



DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES – PLANNING DIVISION

REPORT: Site plan for the Elizabeth Park Basketball Court Renovation
for consideration May 11th, 2021

STAFF REPORT

TO: Planning & Zoning Commission
PREPARED BY: Paul Ashworth, Senior Planner
paul.ashworth@hartford.gov

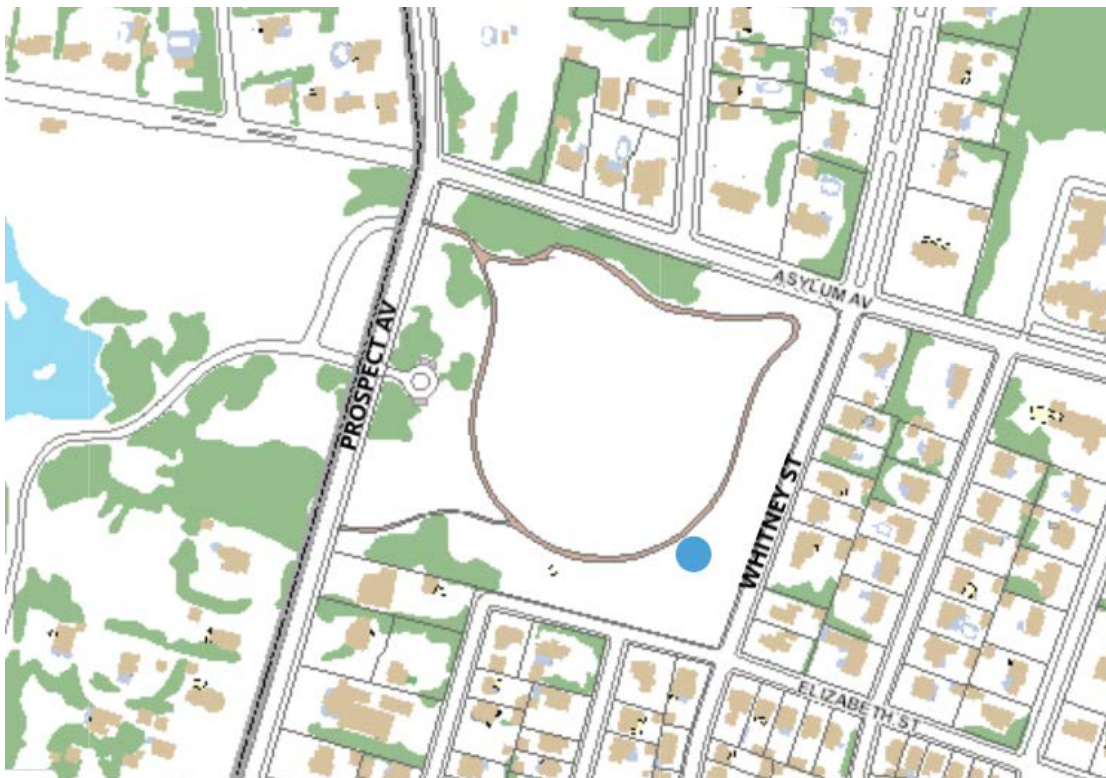
PROJECT: Elizabeth Park Basketball Court Renovation
872 Prospect Avenue
PARCEL ID: 108-295-004
P&Z-COMM-2021-0382

ZONE: OS

TYPE: Site Plan per for Zoning Regulation Section 1.3.3.A.(6)

APPLICANT: Eric Crawford

OWNER: City of Hartford



Overhead View – Hartford GIS 2021

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Applicant is seeking site plan approval of proposed renovations valued over \$50,000 to the Elizabeth Park basketball courts. Per section 3.3.3.2.D.(2), the Planning & Zoning Commission shall review and approve through the site plan review process the design of any and all pieces of furniture, trash receptacles, drinking water fountains, athletic equipment and playground equipment among other items listed.

The Applicant has proposed that the renovated court be dedicated to the late Coach Jack Phelan, a respected basketball coach and member of the Hartford Community, for his dedication to the community and the positive impact he has had on generations of young Hartford residents

The applicant seeks to renovate the existing main basketball court in Elizabeth Park, to include expansion/resurfacing of the court, new basketball backboards/hoops, extended chain link fencing, players' benches, and other park benches. The proposal includes the removal and disposal of the existing bituminous court, hoops/post/bases, and bituminous walkway connecting to the park's gravel trail system.

