

the *Newton Conservators*

NEWSLETTER

Winter Issue

February 1999

Message from the President

Permit Mazes

By Michael Clarke

What are the options for preserving open space in Newton, when market forces drive the last large parcels of land, such as the golf courses, to the block? The recent examples of the Kessler Woods and the Andover-Newton Theological Seminary (ANTS) provide a glimpse of the future.

In the absence of a greatly needed set-aside open space fund to acquire land that suddenly comes to market, the City must scramble to preserve what it can through negotiations, which may depend on the goodwill of developers and conditions placed on building permits. In the case of the 40-acre Kessler Woods, it is likely that only 9 to 13 acres of unbuildable wetlands will be saved. Of the 20 acres now pending for sale by Andover-Newton, some of the proposed Hebrew College Campus will be preserved by deed or conservation restrictions negotiated in the Special Building Permit approved by the Board of Aldermen. A smaller parcel to be sold to another educational institution will come under the Administrative Permit process, through which the City's Planning Department submits a review and recommendations to the Inspectional Services Department, which may follow the recommendations in granting a permit.

The largest ANTS parcel (12-14 acres) is slated for a development that will include affordable (low-income) housing, which is much needed in Newton. 75% of the housing will be at market rates. Because of the affordable housing component, the development will come under yet another type of building permit called the Comprehensive Permit. Comprehensive Permits provide a streamlined path

in order to minimize the expense and time for developers so as to avoid the lengthy negotiations that may occur in granting a special permit. Fortunately, the developer chosen by ANTS has promised to interact with neighbors and be responsive to their concerns, but the process for granting Comprehensive Permits should be improved for cases that will arise in the future. Since Newton has only 5% affordable housing, Comprehensive Permit proposals could evolve for other large parcels of private or institutional land.

In granting Comprehensive Permits, the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) subsumes the authority of all other City boards and agencies. Mass. Gen. Law, Ch 40B §21 states, "The board of appeals shall adopt rules [for Comprehensive Permits], not inconsistent with the purposes of this chapter, for the conduct of its business pursuant to this chapter and shall file a copy of said rules with the city or town clerk." Even though model state rules exist and apply by default, the City did not seem to be aware of them at the time of query. Nor has the ZBA developed its own. Consequently, the ZBA, its advisors in City Hall, and the lawyers, who shepherd the applications through, know well how to influence the Comprehensive Permit process. While everyone at City Hall is helpful, it provides no written guidesheet for the public.

Our neighbor, Wellesley, has written procedures for Comprehensive Permits, because it handles them in the same way as normal Site Plan Approvals. Upon application, the plans are forwarded to: Engineering, Health, Fire, Planning,

Natural Resources, Planning, and Design & Review. The latter three commissions hold their own hearings. All seven departments/boards or commissions submit a letter of review to the ZBA prior to the ZBA's hearing. Also, the developer is urged to interact with city agencies on technical issues prior to application. With regard to open space, the ZBA negotiates with the developer at the hearing on the basis of the density of the units relative to the zoning ordinances for comparable types of housing.

In processing Administrative Permits for major building projects in Newton, such as Lasell's dormitories, the Planning Department holds additional hearings to allow neighbors and others to air their views on open space and other issues and offer modifications to the project.

By law, the ZBA must hold a public hearing to ensure that local concerns regarding health, safety, design, open space, and the environment are properly addressed. The ZBA acts on behalf of all other town boards and officials with regard to local, but not state requirements (e.g. the Conservation Commission must still address state wetlands issues).

Importantly, the ZBA can issue a Comprehensive Permit with conditions. But it is not at all clear how the Newton ZBA determines whether conditions should be placed on a Comprehensive Permit that would preserve open space, natural flora and fauna, and other environmental factors.

As the process is presently practiced in Newton, the Planning Department, though not required to do so, provides the ZBA with a report and recommendations derived from a consolidation of data from the city departments normally concerned with building permits. Now would be an opportune time for the ZBA to write rules for Comprehensive Permits that formalize the reviews of City departments and commissions and include Wellesley's mechanisms to address open space and other local concerns. Even if additional public meetings were included only as a guideline or suggestion in the written procedures, it could have a salutary effect.

