

Massachusetts

Greenfield

Green River Park Wins 2017 Design of Facility Agency Award



As a Playful City, USA, Greenfield prides itself in its exceptional play spaces. Green River Park is no exception. Once an overlooked and underused facility, it is now a gem of the community after extensive renovations in the spring and summer of 2016. Renovations included a new playground, pavilion, picnic tables, benches, bike racks, basketball court, pickle ball court, paved parking area, and Dog Park. The park has truly transformed into an essential community gathering space.

"A truly Greenfield municipal team effort to plan, prepare and complete this project" beamed Mayor William Martin. "From the beginning in 2014 as we outlined our priority projects that had the best opportunity to succeed the pieces began to fall into place." Green River Park, only later to be designated a formal park by the Town Council, had all of the attributes that would maximize available resources. Ample land, dual access, needed repairs, services for multiple interests coupled with a grant opportunity, Foundation funds for a dog park and future expansion opportunities easily paved the way for a priority designation.

The Mayor added "when I say a team effort, I mean several departments working together for the common community good. Those involved include Eric Twarog and Maureen Pollock of Planning; George VanDelinder and Ed Reniewicz of Central Maintenance; Don Ouelette, Mike Duclos, Paul Newell and Paul Raskevitz of DPW; Christy Moore and Kelly Jenkins of Recreation; Rachel Jaquay and Pam Kinsmith, Paws Park supporters and Rick Roy, Chair, of the Recreation Commission".

Together, with the energy and leadership provided by these individuals Green River Park has been selected as the winner of the 2017 Massachusetts Recreation and Park Association's "Design of Facility Agency Award". The Massachusetts Recreation and Park Association's Executive Board established this award as a way to recognize departments that create and renovate facilities that greatly enhance their community. Christy Moore, Recreation Director, accepted the award during the Awards Brunch at the 32nd Annual MRPA State Conference on Wednesday, March 15, 2017 at the DCU Center in Worcester, MA.

The 22 acre park is located off of Petty Plain Road on the southern edge of Greenfield adjacent to where the Green River converges with the Deerfield River. The land was originally acquired by the town in 1911 and was used as tree nursery for Greenfield's Street Tree Program in the late 1920s. Most recently, the park featured an outdated play structure, cracked basketball court, and softball fields. The softball fields were preserved in the renovation, while the rest of the park underwent major rehabilitation.

The entire park design and renovation was strongly influenced by the Citizens of Greenfield. Dating back to as far as the early 1990s, Greenfield Citizens have yearned for a Dog Park for their four legged friends. In 2012 there became a renewed determination for the creation of a dog park. For many years, a dedicated group of individuals rallied and fundraised for their cause. They worked with the Greenfield Recreation Department and Recreation Commission to determine the best location for the park which was ultimately Green River Park. Not only was there strong support for a Dog Park, but there was also massive support to construct an outdoor pickle ball court which was also included in the park re-design.

Soon after confirming a location for the Paws Park, the Recreation Department was presented with a Grant opportunity from the Stanton Foundation, a foundation committed to the welfare of canines and strengthening the human/dog bond. At the same time, the opportunity also arose to apply for a PARC Grant. By combining the two grants, the Department was able to fund the project with a minimal amount of town funding. While balancing the timelines and requirements of each grant was extremely challenging, the result was the amazing park Greenfield has today. Without the combination of both grants, the park renovations would not have been possible.

While the land has always been considered a park space, it is now dedicated as park and recreation land in perpetuity thanks to this renovation project. The Recreation Department is excited to offer new programming at the park and hopes to further its development with walking paths and nature study areas. The Park was designed by Leonard Design Associates and constructed by Mountain View Landscapes.

"It's an honor to receive the 2017 Design of Facility Agency Award for the renovations of Green River Park by MRPA's Executive Board. This is our recognition of a dream come true; from concept to completion. The park is truly a wonderful asset for our community and our four-legged friends," noted Christy Moore, Recreation Director.