Grosvenor School

1045 Grosvenor Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3M 0M8
Telephone: 475 - 5242 Fax: 477 - 6165

Principal: Helen Strock

REÇU/RECEIVED
06 -06- 2003

June 5, 2003.

Councillor Garth Steek,
City of Winnipeg,
510 Main Street,
Winnipeg, Manitoba,
R3B 1B9.

Dear Garth:

We are writing to you to request your assistance in the form of a grant from the Land Dedication Fund. The funds are needed to cover the cost of an irrigation system for Grosvenor School Community Playground's new sod Multi-purpose Sports Field and Berm (which we anticipate will be installed this Summer and Fall). We also wish to request funds to install a new asphalt track around the perimeter of the field. This would enhance circulation and use options, given the very small size of the playground.

Given the scale of the surface replacement costs regarding the existing field, all allocated Winnipeg School Division funds and most of the parent council funds (G.S.A.) will be absorbed in this massive project, leaving too small an amount to manage the installation of the two aforementioned components.

We are approaching you with this request because of the tremendously valuable recreation space that Grosvenor School Community Playground provides to the community:

- ***it is the only playground within a 36 block neighborhood that children and families can reach without crossing a major thoroughfare.***
- ***design of the renewed playground has been developed in consultation with the local community, and given specific consideration to the needs of its children and their families (ie. universal accessibility).*** (Please see attached letter).
- As you are aware, from previous correspondence (February 17, 2003), ***the community has demonstrated broad support for the revitalization plans regarding Grosvenor School Community Playground in the form of a petition, to which 500 individuals signed their names, in January and February of this year.***

The addition of the irrigation system is *critical* to the long term success of the sod field and berm; in addition, the track would greatly enhance the value of this small, but *highly used community recreation site*. The following figures detail the estimated costs, based upon recent market estimates and the recommendations of the landscape architects that have assisted the parent council and community in the planning process:

Irrigation System for Multipurpose Sports Field and Berm	12,500
Asphalt Track	7,500
Total amount	20,000

Thank you for giving this request your consideration. Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact us. The community has been very appreciative of your vital contributions thus far. It would be wonderful to achieve the transformation we hope for with the field this year, and to have the City of Winnipeg be a part of developing this valuable resource to such a wonderful conclusion!! We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Miriam Duff,
Chair, Playground Committee,
Grosvenor School Association.

Helen Strock,
Principal,
Grosvenor School.

MD/em
Att.

May 27, 2003

1021 Dorchester Ave
Winnipeg, R3M 0R1

Re: Grosvenor School Playground

As the parents of a child with severe cerebral palsy who uses a wheelchair, we wish to give our strongest support to the continued development of the Grosvenor School playground area along the lines currently proposed.

The school and its playground are a focus for the entire neighbourhood. It is a meeting place for children and parents. One of the key aspects of the proposed development of the site is the fact that it is fully accessible to people with disabilities. Accessibility means not only that people with disabilities can be physically present, but moreover that they may participate to the fullest extent possible in the community activities on and around the playground. Accessibility not only lets children with disabilities to play with their peer group, but also enables handicapped parents to share their children's outdoor games.

The first phase of accessibility features have already proven their value for our son Michael. The pea-gravel or sand surrounding most play structures is an absolute barrier for wheelchairs, but the larger of the two Grosvenor play structures was wisely equipped with a region of firm foam tile leading from the perimeter of the gravel region to one of the slides and its associated staircase. This firm pathway allows a wheelchair to approach the play structure. Our son cannot leave his chair, but other children with some degree of self-mobility could transfer to the play structure to use the slide. For a child confined to a chair, as Michael is, being able to enter the play area nearly to its centre, where the other children's activities swirl around him, enables a high degree of participation. Contrast this to the marginalization that occurs in conventional playgrounds such as that at the Crescentwood community centre, where a child like Michael can only remain on the periphery, outside the circle of playing children.

The next development phase at Grosvenor School includes equally important features. Improved pavement around the larger play structure, free from potholes and ruts, allows wheelchairs to roll freely, and removes tripping hazards for children and adults who may be self-mobile but who have difficulty walking. The proposed grass berm and trees soften the landscape, which is currently an asphalt desert. The berm relieves the flatness of the site, but it also envelops the play area and provides parent seating with a vantage point having obvious safety and security implications for all users. The trees provide shelter from the sun in the immediate vicinity of the play structure, important for everyone but especially critical for people with limited mobility. The proposed ramp arcing up the face of the berm and leading to a bridge onto the play structure itself is especially important, as it allows wheelchair access into the heart of the activity.

The paved walking/jogging track around the grassed field at the western end of the site is another aspect of the plan that we appreciate because it enables the wheelchair to move easily. Gravel paths are obvious barriers, but even packed clay footpaths rapidly become impassable to wheelchairs due to ruts, or when wet. A wheelchair-bound child who has the use of his or her arms may not be able to jog with the gym class, but on a paved track they can wheel along with their classmates.

We are quite aware that accessibility features significantly increase the cost of the Grosvenor School playground project, but we hope that it is clear that this project can only achieve its potential as a neighbourhood focus if it is in fact available to *all* members of the Grosvenor/Crescentwood neighbourhood. Accessibility obviously benefits those living with physical disabilities, but by facilitating more contact between people, with all the potential for growth that that implies, it also benefits the community at large. Financial support for the continued development of accessibility and environmental features at the Grosvenor School playground is an investment in the community whose impact cannot be reduced to simple figures. We hope that this investment will be made.

Sincerely,



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