

Board of Directors, 1973-1974

President: H. Garrison Wilkes
Vice President: Sharon Francis
Secretary: Gisela Clark
Treasurer: Marilyn Murphy

Directors to 1974

Elizabeth Cushman
Deborah V. Howard
Joan Lerner
Robert Zeeb

John Heywood
Ernest Loewenstein
Norman H. Wolfe

Directors to 1975

Rochelle Alexander
Melvin I. Darack
Milton Rubin
Harold A. Mahon

Jan Cadwell
Betty Dyer
Ann Roesner

Directors to 1976

Thelma Fleishman
Richard Wilson
Phyllis Butler
Karla Karash

James Lewis
Sally Barnett
Helen Heyn
Scott Paradise

June 1973

Newton Conservators
Minutes of Board Meeting
June 20, 1973, 7 p.m.
Church of the Messiah, Auburndale

Present: 16 directors: Alexander, Barnett, Clark, Cushman, Fleishman, Francis, Howard, Karash, Lerner, Mahon, Murphy, Payne, Roesner, Rubin, Wilkes, Zeeb. 2 guests: Joy Kierstead, Judy Wechsler

Arboretum (7 p.m. to 8:07 p.m.). Big box of materials, large map, and thorough report demonstrate Rolce Payne's work. Discussion of: How to get more publicity? Which trees would be suitable? Which nursery to make bid? (Judy Wechsler: "Dogwoods grown in South will never make it here; trees grown locally better deal.") Labeling and mapping essential for arboretum. Benches and lighting near trees? (Mercury vapor lighting affects trees' life cycle, and attracts foliage-eating insects!). Money coming in from very diverse sources: Hendrick Fund, Mayor's Office, Centennial Fund, Sears Fund.

Meeting called to order 8:07 p.m. by President Wilkes. MOTION made seconded and unanimously AGREED ON:

- 1) Conservator Treasurer to handle Arboretum funds and acknowledge receipt of gifts; Conservators to furnish mailing.
- 2) Autonomous **Arboretum Committee**, headed by Ann Roesner, to make use of services offered by Judy Wechsler, Joy Kierstead, Andrea Wilson, Rolce Payne and others (who need not be Conservators). Liaison to Beautification Commission strongly recommended.

The Vale (Sally Barnet, Sharon Francis). City Planner has found 2 firms to appraise land, including Upham's land. Conservation Commission has restated position of April that city should acquire whole parcel. Unanimous agreement that a few people be firmly committed to attend July 2 Planning Board meeting (7:30 p.m., Room 202, City Hall). Cohen's planned subdivision involves no less than four different sewage disposal plans - one of them involves a long pipeline right through the Vale. Helen Heyn and Ann Roesner: "Conservators maintain their position that the city purchase the whole vale." Sharon Francis, while too involved to be able to vote on Planning Board, hopes Conservators will speak. She also points out that further fundraising is necessary.

Conservation Commission (Helen Heyn). September 6 is deadline set for aldermen for Conservation Commission Plan. City Planning Dept members will come to July 22 meeting. Various pressures on open space: WHDH in Upper Falls; land near Hemlock Gorge. MDC interested in bigger easement on Novitiate land.

Geology Booklet. Long discussion: do we charge, or do we give? Milton Rubin's idea of advertising booklet via Newsletter is liked. MOTION (by Debbie Howard) unanimously AGREED on that coupon in Newsletter shall give people a chance to write for free copy of booklet. Additional copies will be 50 cents.

Newsletter. Gratitude to Rochelle Alexander for tireless work, welcome to Joan Lerner, new editor. Long discussion: who should receive Newsletter free? It is felt: Conservators should educate city officials and city bodies in environmental concerns, thus money and effort would be well spent in assuring wide distribution.

Motions CARRIED unanimously:

- 1) elected officials (aldermen, representatives, senators) to receive Newsletter, also some appointed officials.
- 2) Membership Committee to draw up rather inclusive guidelines for mailing list.

Some ideas concerning Newsletter: check-off list for volunteers; more "profile" work. Upcoming election furnishes rich material for discussion of active involvement versus neutral attitude; and of various possibilities for some kind of action (sending questionnaire to candidates, giving people checklist of a few key questions to keep in mind when questioning candidates.) The **Charter and By-Law Question** (see minutes of March 27, April 11, May 9) continues to loom large in many Directors' minds.

Treasury: Mimi Murphy mentions multitude of different accounts. Separate **Sears Fund** account asked for and unanimously AGREED upon, Treasurer, it is made clear, is not responsible for making sure accounts gain best earnings. Her concern much appreciated, and more thinking and reorganizing of accounts problem to be done in the fall. Sharon Francis moves: Treasurer to get specific stationery with letterhead for acknowledging moneys received (receipts will help donors to declare tax-deductible donations). Unanimous APPROVAL.

"Past and Future." Call Garrison for access to Annual Report files, organized under headings like "Hammond Pond," "Pesticides", etc, and read about what's happened up to now.

Future: Garrison suggests that meetings every other month revolve around a "theme issue." This is eagerly agreed to.

Meeting adjourned about 10:30 p.m. Duration of meeting (including Arboretum discussion: 3 hours 50 minutes.

Next meeting: July 18, 1973

Meeting after next: Sept. 12, 1973

Gisela Clark,
Secretary

July 1973

Newton Conservators
Minutes of Board Meeting
July 18, 1973, 8 p.m.
Church of the Messiah, Auburndale

Present: 14 Directors: Alexander, Barnett, Butler, Clark, Cushman, Fleishman, Francis, Heyn, Heywood, Lerner, Mahon, Murphy, Roesner, Wilkes. 3 guests: Jerry Gardner, Dr. Kennard, Mrs. Sullivan. For the Newton Times: Priscilla Leith.

President Wilkes opened meeting at 8:12 p.m., reaffirming meetings will be open to public. Decisions will go back to Directors from Committees (for example, Directors can vote for Committee to proceed with issues like Vale). Agenda to be attached to Minutes for record.