The proposed new court will be increased in size to provide a three-foot-wide apron surrounding the court with a 4-foot by 24-foot concrete pad for the player's bench. The walkway from the court to the park's gravel trail system is relocated to the south corner of the court and includes a 4-foot by 13-foot concrete pad located 10.5 feet from the court for a park bench. An additional park bench is proposed near the northwest corner of the court on a 4-foot by 9-foot concrete pad.

The site is located in the Prospect Avenue National Historic District in the portion of Elizabeth Park surrounded by Prospect Avenue, Asylum Avenue, Elizabeth Street, and Whitney Street. The project site is located along Whitney Street and includes approximately 13,229 square feet.

The City of Hartford Historic Preservation Commission approved without conditions the proposed renovations at their April 21, 2021 meeting (P&Z-COMM-2021-0345).

Since the project is 100% privately funded and the scope is limited to renovations of an existing amenity and not a substantial improvement, a Municipal Improvement review under CT Gen Stat Ch.126 Section 8-24 is not required. The Commission's findings in regard to the subject request shall serve as the final report/decision on the proposed improvements.

KEY APPLICATION TIMELINES

- Application Submission Date: April 22, 2021
- Date Application Accepted as Complete: April 22, 2021
- Application Date of Receipt: May 11, 2021 (sooner of either: date of next regularly scheduled meeting, or 35 days after acceptance of complete application)
- Public Hearing is scheduled to open on Tuesday, May 11, 2021; Open Hearing Deadline: Thursday, July 15, 2021.
- Close Hearing Deadline (if opens May 11, 2021): (35 days after opening) Tuesday, June 15, 2021

- CT General Statutes Sec.8-7D allow that the applicant may consent to one or more extensions of time, provided the total extension of all time periods shall not be for longer than 65 days*.

LEGAL STANDARD

Standard for Application Type:

The Commission reviews site plans in accordance with Zoning Regulations section 1.3.3. Site plans may be modified, conditioned, or denied only if they fail to satisfy the zoning regulations, inland wetland regulations, or subdivision regulations. The Commission may deviate from the minimum requirements for building siting, height, street facades, accessory structures dimensions, tree installation, landscape installation, buffers, fencing, lighting, parking, signage, and street design by up to 15% upon certain findings.

STANDARD SPECIFIC TO THE USE

Per Zoning Regulations section section 3.3.3.2.D.(2), the design of any and all pieces of furniture (including but not limited to benches, chairs, and tables), trash receptacles, drinking water fountains, lighting fixtures, fencing, buildings, structures, historic and monument sites, playground equipment and athletic equipment shall be reviewed and approved by the Planning & Zoning Commission.

FINDING OF FACTS

Parcel Area: 835,916 SF or ~19.2 Acres

Project Area: 13,229 SF or 3.03 Acres

Impervious Surface Area: Increased by approximately 916 SF or 1.5%

Project will replace the existing court and add two benches, one player bench and replace the existing chain link fence with one that is extended by approximately 15 linear feet to help stop stray balls from entering the street.

