

Honorary Membership Nomination Narrative

Nominee: Mayor William Finch

Nominee's Address: Office of the Mayor
City of Bridgeport
Margaret E. Morton Government Center
999 Broad Street
Bridgeport, CT 06604

Phone: (203) 576-7201

Nominator: Connecticut Chapter ASLA; Robert Golde, Trustee

Four decades after participating in the first Earth Day celebration when Bridgeport Mayor Bill Finch was 14, he continues to work passionately for the environment as the leader of one of the nation's most important industrial centers of the early 20th century. A life-long conservationist he is redefining the role of the 21st century city leader by putting quality of life and stewardship of the environment in the forefront of his political agenda.

Immediately after taking office in 2007, Mayor Finch identified his two highest priorities: making Bridgeport the cleanest, greenest city in the region, and reforming its schools to compete in a 21st century marketplace. During his first year in office, he signed an Executive Order to promote sustainability and assembled a team of 100 volunteers who worked for 18 months to turn his dream into reality. His "BGreen 2020" initiative has served as a "Greenprint" for the City's vision for sustainability and a model for others to follow.

His multifaceted approach to the realization of this vision include such initiatives as solar rooftop leasing program, a plan for reducing the total number of vehicle miles traveled in the city by promoting "complete streets", and a new Parks Master Plan, the first in 100 years. Finch also ordered a feasibility study ascertain the viability of utilizing the city's sewage waste to produce energy in a biomass facility as well as to construct a biomass plant that would generate 365 kilowatts of renewable energy a year. Putting feet on the street, the Mayor's Conservation Corps provides jobs for young adults who go door-to-door, raising awareness of the benefits of single-stream recycling, energy efficiency and storm water management which has resulted in a 61% increase for the City's recycling rates. Mayor Finch also implemented the Mayor's Beautification Awards to honor Bridgeport residents who upkeep their properties and he provided rain barrels to help residents save water by utilizing rain water.

Mayor Finch has put Bridgeport at the forefront of an emerging green economy, attracting the only compressed natural gas filling station east of the Mississippi; a business that turns recycled cooking grease into fuel; and a mattress recycling facility. These businesses are three anchors of a fledgling Eco-Industrial Park, which will include a solar array on a former landfill, an anaerobic digester and the largest fuel cell power plant in North America.

Recognizing the potential role of the academic community in assisting him in his initiatives Mayor Finch has reached out to the Landscape Architecture programs at the University of Connecticut and the City University of New York to provide service learning opportunities for students who in turn supply the City with a stream of innovative ideas for redeveloping its post-industrial urban core; a win-win relationship that has grown stronger through his term.

