

To: Professor Toomey, Instructor of English 379: Introduction to Professional Writing

From: Cole Matinzi, Student

Subject: A Report on the Feasibility of a Proposal to Seek Funding for Renovations of a Public Park for the Youth of the Plymouth Community

Date: November 7, 2023

Purpose: The purpose of this memo is to study the feasibility of obtaining funding via a Massachusetts foundation for renovations of the Haskell Field in Plymouth, as well as acknowledge the potential challenges associated with applying funding to town-owned land.

Summary:

This feasibility study proposes renovating Haskell Field in Plymouth, Massachusetts, to create a community park for both locals and students at Plymouth North High School. It identifies grants and explores the logistical challenges of municipal representation for grant use. Seeking guidance from a family member experienced in park projects, the study outlines renovation costs, emphasizes the urgent need due to deteriorating facilities and overcrowded school amenities, and highlights strong student support. It discusses scalability, funding possibilities, and practical management within the school schedule, aiming for a manageable, impactful project.

Background:

It has become a common trend that the newest generations of students receive criticism for their attachment to their devices and unwillingness to embrace the outdoors as their parents and grandparents claim to have done so wholeheartedly decades ago. Concern over children spending

too much time inside has incited so much panic that it has even been given a moniker: Nature deficit disorder¹. This concern is not unfounded. Outdoor play has been shown to bring about several benefits: promotion of creativity/imagination, and the building of confidence to name a few². Unfortunately, safe, and well-maintained areas for children to engage in outdoor activities are no longer plentiful.

Urbanized areas lack significant play space, making the act of getting outdoors and into nature a challenge in and of itself. Even in suburban areas, once popular play spaces have degraded. In my hometown of Plymouth, Massachusetts, this is an issue I have witnessed firsthand.

Playgrounds along my old bus route that I used to pass every day in elementary school, filled with “big kids” playing basketball and football, are now largely barren and have fallen into disrepair. On occasion I will spot kids attempting to play baseball on the old fields, but they will eventually give up due to the questionable conditions.

Plymouth North High School, which I attended starting in 2016 has such a park directly across from it. On 43 Nook Road lies Haskell Field. It boasts over 3 acres of land,³ a baseball diamond and a basketball court. However, until last summer I was unaware of its presence. Ultimately, this space, that would have been a hot spot for kids in the fall and spring after classes, has been taken by time. Outside of the baseball diamond, which is occasionally maintained, most portions

¹ “Why Kids Need to Spend Time in Nature.” Child Mind Institute, 30 Oct. 2023, childmind.org/article/why-kids-need-to-spend-time-in-nature/.

² “Why Kids Need to Spend Time in Nature.” Child Mind Institute, 30 Oct. 2023, childmind.org/article/why-kids-need-to-spend-time-in-nature/.

³ MyRec.com. “Haskell Field & Avery Memorial Playground.” Plymouth Recreation Dept: Facility Details, plymouthma.myrec.com/info/facilities/details.aspx?FacilityID=11285. Accessed 5 Nov. 2023.

of the park have become overgrown and largely unusable. And given that is directly next to a school that lacks enough outdoor facilities to keep up with its growing student population, this could be the optimal park to target.

As a result of these issues, I would like to propose renovations for Haskell Field, with the purpose of rebuilding a community park that would serve not only Plymouth but the Plymouth North High School students.

- While I will need to do more in-depth research, I have already identified a promising foundation and grant for this undertaking. The foundation being the Division of Conservation Services, and the grant being the Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities (PARC) Grant. This grant can be used to “acquire parkland, build a new park, or to renovate an existing park,”⁴ and the Division of Conservation Services as a whole offers assistance to towns for the acquisition and renovation of parkland. However, issues stem from the grant being intended for use by municipalities. Firstly, I would need to study the logistics of representing a town, as well as the challenges/restrictions that would inevitably come from doing so before I seriously consider using this grant.
- I am not overly familiar with the process of renovation and overseeing park land. However, my father worked for multiple decades with the Department of Conservation and Recreation, and his responsibility was overseeing projects such as this. While I will have to independently research costs for basketball court resurfacing, hoop replacements, and landscaping, I will be able to consult my father about the actual steps that would be

