

Working with the Park and Open Space Division

Brookline is fortunate to have staff in the Park and Open Space Division who are professional, hardworking and courteous. A park group will be most successful when it works together with Town employees as a team. Managers and supervisors are the ones who can provide you with supplies for clean-ups and plantings, and work with you on re-design and other improvements to your park. They are also the ones who can put you in touch with the specific grounds personnel who take care of your park.

Tips on Building Relationships

Below are some suggestions for building relationships with the Town.

- Let them know who you are. Introduce yourself and your group members. Set up a meeting to talk about shared goals and visions for your park.
- Ask them what they think needs to be done. Work with them to develop realistic goals that work for both of you.
- Keep them in the loop. Let them know what you are up to. Tell them far in advance if you are planning a clean up or event. Send them your newsletter.
- Thank them officially. When they have been helpful, write them a thank you note. It's a good idea to send a copy to their supervisor.
- Get to know park workers. Brookline parks are broken down into zones and have personnel assigned to your zone. They know your park well and care about it too.

Working with Volunteers

Volunteers are your most important resource. Below are some tips for making your volunteers feel useful and appreciated.

Make new people feel welcomed. If you have a meeting or an event, make sure to introduce yourself to people you don't know and thank them for coming. Find out who they are and why they have come. Thank them for coming to the meeting or event.

Give your volunteers responsibility and put them in charge of things whenever you can. For example, at a clean-up, somebody could be in charge of painting a particular bench, making sure all the tools get returned, taking pictures, cleaning up, sending out thank you notes, etc. Sprucing up a park is one of the best ways to get people involved because it helps develop a sense of ownership for the park and makes people feel useful. Make sure you thank people for their work before they leave!

Collect names, addresses, emails and phone numbers. Make sure you have a sign in sheet at every meeting and event you hold. This is crucial to developing a cadre support for your park friends group!

Follow up: After you have had an event such as a clean up, consider holding a meeting to get people involved right away. Call each new person and invite him or her to attend. This is especially good if you are planning a specific project and will be assigning tasks. If you don't have any immediate tasks at hand, you can still call to check in, thank them for their efforts, talk up your group, mention future projects, etc. Find out what people think their park needs and then encourage them to work on achieving their goals. Add any new people to your mailing lists so that they get newsletters or announcements that you send out.