



August 9, 2024

The Olmsted Network urges the Parks Commission to oppose demolition of White Stadium in Franklin Park or postpone the vote until pending litigation is decided and all parties have received answers to their legitimate concerns.

It has been scarcely two weeks since the Commission concluded there were too many unanswered questions and concerns to take action. Those questions have not yet been answered and scheduling the vote so soon suggests there is little desire to do so. This is particularly sad since the project most directly affects environmental justice communities surrounding the park whose concerns should be heard.

As we outlined previously, pending litigation by our partner the Emerald Necklace Conservancy raises serious issues of regulatory compliance and the privatization of public land; discovery is still underway and a decision is expected in the spring. Given these important matters affecting the public interest, the Parks Commission should take no action until the court decides.

In addition, unanswered questions remain regarding:

- terms of the lease with Boston University Soccer Partners and impact on community usage
- extent of input from the affected neighborhoods on leasehold terms
- use restrictions imposed on BPS students and the community
- fees to be charged
- long term maintenance and care of the facility
- parking impacts on the neighborhood
- traffic intrusion in the neighborhood
- pollution
- noise
- and the irrevocable damage to the design and restorative nature of Frederick Law Olmsted's Park caused by 11,000 planned visitors.

The time to address these questions is BEFORE THE PROJECT BEGINS – not after demolition occurs.

The matter before you is not just a Boston issue – this is an issue for all Americans who believe, like Olmsted, that urban parks belong to ALL the people. For these reasons, the Commission should reject the demolition request or postpone a decision until the pending litigation is decided and all parties have received answers to their legitimate concerns.

Respectfully submitted,
Anne Neal Petri
President and CEO

The Olmsted Network is a nonprofit based in Washington, DC. Founded in 1980, we champion Olmsted parks, places and principles through education, advocacy and stewardship. www.olmsted.org. Our network partners work with cities around the country to steward Olmsted parks and places.