⁴ “Apply to the Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities (PARC) Grant Program.” Mass.Gov, www.mass.gov/how-to/apply-to-the-parkland-acquisitions-and-renovations-for-communities-parc-grant-program. Accessed 5 Nov. 2023.

taken to submit this type of proposal, and what guidelines would have to be followed. He is very familiar with working with the town of Plymouth for events and programs and would be able to provide me with an in-depth breakdown of how a project like this would be executed. In the past he has explained to me how town-related projects consistently go through multiple channels before approval and thus need airtight documentation (which I will be able to ask him to elaborate on as this documentation frequently went through his desk), but once approved and in motion the hired workers are largely reliable and do not require constant maintenance. He has emphasized that the town typically takes over in these situations, and thus my role would largely be in creating the actual proposal and little more. Overall, I believe I would be able to become well-informed on the process of the necessary execution through him and my research, enough to form a professional proposal. With his experience, I would be able to create a grant proposal that would be held under intense scrutiny.

- The costs for the renovation project are also very gatherable information. Through quick searches I found that resurfacing of a concrete basketball court will cost around \$3500⁵ if the damage is significant and given that the hoops themselves are already in place, only the rim and backboards would need to be replaced. These would cost approximately \$350⁶ each depending on the option selected. And finally, landscaping would be within the \$75⁷ an hour range, which would deal with cutting back brush, laying any grass, and general upkeep.

⁵ “How Much Does It Cost to Resurface a Basketball Court?” DNA of SPORTS, 24 Feb. 2022, www.dnaofsports.com/basketball/how-much-does-it-cost-to-resurface-a-basketball-court/.

⁶ Amazon.Com : Lifetime 73729 48 in. Shatter Proof Backboard Rim Combo ..., www.amazon.com/Lifetime-73729-Shatter-Backboard-Orange/dp/B0BZC6391V. Accessed 6 Nov. 2023.

⁷ Crail, Chauncey. “How Much Does Landscaping Cost in 2023?” Forbes, Forbes Magazine, 5 July 2023, www.forbes.com/home-improvement/lawn-care/landscaping-

Overall, the need for this project is legitimate and clear upon inspection of the park. The basketball court alone is filled with weeds and the backboards are not only improperly sized but overtaken by rust. Given that the nearby high school exceeds one thousand and three hundred students and often has its own facilities overrun by team practices leaving no space for any others, it is evident that there is a vast group who would make use of the new space. This is all the more reason to begin the project as soon as possible. The quicker it is completed; the more students will be able to enjoy it. And because of my firsthand experience, I will not have to do further research into the idea of the project being necessary. I have classmates from my years at Plymouth North who had repeatedly voiced to me how they had wished for more outdoor facilities by the school, and I could easily get quotes from them to put into my proposal.

Once again, I believe minimal research will be necessary to determine that this is the optimal solution to the issue of the parkland and the lack of outdoor student facilities. Renovating the current park is far more cost effective than beginning anew considering demolition would inevitably require more labor. And to prove that this is the optimal land to be built upon I would have to research what land is available near the school that is within a safe distance, and not already used. The school boundaries⁸ are available online and if used in tandem with Google Earth I would be able to see what specific land is open in the area. This would be a

cost/#:~:text=Landscaping%2C%20above%20many%20other%20home,more%20expensive%20than%20rural%20o
nes.

⁸ “Two Articles Will Give a Face Lift to Stephen’s Field and a Dredging to Jenney Pond.” WATD 95.9 FM, 7 Mar. 2022, 959watd.com/blog/2022/03/two-articles-will-give-a-face-lift-to-stephens-field-and-jenney-pond-in-plymouth/.

minimal time investment due to the ease of use of these tools, and thus I could quickly identify any superior locations.