Since Comprehensive Permits allow for open space conditions, such as those that were placed on the Special Permit for the construction of Hebrew College, some pavement is already laid toward

adequate public input into structuring these permits. Newton should now delineate its own written procedures to inform residents how their concerns about open space or other issues can be incorporated into Comprehensive Permits. Newton's criteria for placing conditions on such building permits should also be stated. The default set of Comprehensive Permit rules that should serve as a starting point for Newton's can be found at www.state.ma.us/dhcd/components/hac/mlrfin.htm.

The Rumford and Wabasso St. Area

By Mike Clarke

The site of the former Rumford dump coupled with newly acquired land along adjacent Wabasso St. presents a unique opportunity for a new conservation and passive recreational area along the Charles River's Purgatory Cove. Now that DPW Commissioner Hickey has submitted the final environmental report on the Rumford site to the state Department of Environmental Protection, the Mayor is appointing a select committee to plan for the best use of this property. Newton's Environmental Planner, Martha Horn, has already submitted a grant proposal to Department of Environmental Management to garner matching funds for an environmental assessment of the area. This is the first step in a planning effort to determine the best use of this land. Both the Parks and Recreation Department and the Conservation Commission are interested in linking Auburndale Park, the Flowed Meadows Conservation area, the MDC Grove Park, and local neighborhoods through this uniquely-situated property.

In particular, cooperation between City departments and the MDC will ensure that the Charles River Pathway through this area will eventually be constructed in a way that provides protection for the river, the wildlife, and significant plant species. Close to my own heart is the area's informal canoe launch, which should be incorporated into the plan. The Parks & Recreation Department is also considering the Wabasso parcel as a possible picnic area. The Mayor and the City staff are to be commended for developing a comprehensive plan to transform a wasteland into another emerald in the city's open space system.

Conservation Commission Update

By Norm Richardson

The Newton Conservation Commission was busy this past fall with the usual number of miscellaneous filings as well as several projects that required public meetings and engendered considerable neighborhood interest. Included in this latter category were Boston College's plans to build an athletic field near Edmands Park and the Chabad Lubovitch proposal to construct a temple on a residential lot within the floodplain of South Meadow Brook. The Conservation Commission denied both of these projects.

At issue in the Boston College (BC) filing was the status of a small brook in the park, which if not intermittent as claimed by BC, would be subject to the new Rivers Protection Act. BC has filed for, and received, a Superseding Order of Conditions from the Mass. Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). The DEP, while making no finding regarding the status of the brook, concluded that the plan was not subject to the Rivers Protection Act because of their interpretation of an exemption provided in the act that grandfathers projects that were underway prior to passage. The Conservation Commission and a neighborhood group have both appealed DEP's decision.

The Chabad Lubavitch project came under the jurisdiction of both the City of Newton floodplain ordinance and the Rivers Protection Act. In deciding this case, the Commission had to consider whether this was a "redevelopment" of an existing use, whether conditions on the property were "degraded" as defined by the legislation, and how "practicable and substantially equivalent economic alternatives" should be defined for the project. In addition, engineering controls to meet the floodplain ordinance and DEP storm water regulations received considerable debate.

The Commission approved an Order of Conditions permitting the upgrade of an existing American Tower Systems FM antenna in Upper Falls to make it capable of digital TV broadcast. Proposed mitigation for this work near the Charles River included a CR on approximately 4 acres of land and construction of a river walkway connecting the Upper Falls Playground with Conservation land on Williams Street. The building permit for the ATS tower was approved by the

Board of Aldermen on January 4, but this has been appealed in court by a group of Upper Falls residents.

The Commission is completing negotiations on a 30-year Conservation Restriction (CR) with Lasell College. The Conservation Commission also assumed management responsibility for a large parcel of land off Nahanton Street recently transferred from the Public Works Department.

