

Updates, DCR (DCR)

From: Alison Leary Mooradian [alisonlearymooradian@gmail.com]
Sent: Friday, May 31, 2013 6:43 PM
To: Updates, DCR (DCR)
Subject: The Privatization of Public Parkland-Daly Field

Dear DCR,

Last year I became aware of a bill filed near the end of the legislative session that allowed the Commissioner of the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) to enter into a long-term lease of the Daly Field parkland for Simmons College to build a high intensity sports complex for its use, and for a practice field for the Brighton High School football team.

While I am sympathetic to the needs for athletic facilities for both Simmons (my Alma Mata) and BHS, I am concerned about the process that is authorizing this transfer of valuable, riverfront public property to private hands, that will effectively shut out public use for much of the year.

My understanding is that this law was passed before any public meetings or environmental review. The land is being leased for 30 years for a one time payment of \$500,000. That's about \$1,400 month for near exclusive use of the Park.

The failure of DCR to maintain its property, is not reason enough to sell out to the highest bidder. But what is really galling is that the public was not included in a decision that will have the effect of shutting out public use for years to come.

I was unable to attend last night's listening session at the Community Rowing Boathouse. It was unfortunate that I was given only two days notice of the meeting.

I am not necessarily opposed to some kind of public-private partnership that could improve the park, maximize its use and allow public access to the River. But the plan so far in place is not a partnership, but a takeover.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Thank you.

Kind Regards,

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Updates, DCR (DCR)

From: barbara R [ruskinb00@icloud.com]
Sent: Saturday, June 08, 2013 9:14 AM
To: Updates, DCR (DCR)
Subject: Daly Field Project #15039

Dear Secretary Sullivan,

Just a brief note to explain our opposition to acres of artificial turf on a huge development beside the river which would limit public access for a long period of time. We think that the Charles River is one of our most amazing and beloved resources. The land along it is much appreciated and well used in other places. To limit public access to a narrow band on the banks is short-sighted. There are so many places where access is limited by roadways and buildings. Let's make the most of this parkland.

If as much money went into preparation of the land for grass and other plants as will be spent to prepare the land for artificial turf, it would survive with good drainage and become a natural preserve for people and wildlife. Instead of plastic pellets and runoff of uncertain quality flowing into the river and creating a heat sink in summer, we would have a green space that could be used year round for low impact pastimes compatible with principles of conservation and parklands. There will be birds and bugs and animals that will support our river way. The Charles River's banks are part of the Emerald Necklace and are valued.

Sport fields are wonderful--my dad was a college baseball and basketball coach and I was a varsity player in three sports. However, to place seven acres of mostly private facilities and fencing by the last remaining public riverside location seems a mistake. And this mistake would be guaranteed to go on for decades, which means generations of people who would be deprived of places to relax, even play by the river on a natural surface. A small band of land along the riverbank is all that the public would have and little if any access to the privatized fields.

As far as the Simmons deal goes, the college seems to get the much better part of the financial arrangement. Why should Boston residents and neighbors (I'm from Watertown and walk by the river) be deprived of access to the last remaining large public site by the river? There must be other open spaces that Simmons could take over and since Brighton High kids have to travel anyway, they, too, could share a site that's not beside the river. Little League is a commendable organization, but the unorganized kids and adult games and family activities have merit also and people would love to play on a natural surface that would actually contribute to natural life along our river instead of killing all hope of wildlife there.

Not everything of value should be sacrificed to a private corporation/college for development money. We've waited for a fix at Daly Field for a very long time. A little longer won't hurt to protect the last major public land by the river for us and future generations who more and more appreciate and desperately need natural surroundings in order to flourish in the city.

We hope that you will use your position and long term vantage point as protector of our natural physical and social environments to make a decision that will benefit all the people and the river you are bound to protect.

Sincerely,
Barbara and Jeremy Ruskin
members Sustainable Watertown