Reports:

Open Space Conference. Sharon Francis: "My hope is that Conservators will be active in Open Space, and will see leads in the recommendations (published in the last Newsletter) from the Open Space Conference." Thelma Fleishman: "Can we go through

recommendations and decide what issues to tend to?" Pres. Wilkes: "If by election time we can have Open Space defined, formulate a concept of Open Space for the community, we will achieve something real." He suggested to focus on inventory of Open Space. Helen Heyn: "Would that be something other than what the Planning Department has?" Garrison Wilkes felt that to "stimulate public awareness" is important. Sharon Francis warned "not to repeat the Open Space Conference but to outline the Conservators' ideas, condense and affirm their goals."

The Vale (Sally Barnett). Planning Board decided on July 1: (1) recommendation to city to acquire Vale, (2) approval of subdivision with stringent condition regarding sewage. Joan Lerner moved to give some money for Vale. Sharon Francis felt that timing was important, that it would be wise to wait and use mechanism of a Special Meeting to act and vote an amount, should appraisal of Vale be quite high.

Arboretum. Not discussed in detail except for Arboretum Committee's liaison with "Urban Beautification Commission", whose name is already implying negative ideas. "Design Review Board" would express its function better.

Ordway Park (Sally Barnett). Ordway Committee to ask Chestnut Hill Mall developers to have rock hauled to park. Bronze plaque to cost 100 to 300 dollars.

Conservation Commission. Its Plan to be submitted to Aldermen Sept. 6. Important: Capital Improvement Program for 1973-78 may contain funds for Open Space! Sept. 10: City Planning will discuss Cons. Commission Plan. Question from Sharon Francis: "When can Plan become accessible to Conservators?" Discussion with different viewpoints about "When is Conservation Commission Plan a public document?" Joan Lerner felt "It is a public document right along."

The Plan is going from Helen Heyn to Debbie Howard, then to Alderman Jackson.

Chestnut Street. Road improvement had been on books since '69. No response from people till tags appeared on trees. Garrison Wilkes: "We should be aware of some of these road things." Gisela Clark suggests establishing courtesy tradition (city to notify Conservators before any trees get cut down). No decisions.

City Hall. Thelma Fleishman briefly raised question: What should Conservators' role be at City Hall?

No announcements.

VOTE for **Treasury**: (unanimous) for **safety deposit box** at Newton Waltham Bank. Key to be kept by Treasurer.

What Conservators Can and Cannot Do Under By-Laws

President Wilkes:

"By-Laws per se are not the problem, but the state charter and the Internal Revenue Service. Kelly McLintock and Sandra Dawson, both lawyers at Conservation Law Foundation, have pointed out that:

We can do anything within administrative decision (Mayor, Public Works, Conservation Commission).

We can appear at legislative functions at their request. If you wish to speak, have an alderman ask you to speak.

We cannot affect a legislative decision; that would constitute a lobbying act...

Newsletter is directed at Members, therefore we can say just about anything in it.

Newspapers...we can report in the third person. Reporters can write about us...

I want to make clear the framework...I am not throwing this open to discussion. We have an obligation, the Ordway. We have to be honest to that gift...There is much to be done...people should be thrashing out modes of action and then come back."

Sharon Francis: "Did Conservation Commission exist when Conservators were founded? What is the relation between the two?" Helen Heyn: Conservators could receive smaller parcels (maybe under cluster ordinance), Conservation Commission larger parcels of Open Space. Garrison Wilkes: "The two bodies are mutually supportive."

Committees:

A. **Open Space Committee** and **Land Use Committee**. Pres. Wilkes proposed that this discussion be apart from the general meeting.

Harold Mahon: How about a definite timetable for acquisition, concrete plans? A plan that would not jeopardize the Conservators' status. Thelma Fleishman: each Newsletter might contain photo or map of endangered Open Space. Garrison Wilkes: Open Space Committee to have master plan of tactics by Sept./October. Thelma Fleishman rejected getting involved in politics. Mahon: Committee should discuss all the possible alternatives. A group outside Conservators could carry out activities that are not agreeable to all Conservators Directors.

Sharon Francis felt that Garrison Wilkes' idea of an October Open Space meeting (public meeting) was excellent. She will be Chairman of the Open Space Committee. Garrison Wilkes suggested written report (master plan) for Directors' use before meeting. Difference between Open Space and Land Use Committees as outlined by Sharon Francis, Helen Heyn, Garrison Wilkes:

Open Space Committee: concern about acquisition of undeveloped land. High priority on mapping out acquisition goals and strategies.

Land Use Committee: response to and concern with zoning changes, historic districts, etc.

Joan Learner: 1973 being a crucial year for solid waste management, Land Use Committee could be very important.

B, **Water Committee**. Will be headed by Thelma Fleishman (flood plain zoning, brooks, streams -- excluding Charles, which is under MDC.)

C. **Streets and Trees** (and pesticide use). Will be followed by Debbie Howard.

D. **Environmental Education**. Sharon Francis: Should membership be able to join committees via Newsletter? Could Board take telephone poll of membership: (a) what committees members would like to see, (2) what committees members would like to work on.

Elizabeth Cushman: Let us urge members to come. Sally Barnett: Telephone poll on trial basis; personal contact effective. **Walks in the fall** to be continued.

Other business. Letter from Alderman Magni requesting Conservator response to problem of shopping carts abandoned in park land, on river banks, etc. Sharon Francis moved the letter be answered "Conservators endorse ordinance outlined by Ald. Magni."

Meeting adjourned 10:12 p.m. Duration of meeting: 2 hours.

Next meeting: September 12, 1973

Gisela Clark,
Secretary

September 1973

Newton Conservators
Minutes of Board Meeting
September 13, 1973

Present: 15 Directors: Alexander, Barnett, Butler, Clark, Dyer, Fleishman, Heyn, Howard, Lerner, Lewis, Mahon, Paradise, Roesner, Rubin, Wilkes

Meeting opened at 8:10 p.m. President Wilkes restated **policy regarding Minutes**. Minutes to be mailed to Directors as soon as possible after meetings. Any corrections and addenda to be sent in writing to Secretary.

The two-hour meeting revolved about **Open Space in Newton**. Sharon Francis, Chairman of Conservators' Open Space Committee, reported on work done so far, expressing the hope that more people will join the Committee (notice in Newsletter to draw attention to it).