The Conservation Commission received grants from the Massachusetts Historical Commission and the Department of Environmental Management (with matching funds from the City of Newton and Chestnut Hill Garden Club) to cover the preparation of a Master Plan for the Houghton Garden (see separate article).

New Signs for Conservation Areas

By Bud Elliott

Newton is blessed with a variety of open spaces, each with its own marvelous and distinct character. Think of the differing settings of the Houghton Garden adjacent to the Hammond and Webster Conservation areas, or the stream through the Sawmill Brook area, or the bog bridge walk in the Kennard area leading to Lost Pond in Brookline, to name just a few.

Many of our members know of these areas. They are shown on the Conservators' Map of Parks and Conservation Areas. However, there are a remarkably large number of Newton citizens who either don't know they exist or have not visited any of these open spaces. One of the problems has been identifying and finding our conservation areas.

At the entrances to most of our parks there are reasonably attractive signs to greet the public and identify the area. Many, if not most, of our conservation areas do not have identifying signs at their entrances, so many people are not aware of their existence.

These areas are among the treasures of Newton and should be made known for the islands of natural enjoyment and quiet recreational delight they provide within Newton's urban environment. The Conservation Commission is trying to make this easier. As part of their budget request for FY2000, the Commission is seeking funding to begin in July for two types of signs. One will be discreet signs

identifying conservation areas at their appropriate entrances. Another will be larger, two-sided trail kiosks to stand inside the entrances. These kiosks will have maps showing the trails and natural features of the area as well as text describing its history and notable flora and fauna. You may have seen signs of this type at State Park entrances, Nature Conservancy sites and others.

The Conservators expect to contribute to this project and are discussing with the Conservation Commission what part we will take. There may be various ways for our members to participate, so we will keep you informed.

It might be helpful to call or write the Mayor and your Alderman to urge them to approve this Conservation Commission budget request.

Saving Hammond Pond

By Stephanie Bacon

Deep in the woods, between Judge Lowell's house and the little German hamlet of Thompsonville, is Hammond's Pond, a lonely lakelet of twenty acres, where in old times the farmer's lads used to catch eels and pout, with occasionally a lively two-pound pickerel.

King's Handbook of Newton, Massachusetts, 1889

The passage above, written just over a century ago, no longer describes Hammond Pond. The woods, long gone from the Pond's southern and western shores, have been replaced by acres of parking lots, an increasingly dense commercial zone and a busy state highway. Judge Lowell's house is now one of a dozen or more homes in a residential area just to the east of the Pond that is ripe for further development. It is only to the north that the woods remain. Here, the MDC Hammond Reservation and the Webster Conservation Area, the City of Newton's largest conservation parcel, protect what remains of Hammond Pond's natural setting and provide valuable habitat for a surprising variety of woodland and wetland flora and fauna.

As is the case with most urban and suburban ponds, Hammond Pond has suffered significantly from development along its shoreline. The extension of the cattail marsh along the south side of the pond, an over-abundant annual growth of aquatic plants over much of the surface, and the decreasing depth of Hammond Pond are the most obvious signs of declining health. In early 1996, a

group of Newton and Brookline citizens got together to form Friends of Hammond Pond, a non-profit organization concerned with the future of Hammond Pond and its adjoining woodlands. One of the first actions taken by the group was to determine what testing had been conducted at Hammond Pond in the past and to hire a consultant to conduct a one-day water quality study to establish current conditions. Both prior testing and the 1996 study concluded that storm water runoff from parking lots and storm drains was largely responsible for elevated levels of phosphorus, algae, dense aquatic weed growth, and polluted sediments.

