



FRIENDS OF EVERGREEN

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November 23, 2010

Bill Hall
Portland Planning Board Chair
City of Portland
City Hall
389 Congress Street
Portland, Maine 04101

Re: 2010 Brentwood Master Plan, Evergreen Cemetery
Applicant: City of Portland Public Services Department & Friends of Evergreen

Dear Mr. Hall:

We are applying to the City of Portland Planning Board in conjunction with the City of Portland Public Services Department to review and accept the 2010 Brentwood Master Plan for Evergreen Cemetery pursuant to the original 1994 Master Plan. The 1994 Master Plan was a successful collaboration between the City of Portland and the Friends of Evergreen on a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. The original Master Plan presented general recommendations for the Brentwood Parcel, but when the City of Portland leased two and a half acres of the Brentwood Parcel to the Deering Center Neighborhood Association in 2009 as a temporary community garden, the Friends of Evergreen decided to study the Brentwood Parcel in detail with a professional landscape architect.

Like many sections of Evergreen, the Brentwood Parcel has not yet been developed as a planned landscape with burial plots. As an unused parcel, it had served as a buffer between the cemetery and the residential neighborhood. The parcel, however, was overgrown and neglected

The 1994 Master Plan for Evergreen Cemetery recommended that this parcel be reserved for future burial development and ancillary maintenance facilities but did not go into the detail of the design. The Friends were concerned that the “active use” of a community garden is not in keeping with the historically accepted “passive use” described in the cemetery’s Master Plan. At the same time, the Friends understood the community’s desire to use the land in a productive manner. We wanted to bring together these two community organizations through the collaborative effort of a “Treatment Plan” pursuant to the original Master Plan.

The Friends of Evergreen wrote and received two \$5,000 grants from the Thompson Fund of the Maine Community Foundation and the Davis Family Foundation. We wanted a plan that in the short term would serve the neighborhood as a community garden but would also provide a long-term plan to use the land for cemetery development and related cemetery uses as stated in the original 1994 Master Plan.

In the spring of 2010, we hired Tatyanna Seredin, a landscape architect of Mohr & Seredin with experience in historic landscapes and cemetery design. In addition, we assembled a ten person advisory board comprising members from the Evergreen Cemetery staff, City of Portland Historic Preservation Office, City of Portland Parks and Open Space, members from the Deering Center Neighborhood Association, representatives from the Friends of Evergreen and other historic preservation organizations, such as the Maine Historical Society's newly integrated Olmsted Alliance.

The Master Planning process included meetings with the advisory board and two public meetings that were advertised in the local papers. Invitations to abutters and neighbors were hand-delivered. Tatyanna Seredin and the advisory board made suggestions to Deering Center Neighborhood Association which were incorporated into the community garden design as they sought site plan approval from the City of Portland. In May, the Planning Staff approved the community garden design and referenced some of the concepts generated by the 2010 Brentwood Master Plan.

The Master Planning was a positive and inclusive process that brought together interested groups, and resulted in a plan that is enthusiastically embraced by the Friends of Evergreen, the abutters, the Deering Center Neighborhood Association Community Gardens, Historic Preservation groups and city staff. Included in the report is a cost estimate to perform the work by phases. If the entire master plan is implemented, there is considerable income potential for the City of Portland.

In summary, our goal is for the 2010 Brentwood Master Plan to be adopted by the Portland City Council as an addendum to the 1994 Master Plan for Evergreen Cemetery. We recently received unanimous approval of the plan by the Historic Preservation Board and now come before the Planning Board for approval.

Sincerely,



Cynthia Loebenstein
President, Friends of Evergreen

cc: Michael Bobinsky, Director of Public Services
Skukria Wiar, Portland Planning Office