

The Eagle-Tribune

The Eagle • 1867

The Tribune • 1890

Published daily and Sunday by Eagle-Tribune Publishing Co.

North Andover, Massachusetts 01845

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Park will rise from abandoned parking lot

Here are some people and organizations from across our region worthy of praise:

In Lawrence, community groups are working to turn a blighted, abandoned parking lot into a park and playground for city residents.

Groundwork Lawrence, a nonprofit community rehabilitation group, and Lawrence Community Works are cleaning and improving a piece of land along the Spicket River to create Brook Street Park. The 2.7-acre site was once home to a commercial laundry.

The two groups, along with city officials and neighborhood residents, envision a park with a gazebo for concerts, a boat launch on the Spicket River, picnic areas, community gardens, a playground, walking trails and other amenities. They expect the park to be ready by July. Brook Street Park will be the first part of a 3-mile greenway walking area that Groundwork Lawrence hopes to create.

The future park doesn't look like much now, still surrounded with a chain-link fence posted with Department of Environmental Protection warnings. But much progress has already been made. Contaminated soil was hauled off the property last year. It took some work by city officials to free the site from its burden of back taxes.

Brook Street Park will be a great asset to the city when it is completed, thanks to the dedication and vision of those working to make a dream come true.

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