To get a clearer picture of the effect of storm water on Hammond Pond, Friends of Hammond Pond, with the support of Newton Conservators, Inc. and sponsored by the Newton Conservation Commission, applied for and received a grant from the DEM Lake and Pond Grant Program. The study included monitoring storm water, especially during storm events, and delineation of the watershed, the land area draining to Hammond Pond through surface runoff and storm drains. Another purpose of the grant was to create a public information brochure highlighting storm water issues. The grant report, issued in December of 1997, identified the following problems:

- High concentrations of phosphorus, nitrogen, fecal bacteria, sediment and other pollutants are present in the storm water entering Hammond Pond.
- Total annual phosphorus exceeds both permissible and critical levels.
- Storm water comprises 71% of all inflows to Hammond Pond.
- Annual aquatic plant decay and high particulate loads (sand etc.) from storm water are filling in the Pond.
- Waterfowl, Canada geese in particular, contribute substantial amounts of phosphorus, nitrogen and bacteria to Hammond Pond.
- High levels of chloride (salt) are present in the Pond. This may be due to road salting in the winter.
- Aquatic plant growth is excessive for many Pond uses.

The primary management goal for Hammond Pond is to assure the continuance of present uses which include canoeing, catch/release fishing, aesthetic enjoyment, and maintenance of an aquatic

habitat. Any management plan to improve water quality must include both watershed and in-pond approaches to have a lasting effect. Appropriate watershed options recommended by the grant report include diversion of storm water or a system of storm water detention which would allow a certain degree of filtration before storm water reaches the Pond. Possible in-pond measures include control of aquatic plants by chemical application, harvesting or dredging. All of these options need to be examined carefully in light of management goals, feasibility and cost-effectiveness.

Adding to the difficulty of this task are the number of parties that have jurisdiction. Hammond Pond is a Great Pond, which places it under the jurisdiction of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, yet the MDC oversees use and maintenance of the Pond and the City of Newton's Conservation Commission has jurisdiction over the shoreline. Further complicating the issue is that Hammond Pond watershed lies in both Newton and Brookline. Other parties involved include The Chestnut Hill Shopping Center, whose parking lots drain directly into the Pond, and the Massachusetts Highway Department, which is responsible for the Route 9 drain that carries storm water from a section of Route 9 and the commercial area to the south.

While the best solution for Hammond Pond will take time to identify and to implement Friends of Hammond Pond has initiated several projects designed to improve conditions in and around the Pond and to increase public awareness. They have worked with the MDC to place an information kiosk to the left of the boat launching area and are currently helping MDC rangers gather information for three or four seasonal exhibits at the kiosk over the next year.

Another important project is a public education brochure which will be sent to all households and businesses within the watershed providing information on storm water and what individuals can do to minimize its effect on Hammond Pond. In conjunction with the brochure, Friends of Hammond Pond has sponsored a stenciling program, which will be undertaken by the fifth grade at Heath School this spring. This project will involve marking all storm drains within the Hammond Pond watershed with a no dumping warning.

Possible projects for the summer include involvement in an exhibition highlighting ponds in Brookline and Newton, and a program to identify and remove invasive plant species from Hammond Pond's shoreline. If anyone is interested in getting more information on Friends of Hammond Pond, becoming involved with one of our projects, or sharing knowledge of the Pond or expertise in wetland issues, please contact either Stephanie Bacon (734-2904) or Margie Greville (731-1014)

Master Plan for Houghton Garden

The Newton Conservation Commission has received two grants, one from the Massachusetts Historical Commission and the other from the Department of Environmental Management (DEM), with matching funds from the City of Newton and the Chestnut Hill Garden Club to preserve and rehabilitate the Houghton Garden. Gretchen Schuler, Newton's Preservation Planner, wrote the grant applications. The grants will cover the preparation of a Master Plan for the preservation of Houghton Garden, as well as the preparation of construction drawings, bid documents and a portion of the construction.

Houghton Garden is a lovely ten-acre woodland garden with paths overhung by azalea and rhododendron winding around a stream and lagoon-like pond. It is adjacent to the Spanish-mission style house at 152 Suffolk Road built in 1906 and contains the rock garden of Mr. & Mrs. Clement S. Houghton, who were avid, award-winning gardeners. A 1928 award citation from the Mass. Horticultural Society read, "The charm of these delightful gardens lies in the expert use of the natural plant growth and rock formations already existing on these grounds. One is impressed with the idea that plants are in the place intended for them by nature."