Two plans regarding open Space in Newton:

(1) **Newton Recreation Commission Plan.**

Only one piece recommended for acquisition: Allison Park. Other pieces (Pine St. Dump, Turner Terrace, Crescent St. area) not yet accessible. Recreation Commission interested in improving existing areas rather than acquiring new ones. Garrison Wilkes and Ann Roesner felt that apparently tennis players wanting courts lit at night had made themselves heard better than other Newton residents. However, Dr. Levine (Recr. Comm.) seems interested in land acquisition, and Alderman Dietz caused the Recr. Comm. to be directed to come back to City Planning with plan for acquisition. Ann Roesner: "We could influence the Recreation Commission." Sharon Francis: "Commissioner Penney seemed intrigued by our interest...The city may need raising of public awareness..."

An animated discussion about Crystal Lake was deferred to a later meeting by Pres. Wilkes, so that Sharon Francis could report further on.

(2) **Conservation Commission Plan.**

"The 24 items recommended for acquisition were excellent vital items." (Sharon Francis). The Conservation Commission left moot the question of the golf courses when talking to the Aldermen: it is tied to Ed Richmond's proposed major parcel ordinance, cluster zoning, PUD (which City Planner Charles Thomas says "is still two years away" (Joan Lerner). It was felt that 15% Open Space was certainly not enough (Garrison Wilkes: "Has anyone considered wetlands plus 15%?"). Thelma Fleishman: Planning Committee will discuss major parcel ordinance and cluster zoning on Oct. 15, then issue goes to Land Use. Garrison Wilkes: "Is there any sense in the city government that more building will cost more than preserving Open Space?" Harold Mahon: Subcommittee to research economics of development; he and Scott Paradise will look into this question. Sharon Francis: "In Virginia, cluster zoning did not work out; very poor land was left over." Garrison Wilkes: Thelma Fleishman and Rochelle Alexander to write brief review for Newsletter on cluster zoning. Open Space Committee to review Major Parcel issue before next Board Meeting.

Recommendations of Open Space Committee

Much dialogue necessary before Conservators should take stand on what should be recommended. There is latent public support. However, candidates running for public office are not yet sensitized to OS issues. Amount of public knowledge is inadequate.

Therefore: public education opportunities are important for Conservators. Specific proposals of the OS Committee include:

- 1) Informative attractive **pamphlet** about outdoor opportunities in Newton. City to underwrite cost of publication and distribution. Debbie Howard: "Very fluid concept at this moment; a pamphlet that is cheap to produce." Garrison Wilkes: "Why not get started with, for example, a sheet on Crystal Lake with next Newsletter?" Helen Heyn: "Map with green areas like the one published about Wellesley."
- 2) Three **bus tours**, sponsored by Conservators, focusing on North, South, Charles River. Tours to be announced in Newsletter and press: Oct. 14, Oct. 28, Nov. 11. Recreation Dept. bus holding 40 people.
- 3) **Photography contest** with sponsored prizes (photographs taken at different times of the year.)
- 4) Making people aware of **activities** (camping overnight, bird watching, rock-climbing, Drumlin Farm in Newton) rather than just space.
- 5) **Caretakers for Open Space** (retired people).
- 6) **Environmental Questions for election candidates**. Draft of questions was discussed briefly. Opinions varied as to dissemination of responses to questions. Conservators Newsletter only (Thelma Fleishman), Newton newspapers. Helen Heyn's suggestion that a group of individuals sign but that Conservators not appear in papers offered what was felt to be good compromise.

Open Space Committee will be ready for a general presentation at Oct. 10 meeting chaired by Sharon Francis

Announcements:

- 1) Interested in pamphlet "Environmentsl Resource"? Write to Mass. Dept. of Natural Resources, 100 Cambridge St., Boston, Mass. 02202. Interested in "Massachusetts Profile"? Write to Executive Dept., State House, Boston, Mass. 02133.
- 2) Anyone who wants use of League office equipment to check with Joan Lerner.
- 3) Sears Fund to be discussed at Oct. 10 meeting.
- 4) Conservators will meet in the Church of the Messiah, Auburndale, at 8 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month. The October 10 meeting will begin at 7:30 for discussion with Thelma Fleishman on cluster zoning and PUD (to be discussed at Oct. 15 Planning Committee at City Hall).

Meeting adjourned at 10:15 P.M. Duration of meeting: 2 hours 5 minutes.

Gisela Clark, Secretary

October 1973

Newton Conservators
Meeting of Board and Open Meeting
October 10, 1973

Present at Special Meeting at City Hall at 5 p.m.: Directors Barnett, Butler, Dyer, Fleishman, Francis, Heyn, Lerner, Mahon, Andrea Wilson for Richard Wilson.

Discussion of Cluster Zoning, 5 p.m. to 6:30 (Secretary unable to attend).

Discussion of Major Parcel Ordinance.

Developer would get bonus of increased density on a scale worked out by Planning Dept. Disadvantages of Major Parcels Ordinance:

- 1) Double bonus would increase population density.
- 2) Designation of open space would be left to developer.
- 3) 15% open space is a very low figure.
- 4) Minimum lot sizes do not offer anything better than cluster zoning.
- 5) Wetlands would fall to open space credit, thereby reducing useable open space considerably.
- 6) No definite time limit up to which land remains in hands of developer.

Lively discussion touched on low income housing vs. open space, mixture of structures under Planned Unit Development, rezoning before PUD could be worked out. "Major Parcels should not be rezoned before PUD; cluster zoning could be used in the interim." (Sharon Francis). "We want the option kept...land should go to Park and Recreation Department rather than Public Works as presently...Conservation Commission should be consulted at some point regarding Open Space...we want a time limit...find out if this is possible and legal..." (Thelma Fleishman).

Public hearing Monday (Oct. 15) before Land Use Committee: Harold Mahon to communicate Conservators' ideas regarding cluster zoning. Sally Barnett to communicate ideas regarding Major Parcel Ordinance.

Open Space Meeting

Present: Directors mentioned above, and Directors Cushman, Howard, Lowenstein, Murphy, Roesner, Wilkes Zeeb. Guests: Mr. Frisoli (Ward IV), Mr. Gross (Ward VI), Mrs. Schur (Ward V), Mrs. Sheehan (Ward VI), Mr. Upham.