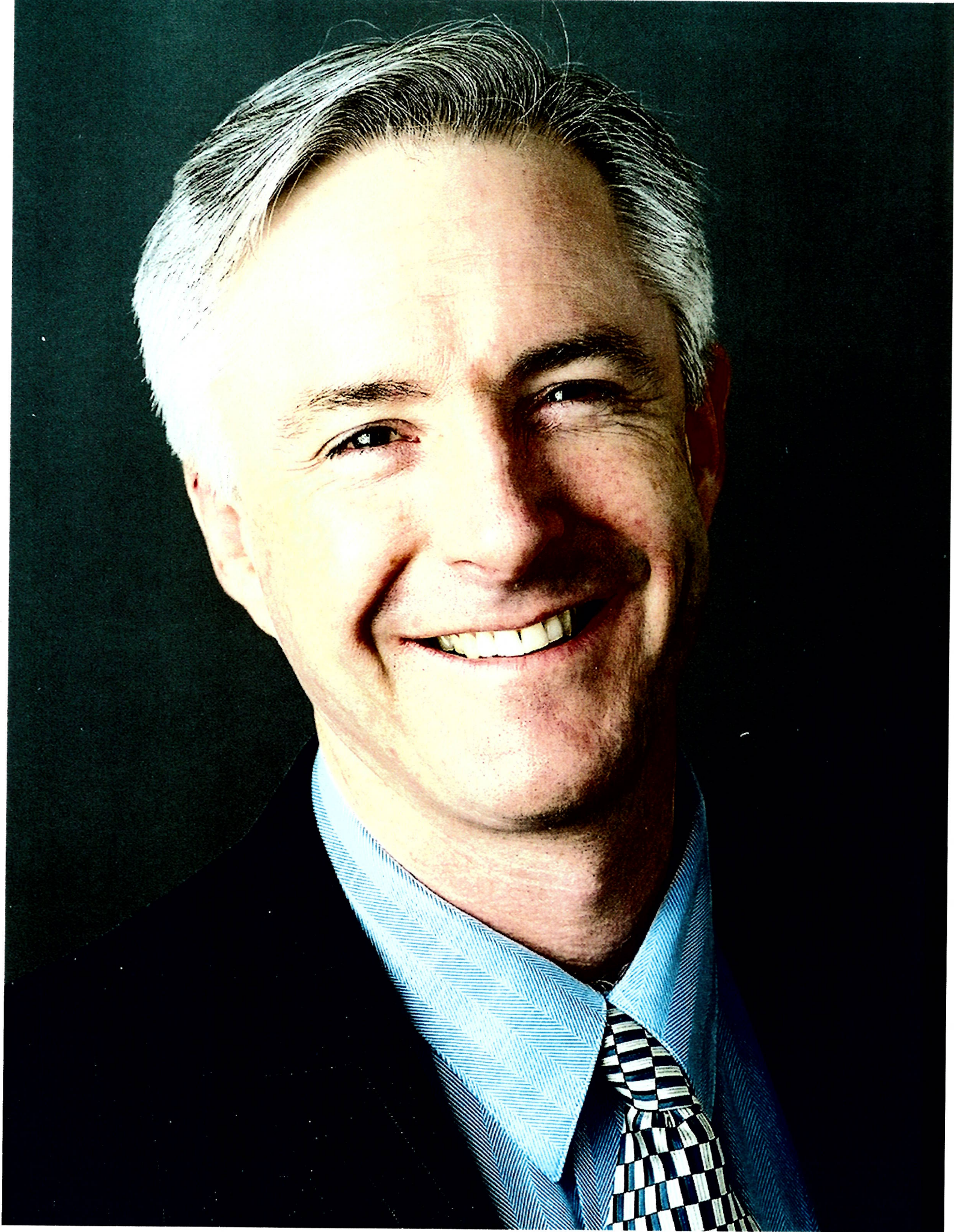
Mayor Finch is committed to creating a generation of new conservationists in the City's young people. In 2011, the Mayor cut the ribbon on the City's first "green" school, the Discovery Interdistrict Magnet School, which also offers students a "green" curriculum – learning fused with the school's environment. Bridgeport's second "green" school, a magnet high school that will offer an innovative curriculum focused on aviation, information technology and conservation, is set for completion in 2013.

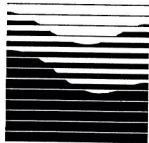
Early on in his political career, Bill Finch, emulating Olmsted, picked up the torch to promote stewardship of our environment for the benefit of nature and our fellow man. Throughout his tenure as State Senator, Bill championed efforts in the state legislature to reduce air pollution by encouraging the use of biodiesel fuels, was a chief proponent of a stronger "bottle bill" in Connecticut and introduced bills to promote preservation of agricultural land and the protection of Long Island Sound.

In 2005, while serving as chairman of the legislature's Environment Committee Bill sponsored legislation to recognize April 26 as Fredrick Law Olmsted Day in the State of Connecticut in celebration of the legacy of this Connecticut native. He continued his support for the Olmsted's legacy by serving on the Board of the Connecticut Olmsted Heritage Alliance established to showcase Olmsted's important works in Connecticut; develop tourism opportunities centered on Olmsted designed landscapes; and promote appreciation and stewardship of Connecticut's historic landscapes. The Connecticut Chapter of the ASLA has recognized this long-time friend of our profession for his stewardship of the environment by bestowing him with its Olmsted Award given annually to a person or organization that has demonstrated an "outstanding commitment to stewardship of the land".