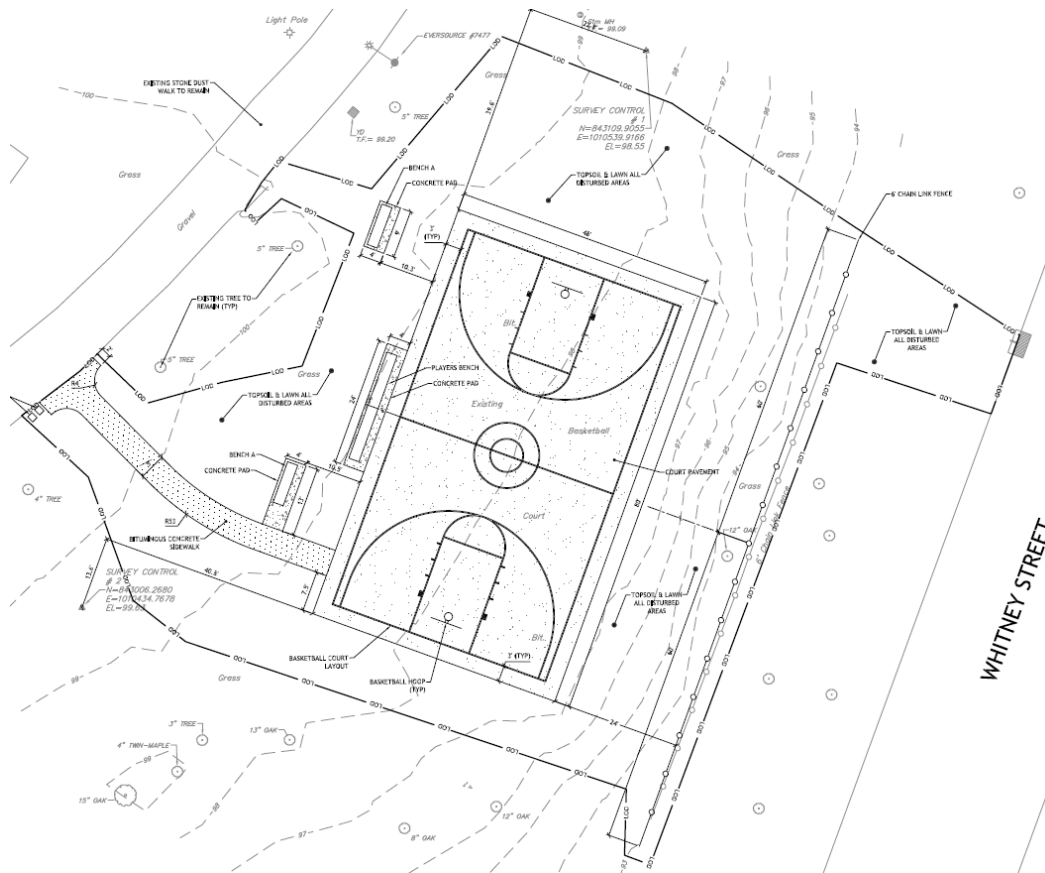


Figure 1. Layout Plan – Freeman Companies 2021

COMMENTS RECEIVED (DEPARTMENTS, AGENCIES, NRZs, PUBLIC)

The West End Civic Association (WECA) submitted a letter of support for the project dated April 5, 2021, prior to the Historic Preservation review of the project.

Brian Gallagher submitted a letter on behalf of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission noting that said council voted unanimously in support of the proposed Elizabeth Park renovations. This letter was dated April 7, 2021.

The Planning Division received a letter from the Director of Operations of the Elizabeth Park Conservancy dated April 5, 2021 confirming their support of the proposed renovations.

All letters of support are attached to this report as Attachment 3, Letters of Endorsement.

ANALYSIS

The proposed basketball court renovation will take the place of the existing, main basketball court in Elizabeth Park and will result in only a minor increase in impervious surface. The existing court will be expanded to include a three-foot-wide apron and the walkway to the park's gravel trail system will be relocated to the south. The only other additions are three concrete pads for a player's bench adjacent to the court and two park benches near the northwest and southwest corners of the court.

Proposed benches are of an unobtrusive design suitable for a park. The player bench is made of durable materials (steel legs and aluminum planks) and is of adequate size for the proposed use. The proposed park bench design also includes durable materials, a steel frame with recycled plastic lumber slats. The proposed basketball hoop is regulation height (10') and also made of durable materials. Staff recommends approval of the proposed designs.

