

# Meeting Notes



**Project**  
McLaughlin Playground

**Client**  
Boston Parks and Recreation Department

**Meeting Date**  
June 16, 2026

**Issue Date**  
June 23, 2026

**Attendees (virtual)**  
**Boston Parks and Recreation Department:** B Chatfield,  
Shanna Dixon  
**Crowley Cottrell:** Naomi Cottrell, Mark Warfel Jr.  
John Carter  
**Community Members:** 17-20 people

## + Synopsis of the Presentation

On June 16<sup>th</sup> of 2026, Boston Parks and Recreation (BPRD) and Crowley Cottrell held a virtual community meeting to solicit feedback from community members in the vicinity of McLaughlin Playground. BPRD started the meeting with an introductory presentation of the team, the project schedule, and an explanation of the priorities for the City of Boston and BPRD.

Crowley Cottrell followed with a presentation of their site analysis. The analysis focused on the various opportunities and challenges within the different terraces (Upper, Middle, Lower, Lowest), while identifying the project scope (Middle and Lower terrace). The analysis then further broke down the opportunities and challenges of the playground and courts at the middle terrace, and the softball field and multi-use lawn at the lower terrace. After the presentation, the floor was opened for community members to share their thoughts and pose questions. The session concluded with an invitation for neighbors to further participate by completing an online opinion survey.

## + Comments from Community Members and Discussion

**Community member comments summarized:**

- The woodland, which serves as a reprieve from the urban environment, is valuable to the community and should be preserved. Both the woodland and the planted slopes between terraces serve local bird and pollinator populations.
- The stairs at the western edge of the park, off Fisher Ave (the "swimming pool" stairs), are deteriorating and need a handrail. Numerous members of the community mentioned their neglect.
- Neighbors also mentioned the poor condition of the stairs between the middle and lower terrace. These stairs are used by hundreds of people a day and they have been in bad condition for a long time.
- Picnicking is common, and grills might be popular with locals. Informal grilling happens now, but a lack of trash receptacles and infrastructure makes it difficult. Picnic tables have been previously requested and are still desired in shaded locations. The drinking fountain is also an important asset.



- Two areas of erosion were mentioned as concerns. Erosion at the stone walls by the basketball court should be mitigated, as should the erosion at the concrete memorial wall adjacent to Parker Hill Ave.
- Many members of the community mentioned the poor condition of the existing playground and its lack of shade. The equipment needs updating, and the chain link fencing creates an unwelcoming atmosphere.
- The most convenient entry route is to cross Parker Hill Ave from Judge St. A crosswalk has been asked for at this location in the past after a child was hit by a car.
- The softball field is primarily used for children's softball, while the rest of the field is often used for volleyball, cricket, and rugby by college students. A youth football team also utilizes the field and can crowd the area at night when they practice. Adult softball leagues once used the field, but they seem to have stopped.
- Cricket is also played on the basketball court, and some community members suggested a formalized cricket area.
- BPRD recently installed new mesh netting at the softball field, and it has been helpful in preventing balls from leaving the park.
- Local fraternities are a problem, as they perform "calisthenics" at around 4am sometimes. They have occasionally taken over the entire field on Saturdays, which has disturbed local residents. BPRD recommends contacting 311, as the park is open from dawn to dusk.
- The existing lighting is highly utilized, but it is aimed toward the street and can be disruptive to the neighbors. If new lights are part of the new project scope, insure they shine only on the field. Many community members mentioned the poor aesthetic of the light poles and would like them to be painted.
- Community members mentioned parking being an issue, especially when the softball field is being used. They asked if the hospital would allow people to park there during games or events.
- The Little League field is used by dog owners which has caused some conflict within the community. Dog owners frequently use the field because it is the only enclosed space where dogs can be off leash.
- Encouraging passive use in the park would be beneficial. Many neighbors mentioned that the stone dust walking route around the softball field is heavily used, though use is inhibited by vegetation in the adjacent fence and poor stone dust condition.
- Several community members mentioned an organized group of bird watchers that frequent the park due to the diverse array of bird species it hosts. Bird watching attracts people from all over the city.
- Three Sweetgum trees were planted by the community to bridge the gap of street trees along Parker Hill Ave.
- The asphalt foursquare pad beside the basketball is unused.
- A dog park was frequently mentioned as a desired neighborhood amenity. Specifics such as a double-gated entry were suggested. Parks (B Chatfield) noted that a community group supporting a dog area is important to make this happen, if so desired, and that a dog area will be gravel, not lawn/grass.
- Many community members mentioned that a splash pad/spray deck would be a welcomed addition.
- Fence protecting kids from nearby traffic is important, though the park currently has too much fencing.

**Community members shared links to important community resources and information:**



- <https://www.bostontrails.org/walkingcitytrail>
- [https://www.instagram.com/missionhill\\_green/](https://www.instagram.com/missionhill_green/)
- <https://www.camh.boston/events/>

## + Next Steps

The community members were informed that the opinion survey will be open for roughly four weeks, closing July 14th. Crowley Cottrell will synthesize community feedback and developed design schemes to be presented at the next community meeting. Community Meeting 2 will likely take place in August 2026.