Sadly, much has changed since the garden's peak between the World Wars. After Mrs. Houghton's death in 1956, the garden was abandoned and the property subdivided. The beloved "wild garden" fell into decay as volunteer trees crowded out the original plantings and waterways silted up. The Chestnut Hill Neighborhood Association successfully fought off

an eminent-domain bid to take the property as a site for the Mass. College of Art. In 1968, Mayor Monte G. Basbas and the Newton Conservation Commission persuaded Newton to take nearly ten acres of the original garden by eminent domain as part of the Webster Conservation Area. The Conservators participated in a major clean-up of the garden in 1973 and the eastern 30,000 sq ft was added with the Conservators' help in 1979. Since then the Chestnut Hill Garden Club and the Conservation Commission have worked to preserve this naturally beautiful habitat. Nevertheless, dense shade, invasive plants, overgrown conifers and road pollutants have dramatically changed the garden.

Marian Pressley of Pressley Associates, a landscape architect and an expert in horticultural preservation, will prepare the master plan and oversee the work in progress. There will be a public meeting to discuss the many issues of the master plan with Pressley on Thursday, March 4, 1999 at 7:30 pm at the Church of the Redeemer in Chestnut Hill. All interested in the restoration of Houghton Garden are invited to attend.

Parks & Recreation News

by Michael Clarke

Procedure Suspended to Name Millennium

Park. The Newton Parks & Recreation Commission suspended its procedure for naming city parks so that it could immediately approve a proposal by the Newton2000 Fund. The Commission has named a passive recreation park to be constructed on the grounds of Newton City Hall "The Salvatore A. Balsamo Millennium Park" in honor of the major contributor to the park. The land surrounding City Hall is historically significant as one of the few Olmstead designs for a municipal building's grounds.

The procedure for naming public parks was instituted in 1994 so that special interest groups would be hindered from rushing names through without due consideration. While sitting as a member of the Parks and Recreation Commission, the co-chair of the Millennium2000 Committee, who is also a Director of the Millennium2000 Fund and was instrumental in garnering Mr. Balsamo's donation, moved to suspend the procedure and name the park. Some members of the Commission

objected to the suspension of the rule requiring a vote at the following meeting. A 5-2-1 majority of the Commission felt the design and fund raising tasks before the Millennium2000 Fund outweighed the normal benefit of considering the proposal until the next meeting. The motion to name the park then passed 5-2-1.

The Newton2000 Committee is holding a competition for the design of the Balsamo Millennium Park. A panel of design professionals, artists and community leaders, advised by city planners and construction employees, will review all ideas. People may buy bricks for \$100 with their names engraved; the bricks will be used in public walkways and paths in the City Hall vicinity. City officials hope the park will visually connect City Hall with the nearby Newton Free Library. Perhaps the winning design will also beautify the ugly parking lot on the south side of City Hall.

Mr. Salvatore Balsamo is a Dover resident and founder of the Newton-based TAC Worldwide Companies, a \$1 billion temporary help firm that employs 400 people on Oak Street in Newton. The *Newton Tab* reported that Balsamo said, "Newton has been very good to us. This was a huge opportunity to give something back. I think it's a great idea to have a park near City Hall for people to enjoy." In a separate, unanimous vote, the Commission expressed its thanks to Mr. Balsamo for his very generous donation of \$250,000 to create the Millennium Park.

At a subsequent meeting, the Commission unanimously voted a change in procedures that would require at least a two-thirds majority in order to set aside a standing written policy of the Commission.

\$50,000 Approved for Phase 2

Improvements to Forte Park. The Board of Aldermen has approved \$50,000 for design and construction plans for further improvements to Forte Park (formerly Allison Park) on the Charles River. Phase 2 improvements will include access lighting and landscaping at the entrance from California Street, an informal picnic area with tables, a bocce court, an exercise trail and multipurpose lighting for the soccer and softball fields and basketball court. There will also be a new sign for the entrance.