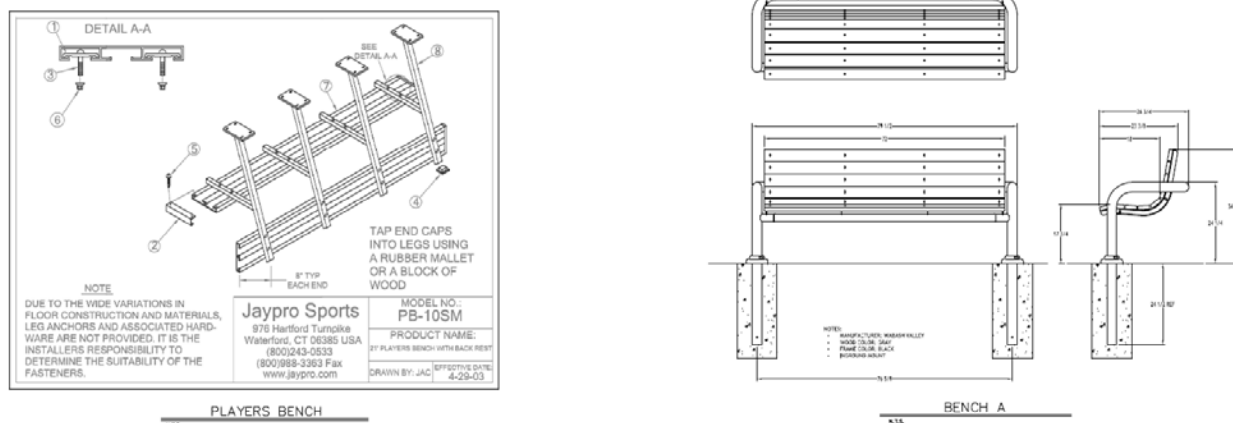


Figure 2. Site Details – Freeman Companies 2021

The basketball court is a character defining feature of Elizabeth Park and therefore alterations/additions to the basketball court should comply with any Historic Preservation guidelines. The approval by the City of Hartford Historic Preservation Commission is adequate evidence that the proposed renovations will not disrupt the cultural significance of the park. The basketball court will remain in the same location, and all alterations/additions to the court are intended to extend the useful life of the court and enhance the safety and enjoyment of park users. This is the preferred alternative to locating a new basketball court in another portion of the park, and therefore staff recommends approval of the proposed basketball court renovations.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of this application.

A draft resolution follows.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Site Plan and Demo Plan
2. Bench and Hoop Specifications
3. Letters of Endorsement

REVIEWED AND EDITED BY,

Aimee Chambers, Director



**CITY OF HARTFORD
PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION RESOLUTION
872 PROSPECT AVENUE
SITE PLAN FOR ELIZABETH PARK BASKETBALL COURT RENOVATIONS**

- Whereas,** The City of Hartford Planning & Zoning Commission reviewed the application and attached documents regarding proposed renovations to the Elizabeth Park Basketball Court; and
- Whereas,** The value of the proposed renovations is over \$50,000 and is required to be reviewed by the Commission as a site plan per Section 1.3.3.A.(6) and Section 3.3.3.2.D.(2); and
- Whereas,** The subject property is Elizabeth Park, located at 872 Prospect Avenue and is listed as a designated historic property in the Prospect Avenue National Historic District; and
- Whereas,** The proposed renovations were approved by the City of Hartford Historic Preservation Commission on April 21, 2021 (COMM-2021-0381); and
- Whereas,** The proposed renovations have been endorsed by the West End Civic Association, the Hartford Parks & Recreation Advisory board, and the Elizabeth Park Conservancy; and
- Whereas,** The proposed improvements are limited to approximately .3 acres of the approximately 19.2 acre parcel; and
- Whereas,** The existing basketball courts are in a deteriorated condition and the proposed improvements would restore the facility to excellent condition; and
- Whereas,** The proposed designs for the benches, hoop and fencing are consistent with the cultural significance of the park and otherwise found to be satisfactory; and
- Whereas,** The renovated court is to be dedicated to the late Coach Jack Phelan, a respected basketball coach and member of the Hartford Community, for his dedication to the community and the positive impact he has had on generations of young Hartford residents; and

