

## **Board of Directors, 1998 - 1999**

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Vice President: Douglas Dickson  
Secretary: Judith Hepburn  
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Carol Lee Corbett	Roger Feinstein
Sally Flynn	William Hagar
Bart Hague	Frank Howard
Peter Kastner	Colleen Minaker
Norman Richardson	Marty Sender
Lucy Caldwell Stair	Nick Yannoni

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Rodney Barker	John Bliss
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Virginia Taplin	Verne Vance
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### **June 1998**

Newton Conservators, Inc.  
Board of Directors Meeting,  
June 24, 1998  
Newton City Hall, Room 202

**Present:** Mike Clarke, presiding; Margaret Albright, Jim Broderick, Carol Lee Corbett, Bud Elliott, Judy Hepburn, Helen Heyn, Frank Howard, Peter Kastner, Colleen Minaker, Norm Richardson, Vaunita Schnell, Marty Sender. Visitors: Sarah Barnett, Aubra Rosenzweig, Cole Stanton, Dan Thomases.

**Minutes:** APPROVED as amended.

**Announcements:** **Depot Day** had a good turnout and went well; special thanks to Mike, Marty, Judy and Peter for leading canoe trips and walks. Mike passed out the 1998-99 **committee assignment** sheets (attached).

Cole Stanton and Dan Thomases from the **Environmental Science Program** of the Newton Conservation Commission gave us a presentation about their summer program for thirty Grade 7-10 students. They expressed appreciation for 20 years of Conservators' support and our annual grant to their scholarship fund. Problems they expressed included a better need to better market the program. Communicating with prospective participants has been made more difficult by recent privacy laws that deny access to the Newton Schools list for mailings. Whereas in the past they had a waiting list, this year there are only 22 to 26 applicants. Mike suggested that in the future we could help them get on the Newton Web Page. Bud suggested we could also put something in our newsletter. Carol Lee, as a parent of past participants, voiced her praise of the program. By consensus we decided to RAISE OUR GRANT, which for many years has been \$500, to \$1000 for this year only. The added \$500 is to be given in honor of Richard Staley, the program's long-time director, who has recently left it.

Mike suggested we might use GIS software at Boston College to make **future maps**, Bud suggested that they be in a loose-leaf format, and Judy suggested we put them on our web page in an easily printable form.

**Treasurer's Report:** Nick transferred \$7000 into a CD with Cambridgeport Bank. Bud is acting treasurer until Mike Collora takes over the books in Aug. or Sept. He has the treasurer's records and remaining maps.

**Membership:** There may be about a 20% increase in members following the direct mailing that targeted Newton's AMC members and new homeowners. However we do not yet have firm numbers. Margaret remarked that this would be about 4x higher than usual for mass mailing campaigns.

Bud suggested we might recruit from the membership to serve on some committees. He'd had a letter from one member who already wanted to help with mailings, etc. Frank said some advisors would like a greater involvement too. Since E-mail would be useful in soliciting volunteers, several board members thought we should request E-mail addresses in a future mailing.

**Conservation Commission:** Norm said that the upcoming meeting will focus on the proposed BC soccer field next to Edmands Park, storm water/river protection issues in the Hammond Pond area, and Shabat House, which is on Dedham St. adjacent to Countryside School and in a floodplain.

**Boston College/Edmands Park:** Because of a conflict of interest arising from his being a BC employee, Mike asked Bud to chair this discussion. Development of a 3-acre parcel

of land by BC for a soccer field partially hinges on whether Edmands Brook flows continually throughout the year, which would put it under the Rivers Protection Act. The City has also classified this stream as riparian, but Norm said there are several lines of evidence that suggest it may not be (hydrographic calculations, absence from USGS maps, etc.). This argument must be resolved first, but the procedures involved in the stream's designation are not clearly worked out yet. Peter, who has already met with neighborhood groups, thought this might buy time/room for compromise and urged that we work for postponement to allow time for a "more thoughtful process." He thought the Newton Campus Neighborhood Assoc. (NCNA) seemed willing to compromise and avoid legal action, although a large informal group of local dog-walkers currently is not.

