

Mathews, Jennifer

From: Franziska Amacher <fran@amacher-associates.net>
Sent: Wednesday, September 1, 2021 11:28 AM
To: Mathews, Jennifer
Subject: Fw: Monument Marker
Attachments: Marker Cost.png

Dear Jennifer,

Attached please find a proposal for the monument marker as well as the estimated budget. Both were drawn up by Gary Hilderbrand's firm. Gary was so enthusiastic about the project that the work was generously done pro bono.

We like the design and hope you will too.

We have also sent the image and the budget to Commissioner Jim Montgomery of the DCR. Let us hope he can find the time to respond promptly.

Sincerely

Franziska Amacher FAIA for Pat Sekler, President

Please copy any future emails to
Franziska Amacher fran@amacher-associates.net
Jan Devereux jan.devereux@gmail.com

marker costs

On Mon, Aug 30, 2021 at 11:38 AM Gary Hilderbrand <gary@reedhilderbrand.com> wrote:

Dear Pat,

Here is what we like to call a 'Statement of Probable Cost' for the marker. The numbers are conservative, but reasonable. You can get this done for less, but working with DCR and the City has its complexities. So we think this is a good number to use for planning purposes. For design of the plaque and the granite, you probably should budget another \$4-5,000, unless you can have Fanziska's staff do the drawings and review the shops. I could provide review of drawings. The numbers below are for fabrication and installation.

Bronze casting, shop drawings	\$4,000
Granite, thermal finish, shop drawings, transit	\$7,500
Concrete base	\$2,500
Mobilization, excavation, general conditions	\$5,000
Landscape restoration	\$2,500
Public safety detail	\$2,500
Total	\$24,000

If there's anything we've overlooked, please let us know.

With hopes for success!!

Best, GH



Mathews, Jennifer

From: Pat Sekler <m.p.sekler@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, July 13, 2021 1:01 PM
To: Mathews, Jennifer
Subject: CPA Olmsted celebration year proposal

Dear Jennifer.

Thank you for returning my call on Monday so promptly. The following is a summary of the important facts related to our conversation.

RE: Request for CPA funding for an Olmsted-Eliot memorial marker in Riverbend Park as the contribution of Cambridge to the 2022 “Celebrating Olmsted. Parks for People” national events marking the 200th anniversary of the birth of Frederick Law Olmsted

I am writing on behalf of the People for Riverbend Park Trust, the organization founded by Isabella Halsted in 1975 to establish a place for peaceful recreation along the Charles River by eliminating vehicular traffic on Memorial Drive on Sundays. Now, almost half a century later, one can look back and state unequivocally that her vision and creative efforts made it possible for thousands from all over the globe to enjoy the historic ambiance along the river from the Eliot Bridge to the Western Avenue Bridge. Saturdays have been added in addition to more weekends at the beginning and the end of the traditional season and have been very popular.

Isabella managed to banish vehicular traffic from a parkway in existing parkland. But the very existence of the parkland with its parkway was due to the vision and the creative efforts of others long ago, principally Frederick Law Olmsted and his protégé and collaborator, Charles Eliot.

In view of the upcoming Olmsted year, there was unanimous agreement at our

recent trustees' meeting that we should follow up on an idea that has been on our agenda since 1998 when we organized (a year late) a 100th "anniversary celebration to honor what many Cantabrigians affectionately call "the sycamores" - the noble *Platanus orientalis* trees planted in 1897 to form the allée upriver from JFK Street, part of the major transformation of the polluted, unsavory Cambridge waterfront into healthful parkland, as envisioned by Charles Eliot and the Olmstedes. Even though Eliot, at the age of thirty-seven, succumbed to spinal meningitis on March 25, 1897, less than a month before the first tree was planted on April 22nd and the elder Olmsted had begun to suffer from senility already in 1895, nevertheless, the gift of their foresight in their plans of 1894 for the potential of the riverscape has been of inestimable value to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for the physical and psychological well-being of its residents and visitors.

The idea we would like to have followed up on is the design and installation of a suitable memorial at the spot where the first tree was planted. This was on the river side of Memorial Drive, approximately on line with the Kennedy fountain.

In our judgment, the memorial should be of durable and dignified materials, uncomplicated in form, and unobtrusive in the landscape so as not to disturb the present visual flow and simplicity of the surroundings. It should not be something to sit on or be attractive to skateboarders or graffiti artists. Nor should it be in need of frequent maintenance.