President Wilkes welcomed guests. Open Space Committee Sharon Francis summarized accomplishments of Conservation Commission, Recreation Commission, Conservators. Slides shown by Debbie Howard and Helen Heyn illustrated focal points for open space efforts. Both Pres. Wilkes and Ethel Sheehan stressed need for quiet, restful open space, and the following general ideas were articulated:

- 1) "Instead of thinking of Open Space as real estate, we are thinking of activities not taken care of in Newton yet." (Sharon Francis)
- 2) It would be highly desirable to eliminate in people's minds the distinction between recreation land and conservation land: people are apt to feel that conservation land is not accessible to them. (Debbie Howard)
- 3) It would be highly desirable to reach adults and arouse their concern regarding open space.

The specific Open Space Committee Recommendations were discussed and somewhat expanded during a lively discussion.

- 1) Information pamphlet distribution through: library, banks, PTAs
- 2) Bus tours: Conservators to bring friends along who don't know about Newton's open spaces.
- 3) Photography contest to stress various activities. Photos to be exhibited in places like the library, whose active Camera Club could sponsor contest (Debbie Howard), and in places like the Academy Cinema, a place crowded with people in their leisure time (Ernest Lowenstein).
- 4) Possible activities could include hiking by the Charles, bicycling on Commonwealth Avenue on Sundays, kite-flying (Joan Lerner, Sally Barnett).
- 5) One approach to focussing adult people's interest on OS was mentioned by Susan Schur and Debbie Howard: offering PTAs a program (possibly a slide show or a talk).

A brief report from Helen Heyn on status of Charles River Road Foundation study (supposed to go to City Planning June 74) and Capital Improvement recommendations (see Newsletter, Oct. 73) concluded the meeting.

Gisela Clark, Secretary

November 1973

Newton Conservators
Minutes of Board Meeting
November 14, 1973
Church of the Messiah, Auburndale

Present: 13 Directors: Barnett, Cadwell, Clark, Cushman, Fleishman, Francis, Howard, Lerner, Loewenstein, Mahon, Murphy, Paradise, Roesner.

Meeting opened at 8:17, chaired by Sharon Francis, President Wilkes being out of town.

Addenda to Last Minutes: Due to an oversight on Secretary's part, Mrs. Heyn's name had not appeared in last minutes' "Directors present" list. Secretary called Mrs. Heyn on Oct. 25 on receipt of Mrs. Heyn's memo indicating absence of her name and informed Mrs. Heyn that this oversight would be corrected.

Membership/Mailing Problems: A few members don't receive Newsletter when address is handwritten -- post office does not forward bulk mail. Thelma Fleishman will ask Rochelle Alexander to continue to type out stencils. Sharon Francis will ask her to teach technique to whoever will type stencils in the future. Dues renewal notices to go out shortly to members.

Treasurer's Report (Mimi Murphy): There are about \$2000 in Savings, \$990 in checking account. Board decided Treasurer and Secretary should each keep a key to Safety Deposit Box. Ordway Account: \$20,000 dollars was bequeathed. \$5,000 in a working account, now down to about \$3000 due to publication of geology booklet. Remainder earned about \$500 interest. Funds for Webster Vale now about \$1700. Conservators' expenses come mostly from postage and Newsletter.

Suggestion from Ernest Loewenstein: Geology booklet could be offered in Newton bookstores in Xmas season.

New Business: Sally Barnett: Planning Dept. is asking how previous letters concerning Federal Funds had been worded.

Webster Vale (Sally Barnett). April: Conservation Commission, Conservators supported city acquisition of Vale. May: Mayor requested funds for appraisal, Aldermen voted funds. September: City received appraisals - Mayor does not reveal them - they seem to range from \$60,000 to \$100,000 dollars, according to Aldermen David Cohen and Crosby. Debbie Howard: In mid-October, the entire Conservation Commission went to see Mayor Mann, stating that they were unequivocally behind total acquisition of Vale and did not want to accept anything less. Questions of sewage, what portion of land city would acquire, public access to Vale were raised. Robert Cohen has bought a house elsewhere in Newton in the meantime. Mayor mentioned Webb lots, public access to Vale from west side.

Motion (from Ann Roesner, seconded by Ernest Loewenstein): If the Mayor's proposal does not support the best interest of the Conservation Commission's recommendations, the Conservators will not support his proposal. If the Mayor's proposal supports the best interests of the Conservation Commission's recommendations, the Conservators would support the Mayor's proposal.

Motion was discussed at some length. Various points were raised, like possible public hearings, and could we speak there; could Aldermen send something back to Mayor; the Vale itself to be ultimate line of defense, with lots 3 and 4 constituting key lots (Sharon Francis); Cohen's financial position possibly not being up to ambitious building plans.

Eventually it was felt that Conservators would be supporting an official body - the Conservation Commission - and the motion was ACCEPTED unanimously.

Brooks of Newton: City Planning (Thelma Fleishman). Alderman McGrath is petitioning to have brook near Pine St. dump covered. Corp of Engineers is urging local authorities to acquire books for flood control.

Last Land Use Committee meeting Dec 10: item on docket should be covered before end of year, but as Towers, NCDF, cluster zoning and major parcels would all have to be discussed in one evening, a working meeting before that date would be most helpful.

Open Space. Debbie Howard: Would Board want to sponsor another Open Space Conference, should it want to spend money on it? Has anybody ideas for it?

Open Space **bus tours** attracted about 100 people.

Sharon Francis: The recent **Woodland Golf Course** problem shows once more how Conservators should be vigilant, recommend procedures for saving Open Space, get Mayor's attention. It appears that city can buy land and rent it for only 5 years (Thelma Fleishman). "There has been a proposal for meetings between golf course directors, aldermen, mayor." (Debbie Howard). Discussion of development rights and easements: Ernest Loewenstein: "Sandra Dawson might talk to us about eminent domain. Could we invite her to December Board meeting?" Conservation Commission is going to invite someone from the Conservation Law Foundation, as assessors in Newton should understand conservation restriction procedure. Possibly a joint meeting could be arranged.

Motion made, seconded and ACCEPTED: Letter signed by Sharon Francis written to Mayor, thanking him for his active leadership in the Woodland Golf Course issue and offering the services of the Conservators.

