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MONARCH PATTERN LIGHT IN THE PARK

Citizen Effort Leads to New Park in East Cambridge After Decades of Work

The East Cambridge Open Space Trust is pleased to invite you to come see our new “pocket park” at the O’Connell Library at 48 Sixth Street. It is scheduled to open in the early fall of 2021, but even now you can see what is sure to be a beautiful enhancement to our city and our neighborhood.

The Trust was founded and funded as result of a legal settlement with the original developer of what is now known as The Canal District in Kendall Square. Its mission, to acquire and improve open space in East Cambridge for public benefit.

The Trustees chose the site for the synergy of potential benefits, including:

- * Owned by the city, negating high land prices.
- * The Library is a valued community center, which this will enhance.
- * Location in a high density setting relatively far from existing parks.

The Trust was incorporated in 2002, but the work on it started well before that date. One Trustee in particular has been working on this for nineteen years. For a decade or so, there was mostly record keeping and community outreach. As our funding slowly accumulated, we reported on our progress and solicited ideas on what to do with the funds. We received a variety of suggestions. None seemed possible given our limited

funds and the price and scarcity of vacant land in our neighborhood. We were forced to be creative.

Some of the criteria we used to evaluate proposals were:

- * Benefit the greatest number and variety of residents.
- * Be accessible to the greatest extent possible.
- * Stretch our funds to achieve the greatest value per dollar spent.
- * Be as eco-friendly as possible.

The Trustees themselves thought of the library site as one that might best accomplish our mission. We sought out initial design help from the non-profit COG Design and eventually hired a duo of talented landscape architects/designers.

Once we had a solid design to show, we approached the Library Department, City Councillors, and City staff from Finance, Public Works, Community Development, etc. While the idea was well received, it took years more of persistence by the Trustees to achieve any real progress—even with a substantial financial contribution by us.

One Trustee recently said “Having experienced all the effort that went into this project up to this point, witnessing the removal of the fencing surrounding the library, watching the first ground breaking, followed by the installation of the outdoor lighting and plantings has been thrilling. Now, each time I pass the library and see the new progress, I look forward to O'Connell Library project being utilized by the community as envisioned by the Open Space Trustees and those who traveled this journey with us.

Please come by and take a look. While the park is still under construction, the library is now open Monday, Thursday, and Friday 10:00 am to 6:00 pm and accessible through the rear ramp entrance.

Plans are available at this [link](#).

Written by Mark Jaquith on behalf of the Trustees of the East Cambridge Open Space Trust.