

From: [Lisa M. Cagno](#)
To: [Carol Ann Desiderio](#)
Subject: FW: Environmental INjustice: Malden's Roosevelt Park Synthetic Turf Plans
Date: Tuesday, May 30, 2023 12:01:23 PM
Importance: High

Wanted you to be aware of this letter which was sent to my spam account on May 15, 2023...

From: Claudia Baptista <info@email.actionnetwork.org>
Sent: Monday, May 15, 2023 2:49 PM
To: Lisa M. Cagno <lcagno@CITYOFMALDEN.ORG>
Subject: Environmental INjustice: Malden's Roosevelt Park Synthetic Turf Plans

City Council Secretary Lisa Cagno,

October 13, 2022

Civil Rights Division
Office of Massachusetts Attorney General
1 Ashburton Place
Boston, MA 02108
AGO@state.ma.us
Abigail.Taylor@state.ma.us

Dear Attorney General and Chief:

I support the Friends of Roosevelt Park as a community member and as a professional who works in the drinking water industry. I have a clear understanding of the issues facing our community in Malden, and understand the park needs to be remediated due to public health concerns with lead contamination. This is vital to the Commonwealth actually implementing the EJ strategies they claim are goals.

The Friends of Roosevelt Park object to the City of Malden's Roosevelt Park Improvement Project (RPIP) on the basis of civil rights violations relating to Title VI. In May 2022, we filed a civil rights complaint through the formal AGO complaint process against the City's Roosevelt Park project on the basis of civil rights violations. The city ignored all environmental justice (EJ) aspects throughout the planning and grant application processes, specifically by not addressing them at all and leaving that section of their recent HUD federal funding application entirely blank. We are asking for a complete work stoppage on Roosevelt Park, and for the project to be started anew with majority participation from the connected Salemwood School, adjacent neighborhood, and non-English speakers who have been predominantly left out of the park's planning process. Many of these stakeholders do NOT want a synthetic turf field placed in their backyard. This EJ community has been ignored by the City when asking for full decontamination of the park and for it to be maintained as a living grass sports field, indoor classroom,

accessible recess field, and passive recreation area for the Salemwood community and neighborhood.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has identified Malden as an Environmental Justice Community: 96.8% of Malden's population is located in an EJ block group.

This is significant due to the fact that Roosevelt Park is located in a U.S. Census tract made up of significantly diverse populations.

Block Group 4, U.S. Census Tract 3418, Middlesex County, Massachusetts:

This 2020 block group in Malden is an EJ population with the criteria of Minority and English isolation.

EJ characteristics include:

- Total minority population: 59 %
- Households with language isolation: 36 %
- The median household income of Malden is \$65,975; this is 77% of the Massachusetts median household income.
- In 2019, this block group had a population of 620 in 276 households.

Languages other than English spoken by 5% or more of the population who do not speak English very well. These languages included:

- Spanish or Spanish Creole: 5.4%
- French Creole: 5.7%
- Chinese: 5.2%

Roosevelt Park is the recess field for the Salemwood School, a Malden Public school which serves 1,200 students in grades K-8, and houses the City's English Language Learners program.

Demographics of the Salemwood School:

- First Language not English: 72.4%
- English Language Learner: 36.6%
- Low-income: 78.4%
- Students With Disabilities: 10.7%

Salemwood School Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity (2021-22)

Race (% of School Population)

- African American: 22.7%
- Asian: 16.0%
- Hispanic: 36.5%
- Native American: 0.3%
- White: 21.9%

- Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander: 0.0
- Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic: 2.6%

In May 2022, the Friends of Roosevelt Park Malden filed a civil rights complaint through the formal AGO complaint process against the City's Roosevelt Park project on the basis of civil rights violations. The City was in violation of Title VI due to:

- 1.) Failure to ensure meaningful access by persons with limited English proficiency - The City did not make translated materials available throughout the many years of the RPIP, including but not limited to: notices for public hearings, public comment periods, environmental reports, city reports, meeting notes, and/or project updates. Materials have been provided in English, with translated instructions stating: "This is an important notice. Please have it translated." This practice continued for a recent City meeting on Roosevelt Park on September 8, 2022, when all flyers to the Salemwood School asked parents to translate it themselves.
- 2.) Failure to ensure meaningful access by persons with limited English proficiency - High levels of lead were discovered in the soil of Roosevelt Park back in 2019. To date, there has only been one official notice delivered to school families and neighbors by the City of Malden and it was sent out in English with directions that stated: "This is an important notice. Please have it translated."
- 3.) Due to the fact the city of Malden has been identified as an Environmental Justice Community by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, there was a failure here to ensure meaningful engagement and involvement from minority and English isolated populations throughout the RPIP planning process. This is a violation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (race, color, national origin); Section 109 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 (race, color, national origin, religion, sex). When processing their HUD CDBG funding application, the city of Malden blatantly left blank the required section on Environmental Justice. The City failed to address the EJ issues the RPIP could cause, effect, or render by proceeding in a specific census tract containing 36% of households with language isolation, and 59% total minority population.
- 4.) No community input or involvement from the immediate neighborhood, and adjacent households. The City identified stakeholder groups that did not include the diverse Salemwood School community and adjacent neighborhood. The City has focused all efforts towards including organized sports teams as the main stakeholders.
- 5.) Prior to September 8, 2022, no interpretation services had been provided for any public hearings, meetings, or comment periods. Interpreters should have been provided to accommodate project stakeholders, and translated materials could have made this accommodation known to interested stakeholders if they needed it.

We are asking for an immediate stoppage to this project, and starting it anew with majority input by the Salemwood School community and adjacent neighborhood. So that Roosevelt

Park can be fully realized as a decontaminated, safe, and healthy living green grass space for this EJ community and its neighbors. It is paramount that this environmental justice community is engaged and involved in this process regardless of race, color, national origin, and language access. You can reach the Friends of Roosevelt Park Malden anytime via email at friendsofrooseveltparkmalden@gmail.com at your earliest convenience. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Claudia Baptista
Malden Resident

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