Some suggestions include a bronze plaque set into a large rock or waist- high polished granite slab. One might even consider something similar to the Old North

Church memorial on Park Street in Boston set into the sidewalk itself.

Since the object of the memorial is to make passers-by aware of the age and historic context of the allée of trees, the text could be similar to the following:

AT THIS SITE THE FIRST OF THE TREES
FORMING THE ALLÉE OF PLATANUS ORIENTALIS
WAS PLANTED ON 22 APRIL 1897
AS PART OF THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE CAMBRIDGE RIVERFRONT
BASED ON PLANS DATED THAT YEAR BY F . L. OLMSTED AND J. C. OLMSTED
FOR THE CAMBRIDGE PARK COMMISSION
FOLLOWING THE VISION AND INTENTIONS OF
FREDERICK LAW OLMSTED (1822-1903) AND CHARLES ELIOT (1859-1897)

Such a text would at least give the thousands who walk by some inkling of the origin of what is left of this handsome allée and hence increase their interest in and respect for this precious riverine parkland, and, hopefully, awaken a concern for its future well-being.

Originally, we had thought such a memorial would be part of the work of Phase III of the DCR's Memorial Drive Greenway program. But that appears to be on hold, or at least significantly delayed, due to the COVID pandemic and the retirement of Rick Corsi who had been the DCR planner in charge.

It would seem, therefore, that without city/private initiative, the chance of having such a memorial designed and installed during the Olmsted year is null.

Under normal circumstances, I would be able to devote time to this, but I have to spend six months in the fall and winter in Vienna, emptying out our apartment there and finding the proper archives for documents from my late husband Eduard's architectural practice as well as materials from his 50 years of teaching at the Harvard Graduate School of Design, serving as the first director of the Carpenter

Center for the Visual Arts. and acting as a consultant with UNESCO, particularly In Nepal.

In my absence, other members of the Trust could be of help, for example, in providing access to the 27 panels we put together for the 100th anniversary celebration held at the site where the first tree had been planted.

At that time, the tree was missing. As part of the celebration a new one was planted. Julia O'Brien, the chief planner of the MDC (merged in 2003 with the Department of Environmental Management to become the Department of Conservation and Recreation), saw the new tree as a symbol of the MDC's and the public's renewed interest in the future of the parkland.

The panels document the history of Section G of the riverfront, the area from the Anderson Memorial Bridge to the Eliot Bridge. In 2001 the panels were on display at Eliot House before being taken over by the EPA where they were framed and displayed in their downtown office. A small selection was shown in Riverbend Park on the occasion of the recent "Serenade the Sycamores" event two years ago, sponsored by the Trust and Green Cambridge. People flocked to look at them, a good indication that the public has a sincere interest in the area and its history. Excellent additional documentation is provided in Karl Haglund's comprehensive book *Inventing the Charles River*, published in 2003, and is enhanced further in the more recent work by Susan E. Maycock and Charles M. Sullivan, *Building Old Cambridge: architecture and development*, 2016.

Although they are employed full time, two of our trustees would do their best to

be of assistance: Jan Devereux, the former Vice Mayor of Cambridge and Franziska Amacher, FAIA a GSD graduate, MArch 77, and practicing architect. Since we are a 501©(3) organization. our treasurer Terrence Doyle might also be of help.

This is a long message, but I thought it would be useful to CPA members to know the basic facts of the situation and the important role played by the elder Olmsted and younger colleagues in giving us the treasured riverfront we know today.

The logical time for a dedication would be the 200th anniversary day of Olmsted's birth, April 26, 2022. In the calendar year, this is only four days later than the planting of the first tree that took place on April 22nd -- a happy coincidence.

The trustees are convinced that the placement of a memorial plaque is a worthy cause and one that would be particularly appropriate as part of the Olmsted celebration year. I have spoken with a member of the GSD Landscape Department, Prof. Gary Hilderbrand who recently led the Tree Canopy Survey work for the City of Cambridge. He thought the idea was well worth pursuing. We hope you will agree.

Although the parkland involved was originally the creation of the Cambridge Park Commission, whatever is done would have to be accomplished, of course, in cooperation with the DCR that currently has jurisdiction over the site. Several years ago, the trustees mentioned this idea to Karl Haglund, a senior planner at the DCR. At that time he, too, felt it would be a useful, educational thing to do.

.It would certainly be an appropriate contribution by the City to the national festivities in 2022.

With my fellow trustees, I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Patricia Sekler
President and Coordinator of the Trust's Metro Parks Adopt-a-lot program