Now therefore Be It

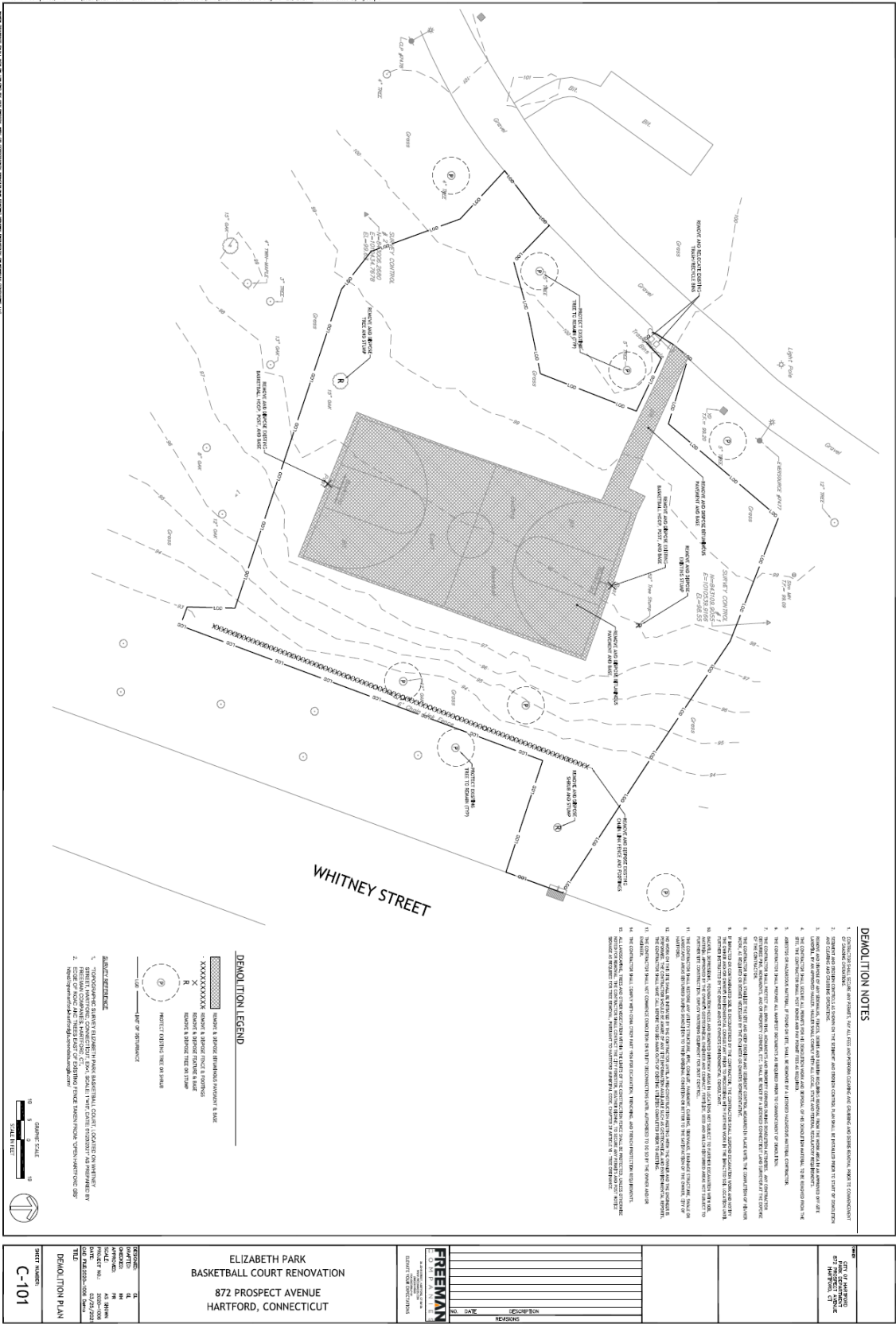
Resolved, The City of Hartford Planning & Zoning Commission hereby finds that the proposed renovations and site plan for the Elizabeth Park Basketball Court Renovations meet the requirements of the Zoning Regulations; and,

Resolved, The City of Hartford Planning & Zoning Commission approves the site plan and proposed renovations as presented:

Be It Further,

Resolved, This 11th day of May, 2021.