Other concerns voiced by board members included lights and noise (Margaret), increased litter, loss of trees, and whether the plan involved artificial turf (Marty). Much discussion followed over the role the Conservators should play, particularly whether offering to be a facilitator in the dispute would compromise our advocacy of open space. Mike thought our recent dealings with Hebrew College in their purchase of land from Andover-Newton might serve as our model: get involved early, keep track of the details, and write unalterable greenspace into the permit. Helen suggested we might also ask BC to accept a conservation restriction to guarantee preservation of the Cambridge Slate outcrop on the Newton Campus.

Mike proposed that we inform BC that the Conservators would like to be participants in a process seeking a compromise between BC and the community. If he is willing, Doug Dickson, who has been following this, would represent the Conservators and possibly serve as a facilitator. How this proceeds would depend on how the Conservation Commission decides on the riparian issue, but we would continue our advocacy position for open space.

Bud MOTIONED that we take the position of getting involved as advocates for the streams and wetlands, which was SECONDED and PASSED. An Edmands Park subcommittee was created consisting of Doug Dickson, Chairman (if willing), Sally Flynn, Bud Elliott, and Peter Kastner, and it will meet during the summer.

**Andover-Newton:** Developers have been selected, Plans call for 60 cluster housing units that will largely fill 10 acres but will preserve the 2-3 acre strip along Cypress St. Mike saw very little greenspace in the plan, but ANTS will leave the door open until the purchase & sale agreement is signed on Aug.31, 1998, to allow for the (unlikely) purchase of the cluster-housing site by an open-space group. However, there are not many foreseeable funding opportunities, and any proposal to purchase the land would compete with other City proposals for finishing Forte Park and acquiring Kessler Woods.

Sarah Barnett from the neighborhood association personally thanked the Conservators, and especially Mike, for assisting in negotiations with Hebrew College and urged purchase to preserve the unique view from the top of the hill. Mike has offered wording to Hebrew College to strengthen the proposed CR on about 2 acres of the proposed HC site. He also suggested that preserving small parcels such as this might be part of

Newton's Open Space Plan to maintain the character of the city and provide a network of spaces for wildlife. Helen said that the City has already picked up 12 CR's of these through negotiation with developers and some, such as the Oak Hill Conservation Pathway, are open to the public.

**Parks and Recreation:** Mike reported on the **Oak Hill fence**. The Auburndale Park Picnic Area is heavily used in summer, and he suggested that Parks and Rec consider developing another picnic area, possibly at **Rumford/Wabasso St.** along the Charles. Marty cautioned that recent overdevelopment at Auburndale Park has only added to its problem of overuse

**Ordway Park:** Mike wondered if we could plant the new varieties of American Elm and Chestnut to replace trees taken down last fall. Frank said the new chestnuts are not yet proven blight-resistant, but elms were further along. Judy urged that two trees taken down, yellowwood and tulip tree, be replaced in kind, since both are also native. Carol Lee suggested that the Ordway Park Committee should consider all of these suggestions, particularly if any of these trees are donated.

**Grants:** Vaunita said Bill Hagar received a grant proposal from Bowen School for \$500 to hire a wetlands consultant, with matching funds put up by parents. She and Bill both felt favorable, but Bud said he hadn't seen the proposal yet. No action take.

Meeting adjourned at 10:05 PM. We are scheduled to meet in July with Doug Dickson presiding, but may cancel. There will be no August meeting.