Solid Waste. Public Works Committee headed by Ald. McDonnell is discussing solid waste. Special committee includes at this time Ald. David Cohen, Ernest Loewenstein, Betsey Lewenberg.

Newsletter: Joan Lerner asked members of Board to bring items of interest to Board meetings, and mentioned that Angier School has reprinted material from Newsletter.

Arboretum: (Ann Roesner). First tree was planted Nov. 3 -- National Arbor Day in April more trees will be planted. It is hoped city will provide watering.

Meeting adjourned at 10:10 p.m. Duration of meeting: about 2 hours.

Gisela Clark, Secretary

December 1973

Newton Conservators
Minutes of Board Meeting

December 19, 1973, 7:30 - 8 PM
Church of the Messiah, Auburndale

Present: 13 Directors: Barnett, Clark, Francis, Heyn, Howard, Lerner, Mahon, Murphy, Paradise, Roesner, Rubin, Wilkes, Wilson; guest: Mr. Roesner; attending Conservation Commission meeting also Mrs. Butler.

Brief discussion of various subjects that Conservators have worked on in the past (land use, Conservators' loss is Conservation Commission's gain. Thelma Fleishman has been appointed to Newton's Cons. Commission) or should be working on (energy). Pres. Wilkes felt it would be appropriate to take a look at these in the spring and outlined **tentative goals** for next few meetings: January 9, a look at Webster Vale and Friends of the Vale; perhaps Energy at March meeting and finalized Open Space report in April; and "Social Value of Open Space" at May or June meeting.

Sharon Francis pointed out: work on the Vale has consumed energies; next tasks would be making inventory of all open land in city and sponsoring (in cooperation with City Planning Dept.) a study of economics of development versus preserving open space in Newton.

Joan Lerner suggested Conservators develop some sort of program in connection with **Earth Day** (April 22).

Solid waste: Max Bluestone, who is not a Conservator, seems willing to work on the problem.

Geology booklet: some bookstores carry it. Best sale was made in school system (about 1000).

From 8 p.m. onwards, Conservator Directors attended Conservation Commission meeting, where Mrs. Alexandra Dawson of the Conservation Law Foundation spoke on **assessing policies and procedures with respect to land affected by conservation restrictions.**

Apparently the current situation is extremely vague and confusing. The Internal Revenue Service, the logical body to supply guidelines, does permit tax deduction for conservation easement. But as value has to be related to re-assessment, this poses a problem for both donor and assessor. The question of investment value versus actual value arises. A total restriction on the land would reduce land to "nominal value". On the other hand, under a so-called "betterment theory," assessment would go down for Open Space, up for houses surrounding it; and many assessors feel this is unfair. Some cities and towns in Massachusetts have handled the problem in various ways. (Sudbury, for example, called some land "unbuildable" and assessed it so: such a category, or even better a set percentage, might be helpful for a city). But a lot of cities have not come to grips with the problem at all.

A more thorough and informed summary of Mrs. Dawson's briefing may be consulted at City Hall: the Conservation Commission Minutes by Mrs. Heyn, which are on record at Mr. Karlin's office.

Gisela Clark, Secretary

January 1974

Newton Conservators
Jan. 9, 1974, 8 p.m.
Church of the Messiah, Auburndale

Present: Directors Barnett, Clark, Paradise, Wilkes, and Mrs. Susan Wilkes. (Carpools and skis were used to get to this meeting! Mrs. Butler came by and brought Conservator mail.)

Ordway Park: It was felt that Helen Heyn's suggestion (her memo of Jan. 5 [for bronze plaque]) should be OK'ed right away, so that Ordway Park could be marked. Sally Barnett raised question of taxes on Ordway, and the park's future: should an easement be established soon, would Newton accept the land as a park and keep it that way?

Norumbega: Scott Paradise felt that this should be discussed next time. On Dec. 5, the Norumbega Association wrote a letter to Conservation Commission regarding city acquisition of Norumbega land. This letter, attached to the Commission's minutes, is on public record, and President Wilkes suggested that it be published in the next Newsletter, together with a map. Also, the Conservators' Open Space committee made a statement to the cons. Commission regarding Norumbega.

Open Space: Committee is meeting Wednesday, Jan. 16, 8 a.m. at Sally Barnett's house to discuss criteria to evaluate Open Space. Susan Wilkes, who is doing an Open Space report for Medford's Conservation Commission, has been gathering important data and is working with Charles Thomas. She is going to summarize material regarding economics of open space vs. development for Newsletter.

Conservation Commission: In April, the term of at least one Conservation Commissioner is expiring. The Newton Times editorial of January 2, 1974 stated that "The aldermen have...let the commission know that a militant conservation approach is one to which they are prepared to be sympathetic," and "that politically motivated aldermen were more idealistic than a supposedly non-political group of conservation leaders". President Wilkes directed Secretary to draft statement for Newsletter, asking Conservator members to give thought as to whom they would like to see on the Conservation Commission, and to write to President Wilkes or to Secretary, and also present suggestion to the Mayor.

Agenda for February Meeting: Open Space Committee to give a half-hour presentation regarding Norumbega. President Wilkes will invite Norumbega Assn. To next

Conservator meeting. Decision about Vale money to be made (People who have donated money will be invited to meeting.).

Item for Agenda in March: President Wilkes will invite the new Public Works Director to talk to Conservators in March.

Meeting adjourned 9 p.m.

Gisela Clark, Secretary

February 1974

Newton Conservators
Minutes of Board Meeting
Feb. 13, 1974, 8 - 10 p.m.
Church of the Messiah, Auburndale

Present: Directors Barnett, Butler, Clark, Cushman, Dyer, Francis, Heyn, Howard, Lerner, Mahon, Roesner, Rubin, Wilkes, Wilson and Mrs. Wilson. Members of Norumbega Association and Friends of the Vale.

Report on Trail Easement near Braeburn/Woodland: Sharon Francis reported that Open Space Committee has written note to Aldermen regarding easement for a trail (12 feet wide) through Life Care Center property, in the hope of public access and public use of golf courses in the future, and in the hope of setting a precedent on such easements.

