



## CITY OF NEW BEDFORD

### PARKS, RECREATION & BEACHES

*JONATHAN F. MITCHELL*



April 30, 2018

Dear Council President Morad,

It has come to our attention that at the April 25, 2018 Special Committee Meeting on Memorials and Dedications the committee voted to bring a motion to the full council regarding the National Park Service designation of Fort Taber Park as a National Veteran's Memorial Park. We applaud your intention of honoring our veteran's with a national recognition; we are however concerned about the implications that this will remove control of this most favored and loved park from control of the city and city residents.

Fort Taber Park is one of our most beloved and heavily used parks in the city. It is home to a portion of our Ralph Saulnier Memorial Waterfront bike and walking trail, named for a former City Councilor. The park hosts the New Bedford Community Boating Center, the Low Tide Yacht Club and the Fort Taber Fort Rodman Historical Society Military Museum. Relinquishing control of the park to the National Park Service jeopardizes the autonomy and continued presence of these entities' at this site.

Fort Taber Park is a favorite destination for organizations both local and national for outdoor events due to the amazing views of Buzzards Bay. The Fort Taber Community Center is a favorite spot for families hosting birthday and graduation parties and weddings. The fees collected from the rentals of these facilities as well as the parking revenue, generated over \$80,000 in revenue for the Fort Taber Revolving account in FY18, the first year for this fund. This revenue, dedicated for reuse at the park, will allow us to hire a Park Ambassador this summer to guide and inform park patrons and event coordinators regarding programs and facilities on site. In future years we will use the revenue to make improvements to the park such as adding a security gate and lighting to Battery Walcott.

We therefore recommend that the city retain complete control of this valuable public resource. We further believe that a transfer of the park to the National Park Service will have unintended negative outcomes including the loss of revenue, possible expulsion of valuable city programs and a loss of control over who uses the park and what fees are charged for use of the park.

We are available to meet with you or the full council at your convenience to further discuss this important matter. Thank you for your attention to our concerns.

Sincerely,

Peter Boswell

Chair, Board of Park Commissioners

cc Mayor Jon Mitchell  
Mary S Rapoza

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES  
181 HILLMAN STREET, BLDG. #3  
NEW BEDFORD, MA 02740  
PHONE 508-961-3015

MAILING ADDRESS  
181 HILLMAN STREET  
BOX #9, NEW BEDFORD, MA 02740  
FAX 508-991-6175