

Mr. and Mrs. Eliezer and Jennifer Strassfeld
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West Hartford, CT 06107

West Hartford Town Council
c/o Ms. Essie S. Labrot, Town Clerk
West Hartford Town Hall
50 South Main Street, Room 313
West Hartford, CT 06107

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Essie S. Labrot
ESSIE S. LABROT
W. HARTFORD TOWN CT FRK

November 23, 2015

To the West Hartford Town Council:

As active and interested citizens, we expect to have a role in the process of shaping our community's public spaces. As evidenced by the petition submitted along with this correspondence, our neighbors expect the same as we do. It seems as if the possibility of that happening is getting more and more remote in the absence of the Town's official adoption of a formal process for public open space planning.

West Hartford has an odd way of going about public open space planning. We do not entrust this process to our town's professional land use planners, who are trained to engage the public in a comprehensive way. Instead, we leave it to the administrators of our recreation programs, whose priorities and strengths lie more in efficient execution than communication with the public. Consider instead the City of Stamford's planning process. That City's land use planners convene public forums to set agendas for all park improvement initiatives. Stamford's planners continue to involve the entire interested public regularly as plans are shaped and refined.

Park improvements will strengthen our communities only if they result from an open and inclusive planning process. The Town's championing of ideas put forward by a small group of active citizens does not substitute for widespread public engagement.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Strassfeld



Eliezer Strassfeld