Ordway: Conservator Directors received three-page memo from Mrs. Heyn regarding Ordway Park (memo attached to Minutes for the record). Memo explains in detail the legal obligation of the city to keep Ordway as a park, no matter what should happen to Conservators Inc.

Webster Vale: History of Vale outlined by Mrs. Heyn: how by spring '73 it was clear Vale was in danger, how Conservation Commission had recommended that entire Vale be taken by the city. Houses to west of Vale have access to sanitary sewer; all houses on Madoc St. will connect to sewer system if need should arise. Cons. Commission is working with Dr. Caldwell (BU). There will be estimate on drainage. President Wilkes showed sketch of Vale and explained drainage.

Sally Barnett summarized history of "Friends of the Vale," how people gave money with the understanding the whole Vale was to be purchased. The city was offered \$2500 (Sharon Francis, Chairman, Friends of the Vale); this offer was never paid any attention to. Sharon Francis mentioned three suggestions for use of the money: 1) gift to the city, 2) trail improvements on Webster site, 3) Open Space account for other open space in city, or for other necessary campaigns to save open space. The third suggestion was felt to be excellent. Richard Wilson suggested that consensus should be written up in

Newsletter. Anyone with other thoughts could contact Pres. Wilkes. Decision to be made at next Board meeting.

Norumbega: Pres. Wilkes welcomed members of Norumbega Association (Mr. and Mrs. Lieberman, Mr. and Mrs. Sullivan). Mr. Sullivan's presentation, maps, slides and ample background material illustrated vividly what the loss of another outstanding piece of open space would mean to the city. (Norumbega Assn's materials attached to Minutes for the record). Mrs. Heyn invited everyone to Conservation Commission meeting February 20, as Mr. Giezentanner was going to brief Cons. Comm. on the mapping of Charles River frontage in Newton (His recommendations to be presented May 30; besides, on April 25, the Waltham Cons. Comm. will present their river plan: War Memorial Auditorium).

Norumbega Association felt their concern was mainly for the parcel north of Commonwealth Ave. While Ald. David Jackson was helpful in drawing up a petition, Congressman Drinan pointed out that Newton has to show real interest first. It is to be hoped the city will add Norumbega to list of land acquisitions under CIP (Capital Improvement Program). Present assessed value of the land: \$80,000. Sharon Francis: retain zoning first, not talk about acquisition as yet. Pres. Wilkes: Open Space Committee is making inventory of Open Space in Newton; Conservators were unable to take stand on Norumbega right now.

Salt: Letter from city not encouraging (see Mrs. Wilson's report in Times' "letters to the editor"), suggesting from Sharon Francis to approach aldermanic Public Works Committee.

Meeting adjourned at 10 p.m.

G. Clark, Secretary

March 1974

Newton Conservators
Minutes of Board Meeting,
March 13, 1974
Church of the Messiah, Auburndale

Present: Directors Butler, Clark, Darack, Dyer, Heyn, Lerner (with husband Ed Lerner), Lewis, Mahon, Murphy, Paradise, Roesner, Rubin, Wilkes

Sears Fund. (agenda item 1). Pres. Wilkes suggested that \$1000 to \$2000 per year go towards management and care of land in Newton, which led to a lively discussion. Should not some money go toward acquisition of very threatened open space, which would bring publicity and attention to Conservators' efforts? (Mahon). There are various pieces of land in Newton which are valuable from conservation point of view, for example near playing field at Newton South High, without street frontage, whose price

the city finds too high (Heyn). MOTION for bringing Sears Fund up to \$1000 for Arboretum trees AGREED TO.

Agenda item 2. Unanimous VOTE: \$2500 borrowed in 1973 from **Ordway account** (for printing of geology booklet) to be paid back from our other holdings, and any money coming in from sale of booklet to go into active working account.

Treasurer's Report (agenda item 3). Treasurer Mimi Murphy has checked out various banks, and her written report (attached to Minutes) was discussed. Director Heyn MOVED to accept treasurer's report; motion CARRIED unanimously. Pres. Wilkes noted there would be 3 term accts. of \$5000, the rest in accts. of \$1000; with checking account at \$700 and savings account at \$3000. This money set aside for use, not for saving up.

Webster Vale Fund (agenda item 4). No calls or letters came in opposing last meeting's suggestion; unanimous VOTE to apply Vale funds to an open space account.

Report on **energy conservation** by Milton Rubin (agenda item 5). Ed Richmond, Public Buildings Committee Chairman, has presented resolution that prior to building or altering a building, developer should submit energy impact statement. Rubin talked to committee for about 15 minutes. Although aldermen (apparently mostly conservative on this issue) did not vote for the resolution, there might be important federal and state bills requiring energy impact statements. How about incentives and regulations regarding energy conservation in older buildings? (Paradise). Lively discussion. Milton Rubin: public education very important; one would have to look at the broad picture for the future.

Wellesley Office Park (agenda item 6), report from Mrs. Heyn. Mrs. Heyn summarized from her Wellesley Office Park file, which is quite extensive by now, as troubles started in 1969, when Wellesley Selectmen and Wellesley Conservation Commission were not helpful, and the Beacon Construction Co. bought a lot which has affected Newton's flood plain ever since. However, on March 4, Newton Aldermen's resolution of 1971 was improved, and a new resolution drawn up in addition. (See also "Other Business, d)", p. 2 of these minutes).

Arboretum (agenda item 7) from Ann Roesner. See agenda item 1 regarding Sears Fund. In connection with discussion of funds for trees, the question of preserving open space in Newton again came up, and open space is so manifestly in danger and the idea of the Arboretum has not generated that much public enthusiasm (Joan Lerner). On the other hand, Betty Dyer felt "concern about the credibility of Newton Conservators if Arboretum and Sears Fund are not followed through."

Discussion turned to **National Arbor Day**, April 26, and plans of Arboretum Committee to have tree planting ceremony (Ann Roesner). Apparently, the city is willing to take good care of trees. Hardy trees only to be considered (Wilkes); Forestry Dept. of City could donate trees (Lewis). Discussion about guarantee for trees.