The project idea itself is new, as there is no information available about efforts to revitalize this specific park. It has also never been undertaken previously, however, there is a much larger project in motion on a coastal park in Plymouth that is boasting widespread upgrades and renovations⁹. Given that another renovation project is currently undergoing I would certainly argue that it is scalable. Of course, funding is the major issue when considering scaling this type of project, and that is something I would need to investigate (assuming I decide to enlarge the project). There are multiple routes I could take when it comes to this, whether that be targeting multiple parks in the Plymouth area or attempting to build some kind of volunteer program centered around upkeep and less intensive renovation projects. However, I question whether that is a project I would be able to finish by the semester's end as that seems extremely involved. This specific project, strictly centered around Haskell Field, is far more manageable. And since I am extremely familiar with the area and thus know precisely what would need to be targeted, I can imagine the project in detail.

Construction would still be possible even with school in session, as the road that provides access to the park is only used by buses upon the beginning (7:00 am), and end (2:30 pm) of the school day. And of course, this would not be an issue on weekends. The land is relatively open meaning it would not be difficult to get workers in, and thus the most complex part of

⁹ "Two Articles Will Give a Face Lift to Stephen's Field and a Dredging to Jenney Pond." WATD 95.9 FM, 7 Mar. 2022, 959watd.com/blog/2022/03/two-articles-will-give-a-face-lift-to-stephens-field-and-jenney-pond-in-plymouth/.

my research would be centered around costs of the basketball court renovation, which would most likely need to involve removal of the original one.

Project Timeline:

November 7 - November 14 (Week 1 - 2): Project Initiation

- Conduct in-depth research on existing grants, focusing on the Division of Conservation Services and the PARC Grant.
- Gather specific information on application processes, requirements, and potential challenges of representing a town for grant purposes.
- Initiate discussions and consultations with the father experienced in overseeing park projects for an overview of the renovation process and project execution.

November 15 - November 21 (Week 3): Site Assessment and Cost Confirmation

- Obtain detailed cost estimates for the required renovations, including basketball court resurfacing, hoop replacements, and landscaping.
- Research neighboring lands within safe distances from the school for potential alternative locations, if needed.

November 22 - November 28 (Week 4): Proposal Planning and Outline Drafting

- Start drafting the initial proposal outline, including project scope, goals, and anticipated impact.
- Begin the preliminary proposal draft outlining the executive summary and project overview.
- Compile findings from the site assessment and cost estimates into the proposal document.

November 29 - December 5 (Week 5): Refinement and Consultation

- Review and refine the proposal draft based on consultations and obtained data.
- Discuss the proposal and project execution steps with the father to ensure comprehensive documentation and accurate project management insights.
- Seek feedback from potential stakeholders, classmates, or individuals who have previously expressed interest in enhancing outdoor facilities in the area.

December 6 - December 12 (Week 6): Proposal Completion and Finalization

- Incorporate feedback and suggestions obtained into the finalized proposal document.
- Review the proposal for consistency, accuracy, and adherence to grant application guidelines.

- Finalize documentation, including the proposed budget and project plan.

December 13 - December 20 (Week 7: Final Week): Proposal Submission

- Conduct a final review of the completed proposal to ensure accuracy and completeness.
- Submit the grant proposal to the appropriate funding body, ensuring all necessary documentation and forms are included.
- Provide necessary copies to the relevant parties involved in the project, ensuring a shared understanding of the proposal's content and goals.

Conclusion:

I can feasibly create a grant proposal for the Haskell Field renovations by the semester's end.

The research I will have to do is significantly less than previously thought, and I will be able to navigate the execution of this project through the expertise of my father. The biggest pieces will be confirmation of costs, and understanding how I would need to work with the town of Plymouth to accomplish this type of proposal. However, the resources to get this information are available. Overall, my personal relationship and familiarity with the area will help streamline this process and allow me to complete this grant proposal prior to the December 20th due date.

Works Cited

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