Albemarle Night Lighting and Press Box

Terry Morris canceled his presentation scheduled for January 25 of a proposal for lights and a two-story press box for the Albemarle Park baseball field on behalf of the Newton North Little League (NNLL). Despite the cancellation, the Board heard discussion by a number of abutters. A representative of the League of Women Voters also raised important issues. Most who spoke were steadfastly against the plan. Should NNLL present a formal proposal, which is not expected to happen before the Commission's March meeting, the Commission will follow its written policy regarding privately constructed structures on parklands. This involves presentation at an open meeting to which abutters have been invited, followed by a month of consideration and then a vote at a second meeting.

Tree and Turf Funds Approved

By Doug Dickson

The Board of Aldermen approved the Mayor's capital improvement budget request for \$150,000 of additional funds for the care of trees and turf. This money augments operating funds that have been constant over a period of years. Because of inflation, the effects of deferred maintenance, and the addition of trees and irrigated fields, the operating budget for tree and turf maintenance has actually lost ground over recent years.

For the last nine years, the operating budget for tree maintenance has stood constant at \$200,000. This amount covers all necessary tree removals (which average about 300 each year) and a small amount of pruning. Pruning is a key to maintaining the health and normal lifespan of street trees. Well-pruned trees are better able to withstand the ravages of wind, heavy snow and ice as well as infestations of disease and pests. The amount of storm damage Newton's street trees suffered in the April 1 storm two years ago demonstrated how severely backlogged our program of preservation pruning has become because of a lack of funds.

The additional money proposed by Mayor Cohen and approved by the Board will add \$50,000 this next year to preservation pruning. The Parks & Recreation Department is drawing up a plan to focus their efforts along streets with the worst record of street tree damage resulting from recent

storms. Another \$50,000 will go for planting of street trees to replace those that have been lost because of age, disease or construction conflicts.

The turf maintenance budget will be doubled with the addition of \$50,000. The number of acres of irrigated fields has more than doubled over the past seven years, during which time the operating budget has remained constant at \$50,000. These added funds would permit proper care of athletic fields, which are used intensively three seasons of the year. Proactive maintenance practices, using integrated pest management techniques, will ensure that these green spaces are available when needed for kids of all ages throughout the City.

2000 Trees by the Year 2000

By Doug Dickson

The Environmental Task Force of the Newton2000 Committee has selected a legacy project to be completed as part of the City's millennium celebration. This project has already stirred excitement among those who have helped shape it and promises to capture the imagination of many throughout our community.

By adding 2000 trees to the tens of thousands that line our streets, populate our parks and public spaces, and inhabit our yards, citizens will have an opportunity to affirm the health-giving benefits of these majestic plants. The beauty of our neighborhoods, village centers, institutions and open spaces will also be improved. From a focused effort over the next two years, we and those who follow us will benefit for a lifetime.

As an environmental project, there is little we could have conceived to create a more pervasive and lasting contribution. Trees reduce air pollution, conserve energy, control erosion and storm water runoff, limit noise, increase property values, provide aesthetic enjoyment, shelter and feed wildlife, and much more. On a return on investment basis, trees may be the most valuable asset any of us owns and may represent the best opportunity many of us will have to give something of real significance to our successors.

The 2000 trees will be planted on both private and public property. The Task Force envisions individuals, groups and businesses contributing to this goal in three ways: planting a tree they would

purchase, donating a sum for planting a tree to memorialize a person or occasion, or donating money to a fund for planting trees in public places. Planting will begin in 1999 and continue throughout the year 2000.

There will be many opportunities for promotional, educational, fundraising and other participation in this effort. A meeting is scheduled for March 2, 7:30-9:30 pm, at City Hall to organize small groups to tackle specific tasks. Please join this effort and feel good about helping to create a legacy for Newton's future.

Green Decade Environmental Series

The Newton Conservators, Inc., is co-sponsoring a lecture in the Green Decade's Environmental Speaker Series on March 22, at 7:00 pm, in the Newton Free Library. The featured speaker is Linda Weltner, Boston Globe columnist, author and leader of the Marblehead Cancer Prevention Project. Ms. Weltner has a website at <http://www.shore.net/~weltner/>. The lecture is titled: "Confessions of an Activist."