Judy Hepburn, Secretary

Addendum: **Newton Conservators, Inc. 1998 Committees**

**Annual Dinner** - Sally Flynn (chair), Carol Lee Corbett, Bud Elliott

**Conservation Commission Liaison** - Norman Richardson, Colleen Minaker, Mike Clarke, Bill Hagar

**Financial/Audit/Investment** - Mike Collora (chair), Roger Feinstein, bud Elliott (Aud. Ch.), Nick Yannoni

**Grants** - Bud Elliott (chair), Bill Hagar (co-chair), Vaunita Schnell, Stephanie Bacon

**Public Relations** - Marty Sender (chair)

**Membership** - Michael Collora (chair) Frank Howard, Margaret Albright, Peter Kastner

**Newsletter** - Bonnie Carter (chair), Judy Hepburn

**Nominations** - Frank Howard (chair), Roger Feinstein, Margaret Albright

**Ordway Park** - Jim Broderick (chair), Carol Lee Corbett, Bud Elliott, Judy Hepburn, Doug Dickson

**Walks** - Judy Hepburn (chair), Karyn Powers

**Open Space:** Doug Dickson (chair)

*Specific issues*

ANTS/HC - Michael Clarke, Doug Dickson

Hammond Pond/Webster-Cohen - Stephanie Bacon, \_\_\_\_\_

Boston College - Doug Dickson, Peter Kastner, Bud Elliott, Sally Flynn

Kessler Woods -

Rumford-Flowed Meadow - Bud Elliott (chair), Norm Richardson

**Parks & Recreation Liaison** - Peter Kastner, Michael Clarke

**Programs** - \_\_\_\_\_ (chair), Michael Clarke, Colleen Minaker, Doug Dickson, Marty Sender, Peter Kastner

### **July 1998**

Newton Conservators, Inc.  
PO Box 11  
Newton Center, MA 02459-0011

The Board of Directors meeting that was scheduled for July 22 is cancelled. There will also be no meeting of the full board in August.

Next scheduled meeting: September 23.

Judy Hepburn  
Secretary

### **September 1998**

Newton Conservators, Inc.  
Board of Directors Meeting  
September 23, 1998  
Newton City Hall, Room 202

**Present:** Mike Clarke, presiding; Jim Broderick, Michael Collera, Bonnie Carter, Carol Lee Corbett, Doug Dickson, Bud Elliott, Roger Feinstein, Sally Flynn, Bill Hagar, Judy Hepburn, Frank Howard, Peter Kastner, Colleen Minaker, Norm Richardson, Marty Sender, Nick Yannoni . **Visitors:** Sarah Barnett, Lucy Caldwell Stair.

**Minutes:** APPROVED.

**Treasurer's Report:** The treasurer's report was given out and APPROVED; it does not yet reflect the \$7000 CD purchased this summer. The new Treasurer, Mike Collora, briefly surveyed our position relative to last year. We are a bit behind in funds because of the Ordway pruning expenses, but assets are about the same.

**Announcements:** The fall **newsletter** is being printed and will be out this week. The November-December meeting will be held on Dec 2.

**Membership:** There are approx. 360 paying members now, Mike Collora reports. The spring drive had good results: approx. 60 new members (out of around 700 solicitations). Peter Kastner said we ought to send these new members a letter of thanks; Mike Clarke agreed. Bud Elliott suggested we also voice our thanks in the next newsletter.

Lucy Stair volunteered to help with future solicitations and suggested we might buy or trade lists with Mass. Audubon, Trustees of Reservations, etc. Bud thought we should ask each member to suggest a few interested friends, including this request in our Dec. dues renewal letter. Doug said we need better publicity. In working with the neighbors of Edmands Park this summer, he encountered 12 -15 people who knew nothing about the Conservators and our purpose. Colleen thought that the membership alone would likely generate many new prospects among our friends, if we each had a copy.

CONCLUSIONS : We will get out letters of appreciation to the 60 new members. We will also distribute membership lists to the Board. We also considered distributing a list of members' names to our general membership, but this needs more thought. A way for members to exclude themselves from the list also seems desirable.

**Grants:** Cabot School put in a proposal to develop and maintain garden space for \$491; Bill Hagar said it was a good proposal, suggesting we round it up to \$500. A MOTION was made (Bud), SECONDED and unanimously APPROVED.

Our grants letter currently says most of our grants are in the \$250-500 range. Bud thought maybe this should be revised upward to perhaps \$1000. Most groups will ask for close to the maximum, however, and often get other grants (e.g. Newton School Foundation). Judy thought alternatively that we should supply a list of recent successful grants projects (group, project description, amount funded, etc.) to aid future requesters, and this was AGREED to.

