

**PUBLIC DOCUMENT NO. 48:
REPORT OF THE BOARD OF
METROPOLITAN PARK
COMMISSIONERS, JANUARY,
1897**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649449606

Public Document No. 48: Report of the Board of Metropolitan Park Commissioners, January, 1897 by Various

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

VARIOUS

**PUBLIC DOCUMENT NO. 48:
REPORT OF THE BOARD OF
METROPOLITAN PARK
COMMISSIONERS,
JANUARY, 1897**

PUBLIC DOCUMENT

. . . . No. 48.

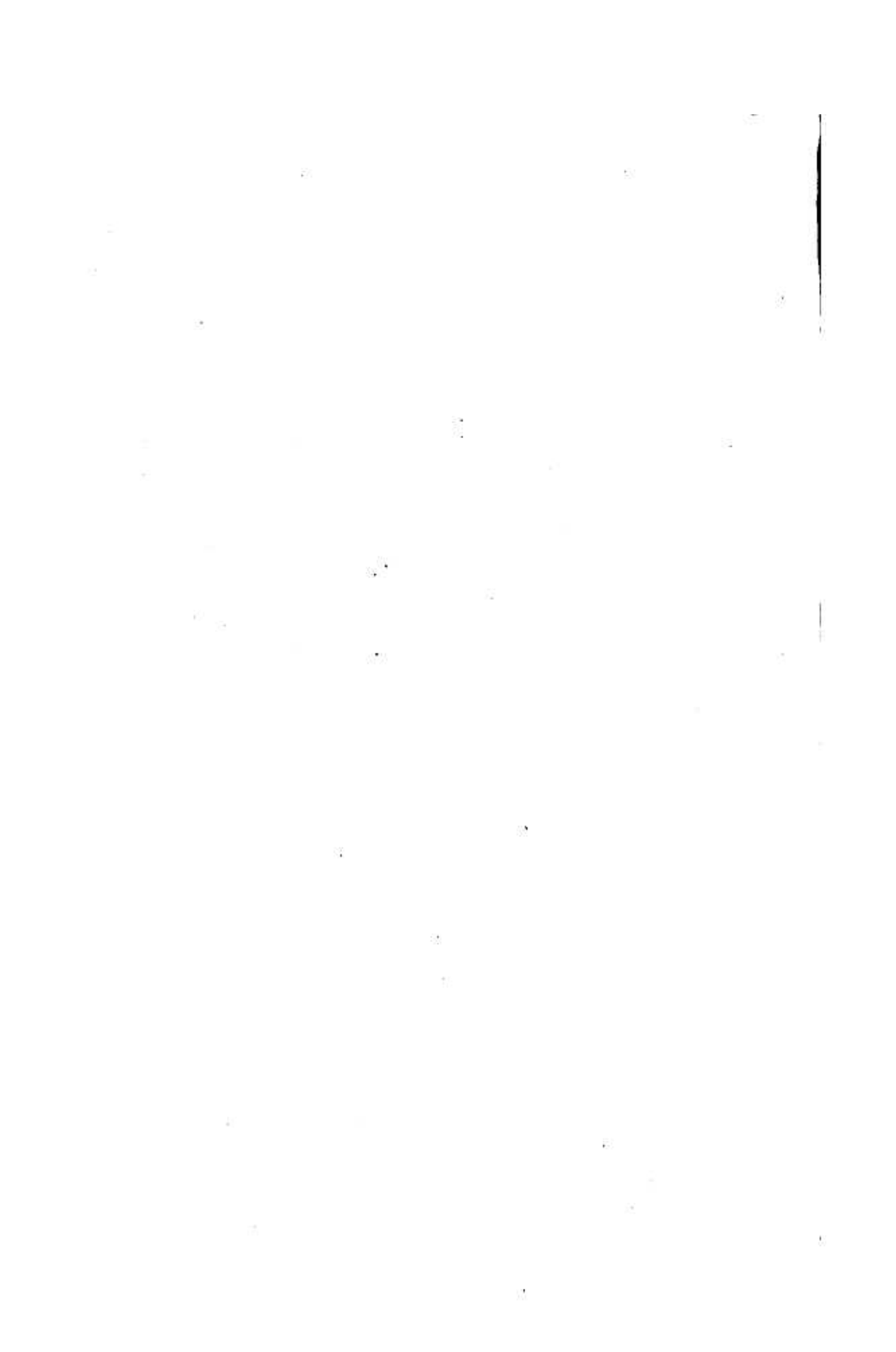
REPORT

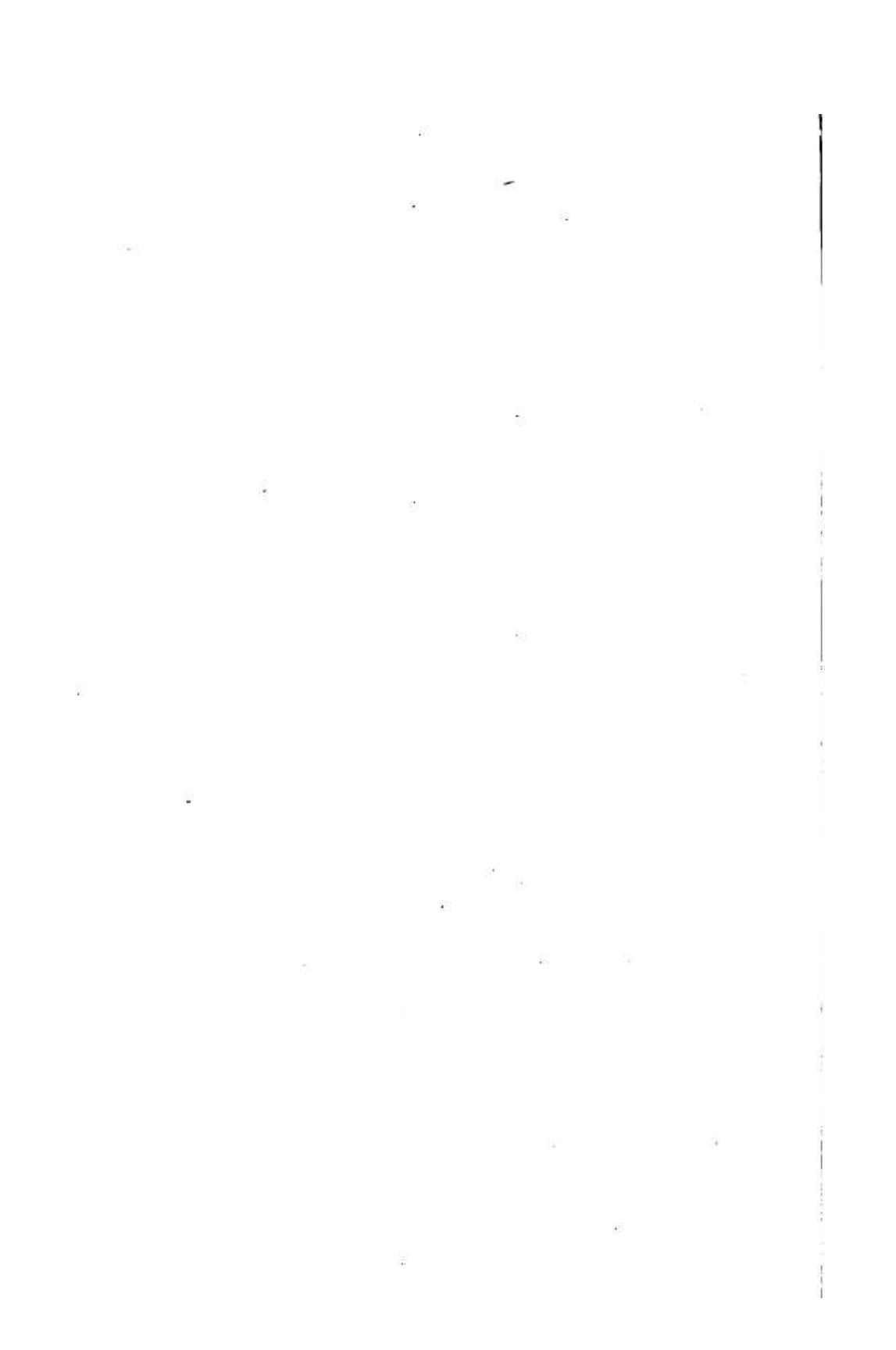
OF THE

*Board of Metropolitan Park
Commissioners.*

JANUARY, 1897.

BOSTON:
WRIGHT & POTTER PRINTING CO., STATE PRINTERS,
18 POST OFFICE SQUARE.
1897.





Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

REPORT.

The Metropolitan Park Commission presents herewith its fourth annual report.

The work of this Commission, and especially the matters to be presented in this report, cannot be fully understood without some knowledge of its previous reports and of the legislation under which it has acted. It will be a manifest convenience, therefore, to briefly review both at the outset of this report.