As part of the lecture, Lee Ketelson, NE Director of Clean Water Action will also discuss, "Organizing to Implement the Precautionary Principle". The Precautionary Principle states that when an activity raises threats of harm to human health or the environment, precautionary measures should be taken even if some cause and effect relationships are not fully established scientifically. In this context, the proponent of an activity, rather than the public, should bear the burden of proof. The process of applying the Precautionary Principle must be open, informed and democratic and must include potentially affected parties. It must also involve an examination of the full range of alternatives, including no action.

Membership Dues Reminder

If you haven't sent in your 1999 dues to the Newton Conservators, we ask you to please do so at your earliest convenience. Your dues make this Newsletter, our grants program, and all our work to preserve open space in Newton possible. So please give extra if you can. And thanks!

Ruth Misch

Many members of the Conservators were saddened to learn that Ruth Misch, a member of our Board from 1981-83 passed away in December. Our sincere condolences are extended to her husband and family.

Grants Program

By Bill Hagar and Bud Elliott

The Newton Conservators accepts grant proposals for monetary assistance for projects that complement the goals of the organization. This includes applications from schools, groups, or individuals for worthwhile projects in the environmental area. Requests may involve funds for such things as materials, equipment, books, speakers, transportation, publication and other necessities. The grants awarded are generally less than \$500, although larger grants will be given full consideration.

Quicken Volunteer

The Conservators are in need of some one with experience in using the checkbook/accounting program, Quicken, to help us update our books. If you would like to help, please contact Mike Collora at 964-3294 or mcollora@dwycollora.com.

Board of Directors Meetings

Members are welcome to attend the open meetings of the Board of Directors of the Newton Conservators, Inc. Meetings are usually on the fourth Wednesday of each month. The next meetings will be on Wednesday, Feb 24 and March 24 at 7:30 pm in Room 202, Newton City Hall.

The Newton: Conservators Newsletter

appears three or four times a year. President: Michael Clarke. Production: Bonnie Carter, 969-0686. We wish to thank the contributors to this edition of the **Newsletter**: Norman Richardson, Mike Clarke, Doug Dickson, Burton Elliott, Judy Hepburn and Stephanie Bacon.

Newton Conservators Early Spring Walks '99

Saturday, April 10, 11:00 AM
Canoe Trip on the Charles

The spring canoe trip up the Charles from Nahanton Park is set for Saturday, April 10 at 11:00 am. This is a leisurely paddle that explores a seldom-visited region of the Charles, which is essentially undisturbed by civilization. The broad wetlands are well populated with ducks, geese, blue herons and the occasional hawk or egret. You may want to bring binoculars. A favorite stop for lunch is the wooded Powell's island, which has some small, but surprising parklands and a wonderful view of the meandering Charles unmarred by buildings. The time is usually about 3 hours, but depends on the current and the interests of the group.

There are a limited number of canoes to borrow from Conservators or others. If you would like to join the trip, need a canoe or could loan a canoe, call the leader, Mike Clarke at 552-3624 or 965-5074. Bring lunch and dress for the weather.

Please Renew Your 1999 Membership Now!

If you haven't sent in your 1999 dues to the Newton Conservators, we ask you to please do so at your earliest convenience. Your dues make this Newsletter, our grants program, and all our work to preserve open space in Newton possible. So please give extra if you can. And thanks!

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Thank you for renewing your membership for 1999!