Doug said we should try to get more recognition for our grants from the local newspapers. Marty Sender, in his role as Public Relations Chair, said he would do this and also publicize the fall walks in the papers.

A proposal from Newton Pride, **Save Our Wildflowers Project** (SOW) for \$500 and services (volunteers for planting, adopting spaces, sponsoring lecture series, etc.) was next discussed. Various members noted that our past grants have never been solely for

beautification (Mike Clarke, Bud E.). Others saw components of our mission in this project: a long-term educational purpose (Peter K.); the plan brings a focus on open space through wildflowers (Mike Clarke); restoration of native plants is not strictly for beautification (Mike Clarke, Judy H.). In discussing the proposal, Peter noted that we have had a difficult enough time taking care of our 3/4 acre Ordway Park, and envisioning an even greater proactive role for the Conservators was difficult. Judy has attended the last two SOW meetings and thought the project's mission was still not clearly defined. There was a general consensus that the SOW grant request was currently too vague.

No funding was VOTED to SOW. Bud Elliot will work with them so that they can revise and resubmit their grant request.

**Ordway Park:** Frank Howard said that he would be able to donate an American chestnut tree for the park. Jim Broderick, Committee Chair, wanted to survey the understory trees and shrubs of Ordway Park and their relation to dominating oaks already there before deciding on the new tree's placement. Frank said the tree can be available in the spring. The Board by acclamation expressed gratitude to Frank for his gift.

**Open Space:** Mike introduced **Lucy Caldwell Stair**, who is interested in working with the Conservators toward developing a long-term open space funding plan for Newton. Proposals developed for Cape Cod, Andover MA, and New Jersey are possible models. We welcome her involvement.

**Andover Newton.** Mike Clarke reports: the special permit for Hebrew College was approved. He anticipates no significant changes from earlier negotiations that preserve some open space on this 6-acre parcel. The sale of the additional 14 acres is going more slowly than expected. ANTS and the developers have promised to involve the Conservators in open space issues, when they have come to terms.

A sloping 1/2 acre property at 274 Langley Rd. opposite ANTS has also recently been sold with plans to develop 3 housing units there, as reported by Sarah Barnett. She voiced concerns that the combination of all these developments in a piecemeal manner by different groups will have a serious negative impact on **Webster Vale**, into which these properties drain.

Webster Vale is the headwaters of a natural brook that was saved in the 1970's. Development on Institution Hill will create more runoff (due to impermeable surfaces), and this flow may ultimately affect Crystal Lake. The properties are not close to a wetlands, so the Conservation Comm. does not have jurisdiction. Sarah made a request that the Conservators endorse a letter to Mass. DEP asking for a special MEPA review (environmental impact statement) that addresses the total package of proposed developments. Some board members urged our participation (Bud E., Frank H. ). Others suggested caution because of MEPA's complexity (Marty S.), because of possible future legal costs to us (Peter K.), and concerns that we do not want to stop Phase I of Hebrew College at this point. (Mike Cl.). T

he Conservator agreed that we wish to limit development of 60-cluster houses on the ANTS land and to protect Webster Vale. Though not endorsing the MEPA request as a sponsoring organization, we VOTED 13-1 to be a co-signator of the neighborhood's 10-taxpayer letter, requesting some type of EIS (environmental impact statement) that would address the cumulative effect of the various planned developments.

**Rumford:** Mike Clarke wrote a letter to the City because of concerns that a final plan for Rumford and adjacent open spaces is still lacking. The apportionment of the land between DPW and Parks & Recreation has not yet been decided.

Bud Elliott suggested we need a new subcommittee to promote our interests there, and he volunteered to chair it. Peter Kastner thought we should write a letter to the Graphic about the division of Rumford parklands; however we should wait until after upcoming election since Rumford has been a big issue for State Rep. candidate Ginny Gardner. It was resolved to form a **Rumford-Flowed Meadow Subcommittee**. Bud Elliott (Chair) and Norm Richardson will serve on it.