The subject of a Metropolitan Park System was discussed and the general plan outlined in a report made Jan. 1, 1893, by a preliminary commission, appointed to consider the advisability of laying out ample open spaces in the vicinity of Boston. That report pointed out the Metropolitan community of life and interests in the cities and towns for twelve miles about Boston, enumerated the dominant features of this Metropolitan area in the order of their importance, and suggested a method of securing and holding them as open spaces for exercise and recreation. As a result, the Metropolitan Park Act, chapter 407, Acts of 1893, was passed, and this Board appointed, with adequate powers to carry out its provisions in a Metropolitan District of thirty-seven cities and towns. An appropriation of \$1,000,000 was at the same time provided by a loan from the Commonwealth on its forty-year bonds, to be repaid by yearly assessments upon the district, according to a rate to be determined each five years by a separate commission to be appointed by the supreme court. The yearly expense

of care and maintenance was to be assessed at the same rate. Various minor acts have since been passed, to enable the Board to carry out to its full intention the trust thus created. The confidence thus reposed in this Board as well as its labors were materially increased by chapter 288 of the Acts of 1894, usually called the Boulevard Act, which empowered it to connect any public open space with any part of the district. An appropriation of \$500,000 under this act was intended to provide for a suitable approach to the Blue Hills and to the Middlesex Fells. The loan for this last appropriation is known as Metropolitan Parks Loan, Series Two, and the others have been grouped as Metropolitan Parks Loan, Series One, and Charles River Loan.

In its last report the Board described the reservations which had been acquired under the Park Acts. Blue Hills, twelve miles to the south of the State House, and Middlesex Fells, five miles to the north, were reported to have been taken as great reservations of wooded wild lands; Stony Brook, a smaller reservation, five miles to the south, had been taken to frame the picture of the Great Blue in a future parkway from Bussey Woods of the Boston Park System to the Blue Hills; Hemlock Gorge, on the upper Charles, and Beaver Brook, to the north-west, — the latter celebrated for its great oaks and its brook famous in Lowell's poem, — had been taken as spots of rarest beauty and interest. About all the banks of Charles River to Watertown not already in other public ownership, and three miles of Revere Beach to the north-east, had also been acquired as the best selections of river-bank and sea-shore within the Metropolitan District. Land to form part of the West Roxbury Parkway from Bussey Woods to Stony Brook Woods had also been taken, and transferred to the city of Boston for care and development; while the tiny quarter mile of King's Beach, at the extreme north-east corner of the district, which had been taken to encourage Swampscott to acquire its neighboring Blaney Beach, was soon to be transferred to that town to care for at its own expense. Within the larger woods reservations, it was also reported, the dead trees and underbrush had been largely cleared away, and a considerable number of preliminary roads and paths built on the

line of former cart paths, and opened at once to the public. Even this development was more than had been at first contemplated, but had been found necessary to prevent fires, and to satisfy the plainly manifested desire of the public to make immediate use of the reservations. The smaller woods reservations had been merely cleared of rubbish and the more important trees cared for. On Charles River no development had been provided for or undertaken. At Revere Beach no development had been possible, because of the magnitude of the preliminary problems to be solved, but progress in the solution of these problems was reported.

Under the Boulevard Act the Board at the same time reported that a plan had been adopted to provide on the south a broad and easy road or parkway between the Blue Hills and Mattapan Square, where connection would be made with the Boston Park System through Blue Hill Avenue to Franklin Park, and on the north a similar parkway between Bears' Den and Pine Hill, the two southernmost points of the Middlesex Fells, and Broadway Park, Somerville, which lies on the outer edge of the dense population, two and one-half miles from the State House. Land had been acquired for portions of the latter in Malden and Medford, and construction begun. Land had also been acquired, mostly by gift, for an additional parkway along Mystic Lakes and Abbajona River from West Medford to Winchester close by the Fells, and construction of a drive-way begun.

These latter takings and construction and the lands to be taken for Blue Hills Parkway were then estimated to require the entire appropriation under the Boulevard Act. Detailed reasons were given to explain the necessity for an additional appropriation of \$500,000 to complete the work already undertaken under the Park Acts. No appropriations for new work were asked for under either act, because it was felt that, although a larger part of the entire plan outlined in the report of the preliminary commission had been carried out than was supposed possible under the appropriations first made, none the less a fuller understanding of the whole matter made it seem right to pause and ask the Legislature to determine the course to be thereafter pursued. The