___ New Member

___ Renewal

Name _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Individual member	\$20
Family membership	\$25
Sustaining member	\$35
Donor	\$50
Patron	\$100
Additional Contribution	\$____
Total	\$____

Please make check payable to: **Newton Conservators, Inc.**

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Saturday, April 10, 11 AM *Canoe Trip on the Charles*

The spring canoe trip up the Charles from Nahanton Park is a leisurely paddle that explores a seldom-visited region of the Charles, essentially undisturbed by civilization. The broad wetlands are well populated with ducks, geese, blue herons and the occasional hawk or egret. You may want to bring binoculars. A favorite stop for lunch is the wooded Powell's Island, a glacial esker with some small but surprising spaces and a wonderful view of the meandering Charles. The time is usually about 3 hours, but depends on the current and the interests of the group. There are a limited number of canoes to borrow from Conservators or others. If you would like to join the trip, need a canoe or could loan a canoe, call the trip leader, Mike Clarke at 552-3624 or 965-5074. Bring lunch and dress for the weather.

Sunday, April 25, 2 PM *Kennard Park*

The completion of the new bog bridge inspires our return to Kennard Park, where a 32- acre post-agricultural forest has grown up on 19th century farmland that became an early 20th century gentleman's estate and finally a Newton park. Explore South Meadow Brook, the mixed and conifer woodlands with colonial stone walls, a red maple swamp with century old trees, and a sensitive fern marsh. Trip leader Judy Hepburn (964-1137).

Sunday, May 2, 2 PM *Hammond Pond - Webster Woods*

Visit a forest and wetland preserve containing a variety of native trees and shrubs, a red maple swamp, puddingstone ledge rock, and a bog which records climate and plant life for the last 12,000 years. Enter the mall off Hammond Pond Parkway (northbound) at Bloomingdale's and go left into the reservation parking lot, next to the pond. Leader: Lawrence Kaplan, ret. botanist from U-Mass Boston (527-3449).

Saturday, May 15, 8:30 AM *Birding and Habitat at Dolan Pond*

Back by popular demand. Though modest in size, the Dolan Pond Conservation Area has a reputation for attracting unusual or rare bird species during spring migration. Bring your binoculars and explore West Newton's "hidden gem" with birder Ted Kuklinski (332-7753) and ecologist Norm Richardson (964-8591). Park and meet at the entrance by the Webster Park circle, off Webster Street.

Sunday, May 16, 2 PM *Geology at Webster Conservation Area*

In the region of Webster Conservation Area known as "Gooch's Cave" most of the major rock types of the Boston area can be observed. Explore a place where 600 million years ago a mighty river poured out onto basin lowlands, lava flows oozed out of volcanoes and fissures, and just possibly glaciers slid down from surrounding mountain tops. Rev. Jim Skehan, S. J. of Boston College, author of *Geology of Newton* and the soon to be released *Roadside Geology of Massachusetts*. is our trip leader (552-8312). Park on the southbound side Hammond Pond Parkway by the entrance trail, shortly after you make the right turn from Beacon St. Be careful to pull entirely off the Parkway itself. Approx. 1 hour.

Sunday, June 6 at 2 PM *Aqueduct Walk: Newton's Linear Open Space*

Walk along the Sudbury & Cochituate Aqueducts, which runs behind backyards and through rarely visited pine woods and meadows. This is one of our most fascinating and unusual walks. Meet in the parking lot of the Waban MBTA Station. Leader: Peter Kastner (244-6094).

Thursday, June 10, 5:30 PM *Newest section of the Charles Riverwalk*

Walk the new one-mile section of greenway on the south bank of the Charles River in Waltham, between Farwell and Elm St. with MDC planner Dan Driscoll ((727-9693, ext. 268). We will see a new footbridge over the river by the Ames shopping center. At Elm Street we will go around buildings (eventually there will be a direct link to Moody St.) and up to Moody Street to look at new construction of the future Riverwalk links. Depending on time, we could continue walking on Riverwalk Park on the north bank between Moody St. and Prospect St. (a .5 mi. segment). (If we can create a car shuttle so that some cars can be at Moody St., we will increase the time we have for exploring additional areas). Meet at the new granite entry pillars on the west side of the Farwell/North St. Bridge in Waltham, where the cities of Watertown, Waltham and Newton intersect. Park in the west end of the Super Stop & Shop parking lot, which you can enter from either Farwell St. or Pleasant St.