Open Space Committee (agenda item 8). Sharon Francis was not present, but Pres. Wilkes asked directors to authorize her to spend about \$100 on preparation, mailing, etc. of Open Space materials (Unanimous "AYES"), and mentioned public Open Space May meeting (to be preceded by Directors' meeting).

Joan Lerner reported that there were to be more field trips (about 4 of them) and 8 to 10 more meetings of the OS Committee before May. Open space to be evaluated on a point system of 100 points. What will the priority system regarding OS be? (Paradise). There will be 2 categories: (1) the biggest 5 - 10 pieces of property that should be kept open; (2) some properties about which we could do something acting alone (Pres. Wilkes).

Other business:

- a) **Business address:** Conservators must have business address, in other words, a post office box is not sufficient.
- b) Question to consider: Are trust officers of banks aware of possible land donations when people make wills? (Butler)
- c) Beautification Commission (Harry Francis) would like to know about Mass. Horticultural Society/Webster Estate question.
- d) Motion to give \$1000 to Save the River was discussed, with Dir. Darack feeling strongly that such action was well within the bounds of the purpose of this organization, and Mrs. Heyn opposed to contributing any money to anything relating to litigation (like Save the River lawyer fees). "Are we willing to donate money to causes in the public good?" (Darack). "We have never given any substantial amounts to efforts that we have not initiated, or to organizations that are not directly connected with the city." (Wilkes). Issue was felt to need much further thought, the motion was WITHDRAWN. However, in connection with Wellesley Office Park (see agenda item 6), the Directors VOTED to reiterate Conservators' statement of December 1971, especially to Secr. Foster, and Pres. Wilkes will inform Directors about this issue at a later date.

Meeting adjourned at 10:30
(Duration of meeting 2 hours 10 min.)

Gisela Clark, Sec'y

April 1974

Newton Conservators
Minutes of Board Meeting
April 10, 1974, 8 p.m.
Church of the Messiah, Auburndale

Next Meeting: May 8, Church of the Messiah (Auburndale), 8 p.m. This is an important meeting. After a 15-minute presentation on 3 natural water systems in the area, the **Open Space Committee** will present its report to the Conservators Board of Directors. At the May meeting, Directors' input and endorsement would be key issues. The public meeting in June would then be a hearing rather a presentation (Pres. Wilkes).

Present: Directors Butler, Clark, Cushman, Heyn, Paradise, Mahon, Roesner, Wilkes.

Meeting opened at 8:55.

Arboretum: On April 26, 14 trees will be put in! Leather book in Mayor's office lists labels of trees. Invitations will go out for the tree-planting ceremony.

There is a possibility that Arnold Arboretum can give us a tree some time to replace the vandalized tree.

Ordway: On April 18, there is a final hearing on Ordway account in Probate Court.

Save the River once more generated lively discussion, but no formal vote was taken on Conservators' contributing money to this and similar causes.

Treasurer's Request: Treasurer Mimi Murphy had called Director Cushman and requested that her written report be included in the April minutes (see copy attached) and that the March minutes be amended to read, under "Agenda item 3: "Pres. Wilkes noted there would be 3 term accounts of \$5000, and rest in accounts of \$1000...."

Mimi Murphy feels that every 3 months, financial report should be included in minutes.

The Directors VOTED unanimously that the President's home address should be the **official address of Newton Conservators, Inc.**

Postal Stamp. Dir. Cushman brought up the question of the non-profit postal stamp. Pres. Wilkes will look into this.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:30 with Pres. Wilkes thanking Treasurer Mimi Murphy in absentia for her efforts, and pointing out the importance of the May meeting (Open space committee's report following Susan Wilkes' report).

(Duration of meeting: 35 minutes).

Gisela Clark, Secretary

May 1974

Newton Conservators
Minutes of Board Meeting,

May 8, 1974, 8 p.m.
Church of the Messiah, Auburndale

Present: Directors Barnett, Butler, Clark, Cushman, Francis, Heyn, Lerner, Loewenstein, Mahon, Murphy, Paradise, Rubin, Wilkes and Mr. Bluestein, Mr. Brandwine, Susan Wilkes.

Pres. Wilkes opened the meeting at 8:25.

- I. **Newton Watersheds.** Mrs. Susan Wilkes presented an extremely interesting report on "Natural Systems Analysis" in Newton, the report being one result of a course she has attended at Boston University. Various colorful maps showed watersheds, soil types, areas not yet urbanized, slopes, present land use. There were various overlay maps providing tools for "predicting" what kind of development would be possible, and what consequences it would imply, and also for demonstrating "defensible open space" in Newton (diversity being one good reason).

Among some exciting ideas relating to open space was:

- a) the idea of "environmental corridors" (the Charles River corridor being the most obvious one), which in Newton would go in North/South direction, intersecting with aqueducts which go east/west.
- b) culverted streams could be uncovered and provide attractive areas.

One overlay map showed what lands are protected under the flood plain zoning ordinance, and consideration of soil in flood plain shows how much land is practically not buildable on. The fact that our school yards are quite wet and full of muck and peat drew chuckles, and also sighs of relief. Muck and peat has to be excavated in order to be built on...

II. Other business:

- 1) **Ordway account:** \$20,000 is recorded with bank in one four-year term account rather than in several separate accounts. This cuts down substantially on paperwork. President Wilkes said he had taken the responsibility of this decision on himself.
- 2) **Vale money:** the Finance Committee wrote a letter indicating interest in the money for a hydrological study of the Vale. Sharon Francis: "Letter to Mayor offering the money for acquisition of the Vale was never even acknowledged." Sally Barnett: "Aldermen have already appropriated the money on request of the Conservation Commission -- and the people donated money for the whole Vale, or other land acquisition in Newton". It was decided that Pres. Wilkes would tell the Aldermen that options are being explored. Conservators are still thinking in terms of the Vale.

- 3) **Nominating Committee**: Helen Heyn, Harold Mahon and Mimi Murphy were appointed and will report to President in 10 days.
- 4) Ernest Loewenstein encouraged Conservators to call persons at State House to support strong **environment-protecting legislature** (There is a move to weaken a bill requiring environmental impact studies from developers), and Dir. Mahon and Paradise and Mr. Bluestein committed themselves to helping in that direction.