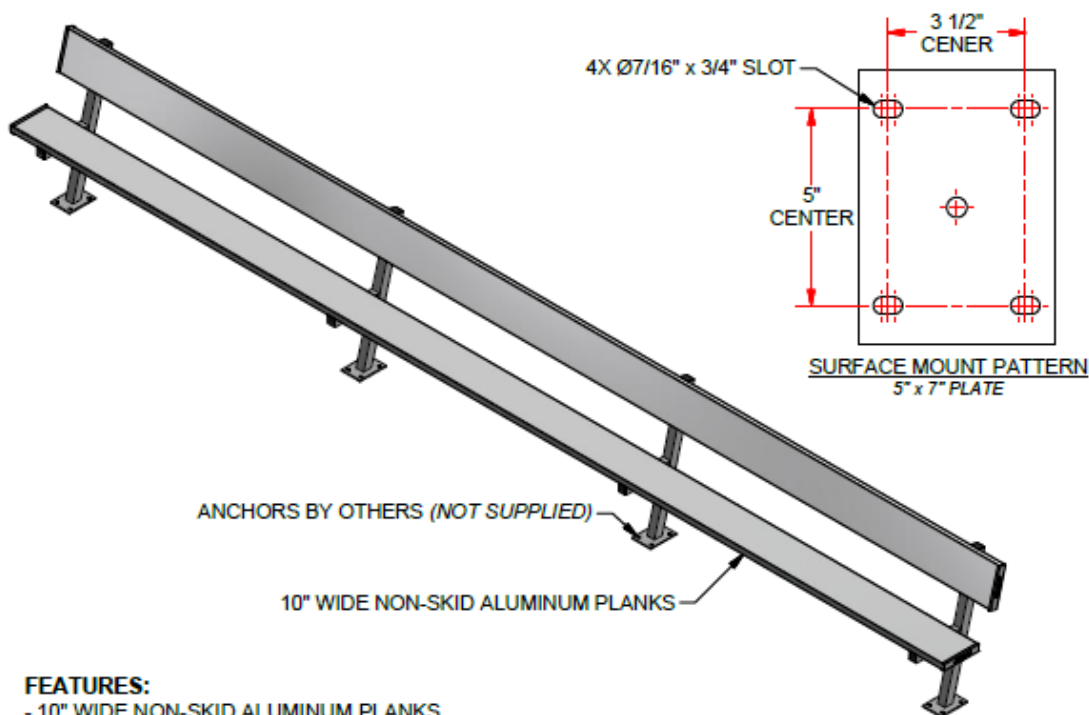
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Attachment 2 – Bench and Hoop Specifications



PB-10SM 21' SURFACE MOUNT PLAYERS BENCH W/ BACK REST

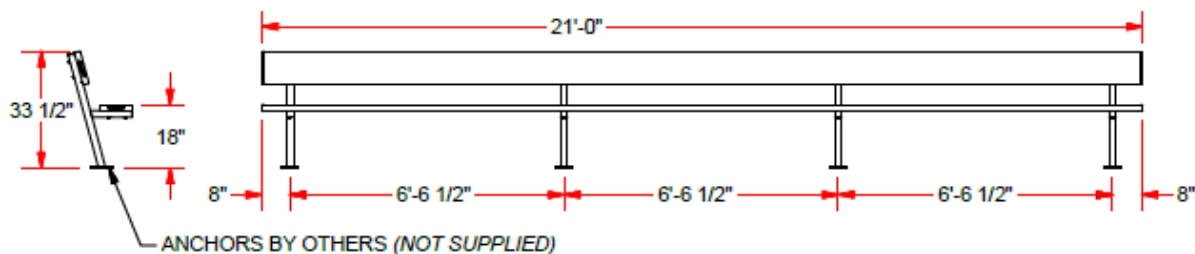


FEATURES:

- 10" WIDE NON-SKID ALUMINUM PLANKS
- 2" x 2" HEAVY DUTY GALVANIZED STEEL LEGS FOR SUPERIOR RUST RESISTANCE
- PLANKS ARE SUPPORTED BY A STRONG, GALVANIZED STEEL UNDERSTRUCTURE
- PLAYER BENCH WITH BACK REST
- SEAT PLANK IS 18" FROM GROUND
- SURFACE MOUNT READY FOR WIDE VARIATIONS IN FLOOR CONSTRUCTION

OPTIONS:

- CUSTOM POWDER COATED COLORS



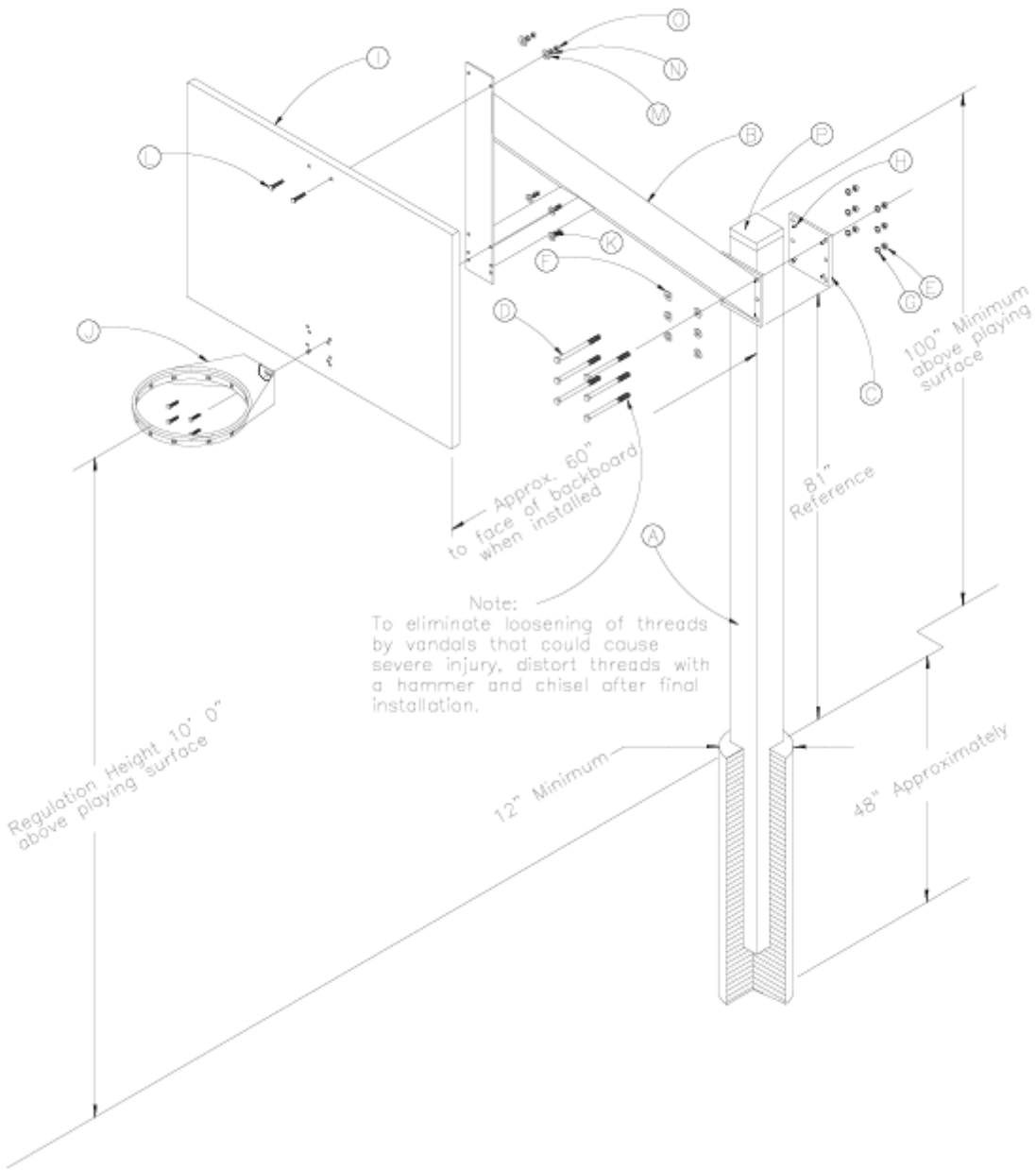
PB-10SM

21' SURFACE MOUNT PLAYERS
BENCH W/ BACK REST

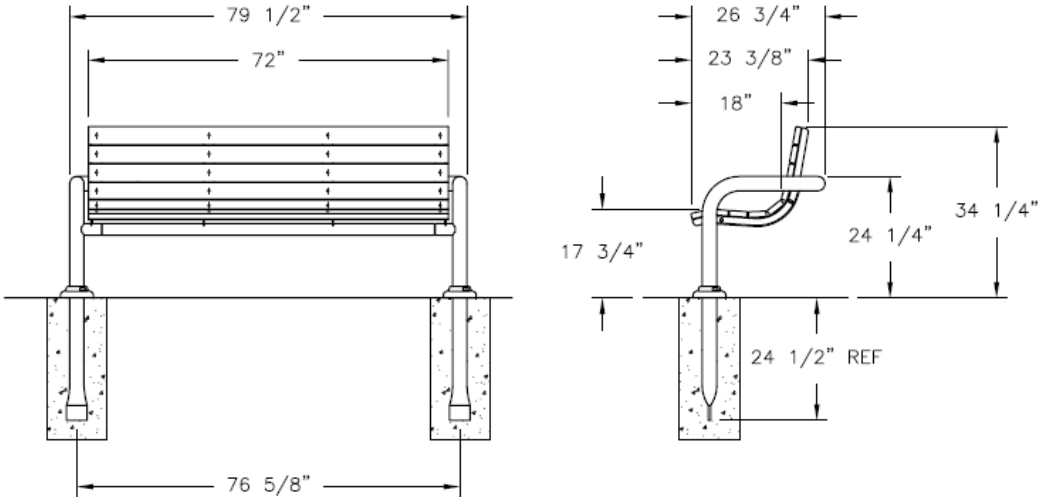
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Sheet 1 of 1



product dimensions:



