February 5, 2023

Dear Mayor Elicker, Members of the Board of Alders, and Department of Parks and Public Works:

On behalf of the Whalley-Edgewood-Beaver Hills (WEB) Community Management Team, I am writing to express our support of the recent communications you have received from the coalition of parks’ friend groups from across the city asking that you increase funding for parks and reinstate the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Trees.

Parks play an important role in our community. The WEB is home to some of the city’s largest and most used parks. Our CMT members are also part of the leadership of the Friends of Edgewood Park, Goffe Street Park, and Beaver Ponds Park, and these groups show the diversity of the important roles that parks can play in our community. They serve as gathering places for festivals and community events, they are places that youth in our community participate in sports and activities, they are where we go to connect with nature and get physical activity, they are home to native plants and animal species, and they are where residents come together with researchers to address questions facing our urban ecosystem.

All of this happens in great part due to the dedication of our parks’ friend groups, but they cannot do it alone. Our community needs more support from the City of New Haven, and we the leadership of the WEB CMT are calling for a return to a dedicated Department of Parks, Recreation, and Trees to care for our city’s parks. The trash and maintenance issues facing our parks are much bigger than anything our friend groups can tackle on their own. Both city officials and parks’ friend groups should have the bandwidth to create, but right now we cannot even keep up with maintaining our parks. We want to partner with the city to develop programming and improvements to our parks that will benefit all residents. We have an exciting opportunity to do so with the current influx of ARPA funds in New Haven, but having dedicated parks leadership and staff is essential both to envision possibilities for the future and to mitigate the current challenges facing our parks.

We hope that you will consider this important request to invest in the future of our city—from our natural resources to our residents’ health and wellbeing—by investing in reinstating the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Trees. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me, and thank you for your consideration.

With best wishes,

[Signature]

Rebecca Cramer
Chair, Whalley-Edgewood-Beaver Hills Community Management Team
203-584-7627
rebecca.k.cramer@gmail.com