In 2008 and 2010, the local environmental group Conscious Decisions recognized Finch with its Green Coast Award for his conservation and sustainability efforts in the City of Bridgeport and the region. Finch was inducted into the National Environmental Hall of Fame.

His passion for environmental stewardship and his belief that his city's children deserve an education that is equal to their suburban counterparts are what motivates Mayor Finch to find new and innovative strategies that will help him move Bridgeport forward and improve quality of life for generations to come. His mission and drive are remarkably compatible with those of our profession and the American Society of Landscape Architects. For that reason we strongly urge that he be accepted for honorary membership in the ASLA.





ASLA

22 February 2013

Honorary Membership Nomination
ASLA
636 Eye Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001-3736
c/o Carolyn Mitchell

CONNECTICUT
CHAPTER

AMERICAN
SOCIETY OF
LANDSCAPE
ARCHITECTS

370 JAMES STREET
SUITE 402
NEW HAVEN
CONNECTICUT
06513

800 878-1474

WWW.CTASLA.ORG

Dear Ms. Mitchell,

The Connecticut Chapter of ASLA hereby nominates Mayor Bill Finch for Honorary Membership in the ASLA.

The profession of Landscape Architecture is immensely fortunate to be associated with Mayor Finch as our profession espouses many of the very same principles that he does. A strong proponent of the legacy of Fredrick Law Olmsted, Bill's agenda as both State Senator and Mayor has consistently focused on improving quality of life and economic conditions. This while educating both children and adults on how good stewardship of the land and natural resources will provide a better, more sustainable way of life. In a city whose industrial past has little to do with its new life, Mayor Finch is implementing measures that are enduring, measures that are rooted in the practice of Landscape Architecture. With his model, his City can be/is a working example for other cities on how initiatives like "complete streets", re-imagining the City's parks system and attracting business that promote environmental and social responsibility will result in a social and economic base that will sustain the City for years to come.

Over the years, as State Senator and Mayor, Mr. Finch has enlisted many of our members, our Executive Committee and even students at the University of Connecticut to participate with him in transforming the City of Bridgeport.

In the accompanying letters of recommendation you will see specific examples of how Bill Finch both as a State Senator and as Mayor has remained true to his vision of bettering lives through stewardship of our cultural and natural environments. As you consider Mayor Finch for this honor, it is my hope that you gather from this submittal the breadth and depth of the man who views the principals of Landscape Architecture as a critical component of environmental, social and economic vitality. The profession would do well to have more friends like Bill.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Respectfully,

C. Eric Rains
Chapter President

Robert J. Golde, PLA ASLA
Chapter Trustee



February 26, 2013

**Bridgeport
City Council**

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Bill Finch
Mayor

Fleeta Hudson
City Clerk

Honorary Membership Nomination
ASLA

636 Eye Street, NW,
Washington, DC 20001-3736

Mayor Bill Finch is a captivating friend and colleague, whose poise and persistence has reinvigorated the Park City, the City of Bridgeport, while gaining many fans and believers every step of the way during his administration from 2008 to present.

As City Council President, I have the joy to work with Bill on numerous projects that directly benefit the people of Bridgeport. Bill's leadership emphasizes conviction and purpose to achieve positive results; he holds a special "hands on" quality to carry forth his public servant spirit.

As a shepherd of the Park City, he has focused his administration on fulfilling the goals of a cleaner, greener, safer, healthier and more affordable Bridgeport and championing what is in the best interest of the City's residents, senior citizens, and especially families and children.