III. **Open Space Report**

Sharon Francis thanked the members of the Open Space Committee (Ann Roesner, Ann Dinsmore, Debbie Howard, Sally Barnett, Joan Lerner, Phyllis Butler, Helen Heyn) for the tremendous amount of work that had been done over the past several months. This work is still going on; in fact, more help is needed.

The following is a very incomplete account of only a few remarks on Open Space: Sharon Francis's report cannot be covered here fully:

Some of the questions raised were: how to establish priorities? What will Newton's future be in the light of its Open Space plan of 1969? What will its population be? (the assumption being, around 100,000: more people would then need more open space, not less). What is the effect of the energy situation? (More people needing recreation nearer home). Of the food situation? (Gardening on the upswing), etc.

The OS Committee did field work in great detail on about 75 pieces of land. So far, the initiative has been in the hands of developers, and the city needs to negotiate the future of open space. The Committee has examined and rated all the pieces of land in the 1969 Open Space plan. All the ratings were gone over and made internally consistent. Sharon Francis distributed seven pages of material with listings of neighborhood parks, farms and gardens, conservation lands, city parks, and an open space evaluation form with a key. She feels that the evaluation process should be an open one, with as much input as possible from many people. Also, she feels "it is essential that the city negotiate, take the initiative, for a number of larger tracts, to negotiate a legal instrument signed by both parties...The Open Space Committee has not looked at costs as yet. Alternatives to acquisition are easements. The value of easements could be related to taxation value. Easements again should be legal instruments."

The Open Space Committee is looking forward to work with Susan Wilkes. Sharon Francis asked Mr. Brandwine to talk about financial and economic issues, in his capacity as member of a Boston consulting firm. His presentation provided some unusual information:

It was assumed that a progressive developer would build on 4 golf courses. Some form of PUD would go on the land: 1474 housing units, with annual revenue at about 4 million. The savings on the tax rate would be about \$400,000 at \$1.30/yr. But the environmental costs, based on studies done in other communities, would amount to

\$700,000! There would be decrease in property value (This includes deterioration in building structures because of pollution), increase in cleaning expenses of about \$65 per person per year, increase in health costs. This environmental cost figure does not even include the actual loss of open space, or the increase in water pollution from runoff, noise pollution, traffic congestion, time loss of drivers, plant damage from automobiles, even the amount of additional traveling (74,000 vehicle miles added every day!).

Sharon Francis pointed out that the general talk about "only PUD," "only residential use" regarding golf courses, with 25% of land left as OS, may not mean anything when you look at the facts stated above. Milton Rubin asked what the cost of additional needed supermarkets would be, with more people moving into an area. Mr. Brandwine also pointed out that the temporary increase in construction jobs is certainly offset by the impact on the environment, which is permanent. He felt that it would be a good idea to push for a tax of one cent per gallon of gas for acquisition of Open Space. Sharon Francis mentioned that maintenance - preventative maintenance mostly - of open space called for far-range planning, and that it should be tacked onto each acquisition. She encouraged everybody to help with open space work, particularly for the June 11 meeting at Newton North High.

President Wilkes concluded the meeting, thanking the OS Committee and taking a voice VOTE for the continuance of its work of "education of the city to establish why we should be concerned about its open land."

Meeting adjourned at 11 p.m.

Gisela Clark, Secretary

late May, 1974

Newton Conservators, Inc.
Minutes of the Annual Meeting
May 29, 1974, 5:30 P.M.
Auburndale Park
(with an informal bring-your-own-picnic supper)

Present: Dir. Barnett, Clark, Heyn, Francis, Loewenstein, Mahon, and Hannah Morehouse, Ann Dinsmore, member Thelma Fleishman

Informal discussion before the arrival of Sharon Francis touched on Nominating Committee (Thelma Fleishman would like to see committee appointed and operative throughout the year), committee on By-Laws (Joan Lerner would like some thinking about lobbying, overall changes in By-Laws), formally acknowledged membership of a CPA and legal counsel (Harold Mahon), attention to low-cost mailing (Sally Barnett).

Dir. Francis opened the meeting at 6:40 and the discussion touched on some unresolved questions that should go on the list of the new Board:

- 1) **Vale money** should be deposited where it would be getting interest.
- 2) **Membership**. Susan Wilkes has helped with membership a great deal, so have Sally Barnett and Joan Lerner. Helen Heyn volunteered help on June 11 (Open Space Conference).
- 3) **League office space**: addressograph is no longer being used there, only mimeo machine.
- 4) **Newsletter reproduction**: what help will be available; production has been problematic.
- 5) **OS Committee** has need of some more money (stamps, paper, photography have cost some). Several people volunteered to bring baked goods. Coffee and punch will be catered at OS conference June 11.

Report from Nominating Committee (Harold Mahon). Dir. Mahon thanked Helen Heyn and Mimi Murphy for their work on the Nominating Committee and mentioned briefly the backgrounds of new Directors, some of whom have already done work for Conservators: Lynn Margulis (Associate Prof. Of Biology at BU; preparing 4-season nature guide for Ordway), Marcus Lieberman (lecturer at Harvard Univ. School of Education, Co-Chairman of Norumbega Association), Robert Brandwein (Vice President of Harbridge House, consultant in land use, working on PUD for Conservators), Ann Dwelley (graduate economist, active with League of Women Voters), Ann Dinsmore (professional landscape designer, member of Newton Advisory Committee), Richard Staley (Warren Junior High, Newton Conservation Commission member), Hannah Morehouse (member of Sierra Club, nursery school teacher, active in Weeks PTA, has helped with Vale fundraising). President Susan Wilkes, well-known to Conservators, is doing graduate work at various universities.

The Report was unanimously ACCEPTED. It was MOVED and AGREED UPON that either Nominating Committee or President should approach less active Board members and check with them how active they wanted to be; and that the new President contact the members.

Sharon Francis read a letter from Susan Wilkes, who was unable to come to this meeting. It was felt that the Conservators should have a tree or shrub planted in the Arboretum (Ann Roesner to be consulted about this) in the name of the Wilkes family. Harold Mahon to write a letter to Garrison Wilkes now, expressing the Director's appreciation of his leadership and efforts on behalf of the Conservators. Motion AGREED UPON unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7:35.

Gisela Clark, Sec'y