



CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
Parks & Recreation

Kathryn Ott Lovell
Commissioner

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February 11, 2016
Philadelphia Historical Commission
Room 576, City Hall
Philadelphia, PA 19107

RE: Mother Bethel Burial Ground and Weccacoe Playground

Dear Mr. Farnham:

Enclosed please find documents requesting final approval from the Historical Commission to proceed with the Weccacoe Playground Renovation Construction Project.

This neighborhood playground improvement project was initiated with community input in 2012. Philadelphia Parks & Recreation partnered with the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society in early 2013 to advance the concept design prepared by the Community Design Collaborative. Our other partners in the project include Philadelphia Water, the Fairmount Park Conservancy, City Council, and the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. Because our team was aware of the historical resources on site, URS was hired as a consultant to perform archeological services to determine their nature and extent.

The investigation confirmed the location of the Burial Ground in the southwest portion of the site, and revealed the location of the North and East walls of the former cemetery. This allowed the team to delineate a precise location to refrain from construction activities so as not to disturb the burial ground. This is clearly expressed in the Phase 1B report dated October 11, 2013 (enclosed) and reflected in the construction drawings.

The proposed playground improvements include new playground equipment and safety surface, a spray ground, a rain garden, furnishings and planting. During construction a six foot tall privacy fence will be erected just beyond the limit of the below ground cemetery wall, and a construction fence will be set another four feet beyond that. This is clearly shown on the site plan sheet G-1 (enclosed).

URS/AECOM Archeological Monitoring will be retained for the duration of the project (proposal enclosed). Services will include providing direction at the pre-construction meeting, being on site during construction activities that are in proximity to the Burial Ground extents, and being on-call should any circumstances arise that need archeological evaluation. Protocols for this will be established in advance of construction.

We are very pleased to be able to update recreational resources at this site while respecting and protecting Philadelphia's historic resources.

Sincerely,

Nancy O'Donnell
Park and Capital Project Manager

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