**Edmands-BC Soccer Fields.** Doug Dickson reports: Boston College has appealed the Conservation Commissions decision to the state DEP; two groups have signed on as interveners. BC has moved fast to clear and cordon off all the land they currently can by rights. Their intent appears to be to do as much work as legally possible pending the appeal and to eventually get the soccer field in the location they originally planned. The Conservators do not have much leverage to negotiate further at this stage.

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 PM. Next meeting is October 28, 7:30 PM.

Judy Hepburn, Secretary

### **October, 1998**

Newton Conservators, Inc.  
Board of Directors Meeting  
October 28, 1998  
Newton City Hall

**Present:** Mike Clarke, Presiding; Margaret Albright, Jim Broderick, Michael Collora, Bonnie Carter, Doug Dickson, Burton Elliott, Bill Hagar, Judy Hepburn, Frank Howard, Norm Richardson, Vaunita Schnell. Visitors: Lucy Caldwell Stair, Lee Breckenridge.

**Minutes:** APPROVED (with spelling corrections).

**Treasurer's Report:** Mike has been unable to get the 5 signatories together so that he may write checks. We are \$5000-6000 ahead of last year, and a just little ahead in terms of expenses.

**Announcements — Andover Newton:** There has been no actual land transfer yet, nor has the purchase-and-sales agreement for Hebrew College been issued at this time. Zoning height and light trespass amendments have been proposed for the HC special permits. The Health Management Training Facility & 60-unit condo development are somewhat further behind. Since Terraces, the condo developer, plans 20% low income housing, their permit request goes to the Zoning Board of Appeals, not Land Use. By nature ZBA is designed for legal appeals, not permits, and there are few ways citizens and groups can directly influence it. Terraces is planning to get funding from a federal agency, which means MEPA is not automatically triggered.

Ideally we would like conservation restrictions on (1) the view, (2) the greenspace of Hebrew College to continue around the perimeter and (3) a wildlife corridor connecting between Langley Rd. and Cypress St.

The CRWA's contribution to the 274 Langley Rd. issue may segue into city wide planning/awareness concerning water that is not able to reach its watershed; currently this is not addressed legislatively but may be in the long-term. The special permit requested by 254 Langley Rd. returns to the Land Use Committee on November 17.

**Membership** — Mike Collora reports 350 current paid members, but several hundred more are on our lists. He suggests we cull the list of members who haven't paid in several years. Lucy suggested we retain these culled names for later use in mass mailings to recruit members.

**Conservation Commission — Chestnut St. Tower:** The owners want to move the tower, they have legal rights, and within 6-mo. this falls under FCC not local jurisdiction. Because they want to move it sooner, they are willing to grant a 5-acre conservation restriction along the Charles River and provide money for development of a walking path. The Conservation Commission supports this, since they feel the tower will be legally mandated anyway.

Lucy thought they approved the choice (of two) of a path closest to the river, involving 4.2 acres, with escrow funds for its creation. They are not planning to actually build the walk yet. Doug felt we should support it on record but should also express concerns over terrestrial digital frequencies and magnetic emissions. Margaret said that FCC is forcing the new tower on large media markets like Boston, so despite any concerns over emissions, it will inevitably get built. Vaunita said Friends of Hemlock Gorge and Upper Falls residents feel strongly that since the towers went into their neighborhood in the first place and generate lots of money, we should maximize what we get back. Doug thought we should try to get the owners to support financially the extension of the river walk beyond their own property.

Mike Clarke indicated that he had already written Brian Yates expressing our concerns about the tower, but that if it was legally mandated, then the city should get the CR and as much money as possible to support the development of the Charles River Pathway through the area. Norm, upon his arrival, said that the CC accepted the pathway in

principal but with a dollar amount still to be decided. However the owner was not currently planning to create a sophisticated MDC-type walk.

**Other CC -- Shabbat House plans** were held over for another month with concerns remaining over River Protections Act jurisdiction, footprint of the project, etc.

**Parks and Recreation — Rumford Avenue:** At Mike Clarke's suggestion, the Parks & Rec. Commission formed a planning subcommittee to decide the best use of the property, should it come to Parks & Rec. The subcommittee met with Martha Horne and Maria Plati and suggested that a \$5-10K survey to demarcate wetlands should be done before the Mayor's committee on Rumford is convened.

