



## **Olmsted Network Lauds Boston Parks Commission Decision to Reject Demolition Request**

WASHINGTON, D.C. (July 29, 2024)— Responding to concerns raised by the Olmsted Network and others, the Boston Parks Commission has agreed to defer action on a Demolition Request for White Stadium in Franklin Park. The Commission determined that there were too many unanswered questions to justify action.

Olmsted parks and partners across the country had raised their voices in opposition to Commission action. In comments filed with the Commission last week, Olmsted Network members and partners in Nashville, Seattle, Cambridge, Boston, Atlanta, Buffalo, and Appleton, WI, called upon the Commission to postpone any decision.

**“This is not just a Boston issue,” argued the Olmsted Network. “[T]his is an issue for all Americans who believe, like Olmsted, that urban parks belong to ALL the people. For these reasons, we ask you to postpone action.”**

Earlier this year, Olmsted Network partner Emerald Necklace Conservancy and 20 others filed suit against the City of Boston, the Trustees of the White Stadium and the Boston Unity Soccer Partners challenging the White Stadium development plan on the grounds of unconstitutional privatization and regulatory irregularities.

In comments filed by President and CEO Anne Neal Petri, the Olmsted Network said

As a national champion for Olmsted parks, we know that – in too many cities – our public parks are being handed over to private partners to the detriment of the public. The modus operandi is the same: find a private entity, enter into a lease for many years, and, in exchange, allow that entity to enter into an array of activities. Typically, revenue is pledged, but with strings attached, resulting in access fees, limitations on public participation, and disregard for the fundamental notion, central to the work of Frederick Law Olmsted, that public parks should be free and open to all.

There is no dispute that the White Stadium project will impose new fees, variously limit school and public access, and introduce new lighting and noise that are contrary to the restorative nature of a park. There is no dispute that this is just one of multiple commercial developments in or near the Emerald Necklace which we contend threaten

to fragment and dismantle this irreplaceable City landmark under your purview. [Read more from the Olmsted Network.](#)

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According to The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted, the Boston Parks Commission has played a crucial role in protecting and preserving Boston's Parks since its founding. The records reveal that the Commission and Olmsted regularly discussed the proper usage of a park, with the politically-appointed commission members then OPPOSING the introduction of numerous activities – like this one -- that would have distracted from the quiet enjoyment and universal access Olmsted intended. See The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted, Vol. IX, The Last Great Projects, 1890-1895, Editors David Schuyler and Gregory Kaliss (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015), 32.

We respectfully request that the Commission embrace this responsibility today. If the Parks Commission will not protect the parks, who will?

*The Olmsted Network is a nonprofit based in Washington, DC. Founded in 1980, the Olmsted Network champions Olmsted parks, places and principles across the country through education, advocacy and stewardship. [www.olmsted.org](http://www.olmsted.org).*

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