

Eric D. Batista
City Manager



City of Worcester

March 24, 2026

Attachment for Item #8.10 A

TO THE WORCESTER CITY COUNCIL

COUNCILORS:

I respectfully submit the attached communication relative to the review and master planning process for Newton Hill at Elm Park, as received from Robert C. Antonelli Jr., Commissioner, and forwarded for the information of your Honorable Body.

The Department of Parks, Recreation, and Cemetery (DPRC) in partnership with the University of Massachusetts Amherst, College of Social & Behavioral Sciences, Department of Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning (LARP), the Parks and Recreation Commission and the Urban Forestry Tree Commission will begin the review and master planning process for Newton Hill at Elm Park (Newton Square Tennis & Basketball Court area). Approximately 18 junior-year students in the Design Studio V class will be assisting the municipality in the review and planning of renovations and improvements to this facility. There will be two public hearings to gather community feedback. The first hearing will take place on April 2, 2026 at 6 p.m. in the Parks, Recreation, and Cemetery Administrative Office located at 50 Officer Manny Familia Way and the second hearing will be scheduled for early May.

On behalf of the municipality, I wish to thank the University of Massachusetts Amherst, College of Social & Behavioral Sciences, Department of Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning (LARP), for their partnership with DPRC on these donated services on the development of this plan. The education and development of college students in the Commonwealth is essential for the future of park landscape design. These students will be the future of our community park improvement programs, and this partnership reflects the municipality's commitment to attracting and retaining college graduates by providing them with local opportunities for growth and applied learning.

This plan will assist DPRC in developing a cost estimate, prioritizing possible work, and identifying possible future grant opportunities that would assist in funding renovations.

Respectfully submitted,

Eric D. Batista
City Manager



The City of Worcester

Department of Parks, Recreation, & Cemetery
Robert C. Antonelli Jr., Commissioner
50 Officer Manny Familia Way, Worcester, MA 01605
P | 508-799-1190 F | 508-799-1293
parks@worcesterma.gov

To: Eric D. Batista, City Manager
From: Robert C. Antonelli Jr., Commissioner
Date: March 24, 2026
Re: Newton Hill at Elm Park (Newton Square Tennis & Basketball Court area) Review

The Department of Parks, Recreation, and Cemetery (DPRC) in partnership with the University of Massachusetts Amherst, College of Social & Behavioral Sciences, Department of Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning (LARP), the Parks and Recreation Commission and the Urban Forestry Tree Commission will begin the review and master planning process for Newton Hill at Elm Park (Newton Square Tennis & Basketball Court area) and submits this information for your review, schedule, and consideration and to forward to the City Council for their respective schedules.

DPRC & LARP, with assistance from Beals & Thomas, Inc. (B&T), will complete the initial community engagement and conceptual design with approximately 18 junior-year students in the Design Studio V class. The Studio is a seven-week class where students learn the principles, methods, process, and techniques of landscape architecture design. The students will be visiting Worcester to review the property and understand the current site layout and context. The next step is the community engagement process and based on the student's class schedule we have selected Thursday, April 2, 2026 at 6 p.m. for this meeting.

Overall, DPRC will complete two public hearings on Newton Hill at Elm Park (Newton Square Tennis & Basketball Court area), with the second meeting scheduled for early May 2026. Meetings will be posted with the City Clerk, on the municipality's website, and on the municipality's social media accounts. The Department will also work closely with the Parks & Recreation Commission, the Urban Forestry Tree Commission, and local neighborhood groups and organizations to promote these meetings.

The review and master plan process will culminate with approval from the Parks & Recreation Commission at a regularly scheduled meeting. The final plan will assist the municipality in defining the future Newton Hill at Elm Park (Newton Square Tennis & Basketball Court area) by developing a plan that maximizes its full potential. The plan will be designed to meet the needs, wants, and desires of the neighbors, citizens, and organizations that currently use park facilities. This plan will become a community-endorsed guidebook for Newton Hill at Elm Park (Newton Square Tennis & Basketball Court area) that will include a synthesized plan for phased improvements.

The location and date of the first public hearing is as follows:

Newton Hill at Elm Park (Newton Square Tennis & Basketball Court area):

LOCATION: Parks, Recreation, and Cemetery Administrative Office
Green Hill Park
Meeting Room A
50 Officer Manny Familia Way
Worcester, MA 01605

DATE & TIME: Thursday April 2, 2026, 6 p.m.

When new meetings are scheduled, additional correspondence will advise of these dates and times. We look forward to working with the Parks & Recreation Commission, Urban Forestry Tree Commission, neighbors, organizations, and users of Newton Hill at Elm Park (Newton Square Tennis & Basketball Court area) to finalize this guidebook that will identify future improvements and renovations to this park. All are invited and encouraged to attend.

Please review and advise if there are any questions.

Sincerely,



Robert C. Antonelli Jr.
Commissioner
Parks, Recreation, & Cemetery