Bill's love of Frederick Law Olmsted and the field of Landscape Architecture has shaped his vision and propelled his crucial role in making Bridgeport one of the most sustainable and progressive cities in New England. He has spearheaded a number of projects yielding great results. These efforts spark creativity, economic development and optimism. Currently in the implementation phase are the following major projects: *B-Green: A Sustainability Plan for the City of Bridgeport*, Regional Plan Association, 2010; *the Parks Master Plan*, with Sasaki Associates, 2011; *the Pleasure Beach Park Master Plan*, with Stantec, 2011 and *the Knowlton Park Master Plan*, with Fuss & O'Neill 2011.

To summarize, Mayor Bill Finch deserves to be nominated as an honorary member of the ASLA because he embodies the **human dynamic** inherent in Landscape Architecture. This is a principle to his management of the City, whether it has been building new schools, parks or economic development: the beauty expressed in nature and in the environment should be cherished and celebrated by all everyone. Bill raises this awareness with residents and within the City's government.

We are on target now and engaging multiple partners and supporters along the way, including the ASLA, and we appreciate your help, support and recognition.

Sincerely,


Tom McCarthy
City Council President

Honorary Membership Nomination
ASLA
636 Eye Street, NW,
Washington, DC 20001-3736

26 February 2013

re: Honorary Member ASLA, **Candidate Bill Finch, Mayor, Bridgeport, Connecticut**

Members of the Selection Committee for ASLA Honorary Membership,

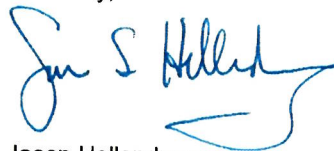
I would like to convey my enthusiastic support of Mayor Bill Finch's nomination for Honorary Membership in the American Society of Landscape Architects. I first met the Mayor not quite three years ago when we were selected to prepare a Parks Master Plan for the City of Bridgeport. Through the process of working with the Mayor on the Plan – a process he has championed – I have been amazed by the passion he exhibits towards cities, people, the environment, and parks. There is no one more deserving of becoming an Honorary Member.

I was first exposed to the Mayor's vision and passion at our project kick-off. It was April 27th, and he apologized that we didn't have the kick-off the day before – that was the anniversary of Frederick Law Olmsted's birth. The day would have been a fitting day to launch the City's Parks Master Plan, with a focus on reinvigorating many of the community's struggling parks, several of which are gems commissioned by P.T. Barnum and designed by Frederick Law Olmsted during the City's heyday in the latter 1800's. I would come to learn that the Mayor was a founding member of the Connecticut Olmsted Heritage Alliance, and while in the Connecticut State Senate in the early 2000's, he led an initiative to preserve Olmsted parks in the state.

While Bridgeport is a city with a great legacy of historic parks, it is also saddled with being the former "Industrial Center for Connecticut"; it is a former mill city, then a munitions city during the World Wars. It was abandoned and left a post-industrial landscape with one of the highest murder rates in the country. Since being elected in 2007, Mayor Finch charged the community to join him in creating a bold vision for the future. The BGreen 2020 Plan serves as a "Greenprint" for the City's overall vision and path forward for a "green" economy. He has positioned the City's renaissance on its strategic location along Long Island Sound, the northeast corridor transportation network, and proximity to New York City. The Parks Master Plan serves as the framework to make Bridgeport a more livable city and help better retain and attract residents and businesses. Within the Parks Master Plan, he has looked to the City's rivers, greenways, and coastline to create a system of green infrastructure that can clean the City's natural resources and protect it from the threat of sea-level change and storm surge, as experienced during Hurricane Irene, Sandy, and Storm Nemo the past three years. All of these efforts locally have been recognized by the U.S. Conference of Mayors, where Mayor Finch has been charged with a leadership role to convey his passion and leadership so that other community's may benefit.

I enthusiastically endorse Mayor Finch for your consideration and appreciate the opportunity to express my support on his behalf – I can't think of anyone who is more deserving of that recognition than Mayor Finch.

