, RECREATION AND CITY PARKS**

No. 2012-13

**As amended in Committee 3/15/2012*

***As amended by City Council 3/26/2012*

Passed:
March 26, 2012


Anthony J. Lupino, Council President

Resolved that

Whereas, the Cranston City Council supports the expansion of city parks,

Whereas, planning for new recreation areas will position Cranston to win competitive grants when they become available,

Be it resolved, that the City Council supports pursuit of the following projects as priorities to make more outdoor space and recreation available to Cranston citizens.

Be it further resolved, that the mayor's office shall report ~~monthly to the Public Works Committee~~ ^{***at least quarterly to the Public} on the progress of the following projects.

Ward One: Acquire Bellefont Pond property to create a park. The 14.8 acre property, which includes the entire shoreline of Bellefont Pond, is owned by BASF. Fishing, walking and picnicking would be possible around the pond. The park could also enable a walking path to connect Roger Williams Park to the Pawtuxet River and city owned land at the end of Park View Boulevard. The city once received a state open space grant to purchase the property, but used the money for the Cullion property. The city must be sure all contamination issues are resolved before it acquires the land. First steps: Formally notify BASF of the city's interest in the property and wait for the company to complete contamination survey by end of 2012.

46 Ward One: Acquire trail easements and land to improve and protect the Pawtuxet
47 River Trail. The three mile trail currently runs from Rhodes on the Pawtuxet to Warwick
48 Avenue and then back to Pawtuxet Village on the Warwick side of the river. DEM has
49 abandoned the Pawtuxet River Supply Depot on Warwick Avenue which is a key part of
50 the trail. The city should acquire all or part of this property to insure trail access. The city
51 should also explore acquiring an easement from Yardworks to extend the trail from
52 Warwick Avenue to Mayflower Drive. At Mayflower Drive, a short walk along quiet
53 residential streets would bring walkers to the Bellefont Pond property. The easement
54 would require that the chain link fence surrounding the Yardworks property be set back
55 10-15 feet. First steps: Contact DEM regarding the abandoned depot and contact
56 Yardworks concerning acquisition of an easement and fence relocation. RIDEM has
57 small trail grants up to \$3000 available which could help on this project.

58
59 Ward Two & Six: Build Pontiac Spur bike path. This abandoned rail bed could
60 potentially connect Wellington Avenue to Knight Street at the Warwick/Cranston line,
61 creating a three mile path. First steps: Start the procedure to get the project placed on the
62 RI Department of Transportation's Transportation Improvement Program lists and
63 investigate whether the path could be extended by way of the South Elmwood line to
64 Bellefont Pond.

65
66 Ward Three: Calise Field: This recreational facility in a densely populated section
67 of Cranston could be improved to serve more people. The city should devise a park
68 redevelopment plan to better utilize the non-ball field section on the park's southern end.
69 Possible improvements include a trail along Print Works Pond, canoe and fishing access,
70 community garden, improved pond views, reconfigured parking areas, possible shared
71 parking with abutter RIARC. First steps: Talk with Cranston Print Works about the
72 transfer of the pond shoreline adjacent to Calise Field to the city, discuss cooperation
73 with RIARC and develop a draft plan.

74
75 Ward Four: Acquire land or easements to develop a trail network on the Cranston
76 Historic Farm Route. By connecting city owned conservation land and Audubon Society
77 land with Curran State Park near the right angle turn of Laten Knight Road, a several
78 mile trail system can be built. This would allow establishment of a trail from Burlingame
79 Road to Laten Knight Road to Seven Mile Road. The plan should include better signs and
80 parking. Contact landowners to explore making the connection and contact the Pagliarini
81 family about possible acquisition of 67 acre Hope Farm, perhaps in conjunction with the
82 federal government's National Resources Conservation Service.

83
84 Ward Four: Extend the Meshanticut Park walking path a quarter mile north along
85 Meshanticut Brook to Angell's Pond. The State of Rhode Island, the city and the
86 Providence Water Supply Board own the entire western bank of the brook between the
87 two ponds. The city, through the Western Hills Middle School property, also owns the
88 southern shoreline of Angell's Pond. The removal of 31 parking spaces would allow a
89 tree lined trail along the brook. Fishing and boating access should be established on
90 Angell's Pond. First steps: Contact the school department and Providence Water Supply
91 Board to explore their support for the project.

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93
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95 Ward Four, Five & Six: Establish a bike path or walking trail along the
96 Providence Water Supply Board easement than runs from Pontiac Avenue to Midway
97 Road and beyond. First steps: Secure the water supply board endorsement of the concept
98 and talk with the Wilders Companies about coordinating this project with their redesign
99 of Garden City.
100
101 Ward Five: Improve Knightsville gazebo and park to include old DPW garage
102 property. The vacated DPW property adjoining the gazebo was intended to expand the
103 park, but it has not been incorporated into it. First step: Develop a design to incorporate
104 the DPW lot into the existing park.
105
106 ***As a prerequisite to implementation of any of the fore-mentioned projects, a**
107 **cost of maintenance recommendation be conducted to include, but not limited, to**
108 **cost for maintenance and upkeep.**
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110
111
112 Referred to Public Works Committee March 15, 2012
113 Sponsored by Councilman Stycos



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Allan W. Fung
Mayor

From the Desk of Mayor Fung

April 4, 2012

In accordance with my obligations under the City Code, I am providing my opinion on the City Council's Resolution 2012-13 entitled, "Supporting the Creation and Expansion of Outdoor Space, Recreation and City Parks."

First, I want to say that this administration has taken advantage of the opportunity, where it was feasible and affordable, to expand the City's open space holdings and to improve our recreational opportunities such as the acquisition of the Moreau Farm Conservation Easements, the NRCS improvements to both Fay Field and Blackamore Pond areas and the City efforts to restore the floodplain functions in the Warren and Amanda Avenue areas. Further, our efforts to acquire the residences in the flood plain in the Perkins Avenue area will, if successful, return the land to perpetual open space. I am therefore glad to see that the Council, through this resolution, is also willing to support the administration's ongoing efforts in this area.

However, I must caution that there are always costs involved in any such acquisition and subsequent project. As many of you know, the above initiatives that this administration has undertaken, with your approval, have come at some or no cost to the city. In my opinion, the Council's resolution to look for opportunities in every ward in the city could have a significant financial impact, particularly if all the proposals are implemented.

In these difficult economic times, the City must always weigh the advantage to be gained from improvements to the City's open space and recreational facilities against the ability of the City's residents to absorb the costs through taxes to acquire and maintain said facilities. Particularly with respect to maintenance of any potential newly acquired facilities, I want to remind you that we continue to operate with less manpower in many divisions, including in Parks and Recreation. To pursue any of these proposals would entail a need for additional manpower or at the very least the engagement of an outside contractor to maintain any such facilities.

Further, as to funding, we will need to pursue new bond authority for Parks and Recreation in the upcoming election cycle. The prior bonding authority has been depleted for numerous recreation projects. While we have plenty of bonding authority for Open Space, which can be used for acquisition, we will need new authority for any improvements and maintenance of any proposed project.

Also, I would note that several of the actions identified, i.e. the expansion of the bike path system, require State action and are proposed for land that is not owned by the City and therefore is not within the City's control.

The administration will investigate the feasibility and associated costs with each project. While we realize that the city code provision provides the administration with six months to file progress reports on such projects, we will make every effort, particularly since we have limited resources, to comply with the council's request that we respond quarterly. Thank you.