Attachment 3 – Letters of Endorsement



WEST END CIVIC ASSOCIATION

P.O. BOX 370115
WEST HARTFORD, CT 06137
www.wecahartford.org

To: Mr. Eric Crawford
Freeman Companies

April 5, 2021

RE: Renovation of Full-Size Basketball Court on Elizabeth Park East Lawn

Dear Mr. Crawford and Freeman Companies,

This letter is written on behalf of the West End Civic Association (WECA), the NRZ representing the West End neighborhood, in support of your proposed renovation of the full-sized basketball court in Elizabeth Park's East Lawn in honor of the late Coach Jack Phelan.

The renovation you propose is a welcomed improvement to the East Lawn and the first of a long list of ideas WECA is currently bringing forward to the city. The project will not only improve the infrastructure and aesthetics of the court, but is also an improvement for the safety of the players.

The basketball court is an extension of the community and a gathering space for young men and women to come together, showcase their athletic abilities, build community, and have fun. Many children in the neighborhood grow up learning how to play on the courts of the East Lawn and WECA believes that your project can only enhance those memories.

In sum, WECA supports your proposal and feels it will be a much needed upgrade to the East Lawn. If there is anything WECA can do to assist your endeavor, please feel free to reach out to me at (573) 433-6603 or publicsafety@wecahartford.org.

Matthew Marks
West End Civic Association
Public Safety

CC: Residents of the West End



04/05/2021

Mayor Bronin
550 Main Street, Room 208
Hartford, CT 06103

RE: Elizabeth Park Basketball Court Improvements

Dear Mayor Bronin,

The Park and Recreation Advisory Commission voted unanimously in favor of supporting Mr. Losapio and Mr. Crawford's plan to renovate the basketball court at Elizabeth Park.

Brian Gallagher

Park and Recreation Advisory Commission, Chair



4/7/21

Parks and Recreation Advisory Commissioners

Chair, Craig Mergins, Denise Best, Colin Billings, Janier Caban-Hernandez, Jonathan Cabral, Charmaine Craig, Jeffrey Devereux, Brian Gallagher, Chris Hayes, David Morin, Dave Rozga, Desmond Sinclair, Donna Swann, Stanford Walker, Carl Williams
Ex Officio Members: Mayor Luke Bronin, Treasurer Adam Cloud, DPW Director Walter Vasselka, Troy Stewart

April 5, 2021

To: Mr. Eric Crawford, Freeman Companies

Re: Renovation of Full-Size Basketball Court on Elizabeth Park East Lawn

Dear Mr. Crawford and Freeman Companies,

I am a long-time resident of the West End, since 1975, and I support the renovation of the basketball court at East Lawn. I am also director of operations for the Elizabeth Park Conservancy. Our role is to maintain the many gardens on the West Lawn of the park. So, I speak from two positions, personal and professional. We work closely with the City of Hartford Park Department to make the park the best it can be. This new full-size court is a wonderful addition to the park.

A full-size basketball court is long overdue for the young residents who live in the area. Besides having fun, these kids are MOVING, instead of watching television or on their computers. The social aspect of having a "home away from home" is important for young people. Between COVID and just normal isolation/computer age living, kids getting together for a game has so many benefits.

I often walk by the courts, on Whitney Street, and see the kids playing ball. I also see the ball bounce down to the street, and kids must get it. This is very dangerous for them on such a busy street.

I never met the late Coach Jack Phelan, but I heard many stories about his commitment to Hartford Youth through his basketball programs. What lovely way to honor him! It sounds like he made a huge impact on many young people in his time.

I am looking forward to another great improvement to our wonderful park and another way to contribute to community.

Kathleen G. Krackowsky
100 Goodwin Circle
Hartford CT 06105

Elizabeth Park Conservancy
1561 Asylum Ave
W. Hartford CT 06117