Sincerely,



Jason Hellendrung
Principal



P.O. Box 724
Ridgefield, CT 06877
www.ctolmsted.org

February 19, 2013

Honorary Membership Nomination
ASLA
636 Eye Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001-3736

Committee members:

I am very pleased to support the nomination of Mayor Bill Finch as an Honorary Member of the American Society of Landscape Architects.

I have known Bill since 2004 when he was a State Senator and Chairman of the Environment Committee. He was also leading the efforts at this time to gain state-wide recognition for Connecticut native Frederick Law Olmsted. Bill lived in Bridgeport across the street from Beardsley Park, perhaps our state's best example of a city park designed by Olmsted senior, and as I soon discovered, was an avid reader and had a remarkably good understanding of Olmsted's life, and through that of the profession of landscape architecture.

His enthusiasm encouraged the founding of a non-profit, the Connecticut Olmsted Heritage Alliance, and Bill was a founding member. COHA has held several conferences with a focus on Olmsted's life and the work of his firms in Connecticut, and after Bill became Mayor of Bridgeport and left the COHA board, he continued to support our efforts.

Several years ago I was waiting for a meeting with Bridgeport staff, and to my surprise and delight found a copy of Landscape Architecture Magazine on the table in the waiting area. I'm not sure how it had gotten there, but I was sure that Bill was involved.

As a practitioner, it is always a pleasure to meet and work with a "civilian" who has some knowledge of the profession of landscape architecture. For many years Bill Finch has shown that he understands our profession and appreciates how landscape architects can help him to achieve his goals for Bridgeport.

For all these reasons I heartily support the nomination of Mayor Bill Finch as an Honorary Member of the ASLA.

Sincerely,

Norma E. Williams

Norma E. Williams, ASLA
Treasurer and Past President



Stantec

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2321 Whitney Avenue
Hamden, CT 06518
Tel: (203) 281-1350
Fax: (203) 281-1470

February 13, 2013

Honorary Membership Nomination
ASLA
636 Eye Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001-3736

Re: The Honorable Bill Finch, Mayor, City of Bridgeport, Connecticut

Dear Nominating Committee:

As a practicing Landscape Architect for over 26 years, I value my membership and fellowship with the American Society of Landscape Architects. As Landscape Architects we work hard to support our profession, advance our knowledge, and maintain our place as leaders in design, sustainability and stewardship of our land. At times we become acquainted with an individual who has taken a different career path yet who is most worthy of acknowledgement by our professional society.

Many have accomplished great deeds in the stewardship of our lands and the health, safety and well-being of people. I can only speak genuinely for those with whom I am most familiar, and it is my great pleasure to nominate Mayor Bill Finch as Honorary Member of the American Society of Landscape Architects. Mayor Finch has demonstrated his commitment to our natural environment and making our cities more livable. He has accomplished much and has empowered landscape architects during his many years in public service to achieve these goals—long before many current day sustainability initiatives gained such vital prominence.

Mayor Finch has been and continues to be an avid supporter of our profession. As a former State Senator and now Mayor of Connecticut's largest city, he has embodied the principles of landscape architecture and healthy communities in all that he has and aims to accomplish. In his home City, Mayor Finch has enhanced two major Olmsted parks, created new parks from former brownfield sites, and prepared a City-wide park master plan that places as much emphasis on small neighborhood parks in the City's poorest communities as it does on its major destination and historic parks that are popular to State residents far beyond the City's borders.

His influence extends well beyond the City's park lands. Mayor Finch initiated the BGreen Bridgeport program to establish the City as the cleanest, greenest, safest, and most affordable city in the State and in the region. It's a lofty goal, however the initiative has pierced nearly every aspect of the City's public realm from enhanced public transit, cutting edge fuel cell technology, connected greenways and a restored urban forest to reclaim the City's proud place as the State's Park City.

I have heard Mayor Finch say on numerous occasions that if he could wake up tomorrow in another profession, he would be a landscape architect. I am privileged to have this opportunity to nominate him as an honorary member of ASLA. Thank you.

Very truly yours,

Gary Sorge, FASLA, CSLA, AICP