At the request of Bud and Mike Cl., Mayor Cohen is establishing a committee involving all the stakeholders in the Rumford area. The parcel involves: (1) the dump mound itself, retained by DPW for recycling; (2) the fairly steep surrounding berm that must be passively used; terracing makes it suitable for walking paths. (3) wetlands that the Conservators will recommend go to CC, hoping that there will be future paths and boardwalks; and (4) the Wabasso St. acquisitions, which have water frontage.

Martha Horne wants to retain Wabasso as CC land. It is suitable for a canoe launch, to which neither CC nor P&R object. P&R may want to put some picnic tables, grills, etc. there, but the Environmental Planner is concerned about trash maintenance. Norm thought the breakdown of wetlands to Flowed Meadows & CC and Wabasso to P&R made sense.

Questions were raised as to nature of the picnic area, what type of picnickers is targeted, and parking. We AGREED that wetlands should become part of Flowed Meadow (CC), but at Doug's suggestion reserved our final opinion on the picnic area, dependent on seeing an actual plan.

Other: The license for the **concession stand at Albermarle** has been renewed for another 3 yrs. The Jerry Angino request was transferred to Parks and Recreation, with no action.

**Grants:** Countryside School sent a letter and photos of the garden project we funded last year. The revised proposal from Newton Pride Wildflowers (for \$500 for 3 yrs.) to systematically restore native American plants to open space has support of the entire grants subcommittee. The Board VOTED APPROVAL by acclamation. Doug suggested that with a 3-year grant we put in some triggers. Mike Co. suggested we request submission of a report from Newton Pride before our annual reauthorization, which the board APPROVED.

**Land Use: Edmands Park/BC Soccer Field.** Mike Clarke turned the gavel over to Doug Dickson and left, due to potential conflict of interest.

Boston College wrote a letter to the Conservation Commission wanting to reopen discussion on the original soccer field proposal of July, with the participation of all interested parties. The matter is currently before the State Dept. Environmental Protection. Because BC would like to move forward with more speed and certainty, it has revived the proposal negotiated in July with interested parties, including the Conservators. Additionally BC has offered a lump sum (\$20,000), to be met with matching funds, which is to go for the enhancement and improvement of Edmands Park. This deal is provisional on agreement that an appeal will not be lodged with DEP. BC wishes to give the money to the Newton Conservators as a "fair-minded party" to hold and administer. This avoids potential political aspects of giving money directly to the City. It was noted that Parks & Rec already has \$50,000 for Edmands improvements in the budget, and as much as \$450,000 in future expenditures is being planned.

Discussion followed on whether or not we should agree to play the role BC has requested. It was quickly agreed that we do not want to be fund-raisers for matching funds or pre-empt Parks and Recreation's activities. Bud thought the letter lacked specifics, which usually means less will be done not more. Doug said that the specifics would be settled by interested parties, and we should focus on our proposed role. Norm thought that BC wanted the Conservators to play a mediatory, consensus-building role. Jim said that for us to decide on use of this money is taking on a huge responsibility, akin to financial management of the park, and we have difficulty enough dealing with Ordway Park. Bud said we shouldn't do anything without the approval of Parks & Rec., that \$20,000 is a trivial amount to put up, and that the matching funds idea is even more inane. We shouldn't be making this decision because it isn't ours to make: it's Parks and Rec's.

Doug said Parks & Rec is neither opposed nor favorable to the BC offer. He suggested a broad planning group might be formed to make decisions on how the money should be spent, if we accept it. Lee Breckenridge thought the deal turns us into an environmental front for BC. BC is avoiding the City to make it look like they're not "purchasing a permit," which is in fact what they are trying to do. Lee thought the problem of spending the money might come back to haunt us in the future. Bud added that if other groups are opposed to this deal, accepting BC's role will put us effectively in opposition to other open space groups. Some thought the Conservators could act purely as a temporary repository of funds, but only if required and only if the funding would otherwise be lost; others demurred on even that role as too compromising for us. Doug said that as point-person he had to have a precise position to take to the next meeting, and he would like to say we'll be willing to play a role up to some *specific* point.

