



Community Meeting on Portland Street Playground Renovation Project

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Team Haverhill is convening a neighborhood discussion about renovation plans for Portland Street Playground on Wednesday evening, November 20, from 5:30 to 7:30 pm. The meeting will be held in the Parish Hall of Trinity Episcopal Church, via the entrance on William Street.

Families and individuals who live near the playground are encouraged to attend the session, which will include a complimentary dinner and an alternate activity for children during the meeting. Pre-registration is encouraged to ensure sufficient food and child care.

For almost two years, Team Haverhill has been working in partnership with the City and the neighborhood to develop plans and build support to renovate the Portland Street playground, which is located between 4th and 5th avenues. Team Haverhill is providing volunteer leadership for the project, and is currently raising funds to match the City of Haverhill's \$25,000 financial commitment dollar-for-dollar. Business sponsors and private donors are being sought for the project.

Over the last three months, Team Haverhill volunteers have been working closely with City Recreation Director Vinny Ouellette and Community Development Director Andrew Herlihy to evaluate design options and develop the budget for various phases of the work. On the agenda for November 20 is a basic layout for the renovated site, which is expected to include a playground area for children and a court area for basketball. The planning team will present various options for play equipment and seek feedback from potential playground users about which they would like to see included.

In the fall of 2012, Team Haverhill joined with local residents to conduct a neighborhood survey regarding ways people use--or don't use--the playground, their views about the facility's condition and safety, and their preferences for playground amenities. Survey teams knocked on the doors of more than 70 nearby homes, heard a variety of concerns about the safety and condition of the facility, and identified community members who wanted to be involved in the renovation.

As a result of neighborhood concerns from the survey, the agenda for November 20 will include formation of a neighborhood team to help to keep the playground clean and safe. Duties might include putting playground trash bags out at the curb for weekly pickup, and alerting police about illegal or unsafe activities. While not included in the initial plan for budget reasons, a security camera has been requested by local residents as an element to be added to the project as soon as resources become available.

Residents can make dinner reservations by email; send your name, address, telephone number, and ages of children attending to info@teamhaverhill.org. Residents can also leave a telephone message for Team Haverhill at 978-228-1060; include your name, phone number, and ages of children who will be attending.

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For more information, please contact:
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About Team Haverhill

Team Haverhill is an independent, volunteer action group dedicated to making Haverhill a better place to live, learn, work and play. We pursue this purpose by fostering civic dialogue, organizing hands-on projects, creating a more informed public, and advocating for positive change. Team Haverhill is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization serving Haverhill, Massachusetts.