Lee suggested wording that was **AGREED TO BY ACCLAMATION**: We will reply (1) that we are looking to create an environmentally sound proposal satisfactory to all parties, (2) that we feel that we are not a group geared to taking on financial management responsibilities of this scope, and (3) that we also wish to do everything we can that is favorable to the neighborhood and to Edmands Park. Therefore, the Conservators request a reasonable explanation as to why the proposed funds cannot be given to the City directly. If this is in fact impossible, then the Conservators are willing to play a role as

repository of fund, but only if it is truly necessary and only if all interest groups come to mutual agreement on our role.

The meeting adjourned at 10:20 PM.

Judy Hepburn, Secretary

### **November-December 1998**

Newton Conservators, Inc.  
Board of Directors Meeting  
December 2, 1998 - 7:30 PM  
Newton City Hall

**Present:** President Mike Clarke; Anna Marie Abernathy, Margaret Albright, Stephanie Bacon, Jim Broderick, Michael Collora, Carol Lee Corbett, Doug Dickson, Burton Elliott, Sally Flynn, Judy Hepburn, Helen Heyn, Frank Howard, Peter Kastner, Norm Richardson, Nick Yannoni. Guests: State Rep. Ruth Balsler, State Rep. Kay Khan

**Minutes:** APPROVED as amended.

**Treasurer's Report:** We have \$92,000 assets and are making about 5% on investments. Mike requested authorization for a budget of around \$250 to buy mailing lists or to make contributions to nonprofit organizations that voluntarily supply them; we might also get some lists by exchange. He plans to work with Lucy Caldwell Stair on a direct mail campaign at the beginning of the year. The budget request was MOVED, SECONDED and APPROVED by acclamation.

The membership policy was reiterated: Memberships start in January, but new members who join after September 1 do not need to renew for the following year.

**Open Space Issues: Working at the State Level, dialogue with invited guests, Newton's State Representatives Ruth Balsler and Kay Khan:** Five major different issues were brought up:

- (1) Mike Clarke voiced concerns about the proposed, **large television towers** and the differing opinions on legal issues involved. The Top 10 markets, which includes Boston, must go on line by the end of 1999 by FCC edict, but local opposition is rising everywhere and the decision may yet be reversed. These HDTV antennae have a huge range, so Newton should not be an automatic choice just because other antennae are sited here.
- (2) Peter Kastner addressed the **special concerns that mature cities such as Newton have in preserving open space**, especially in the light of transportation planning. Rep. Balsler expressed similar concerns and voiced her hope of attaining a seat on the Local Affairs Committee of the House. There is a proposed Advisory Board in

Communities bill coming up that could address such issues. She thought a caucus might be formed similar to the MDC Caucus, which supports an agency very effective at maintaining and creating open space. Concerns were expressed that the MBTA has not been very forthcoming about its future plans. It seems more interested in development of sites like Riverside and Woodland, when what we need it not *development* but more parking -- i.e., an emphasis on getting people out of cars and onto the T system. Anna Marie Abernathy brought up the long-standing issue of Newton being penalized by a higher assessment whenever MBTA parking is expanded, though many cars parking at Riverside, Woodland, etc. are from the outlying suburbs. Kay Kahn said she will talk with Hasty Evens about the MBTA issues.

- (3) The **mandate that electric utilities dispose of surplus properties, such as Newton's Kessler Woods**, is detrimental to community open space. Communities also need a longer time frame to get bids together for acquiring these properties. We asked if the mandate might be changed under the new Attorney General, and our Representatives both thought the new AG would be reviewing that.
- (4) The **status of the Communities Protection Bill**, which will allow communities to institute land transfer taxes for preserving open space, was broached. Both Reps. Balser and Kahn said that this bill will be coming up again in the Legislature, because many communities are interested in having transfer taxes and voting on it piecemeal, town-by-town, is proving unworkable. Jim Broderick said he would like Massachusetts to consider something like New Jersey's "Green Acres" Fund, a statewide loan fund that can supply a community with quickly needed cash when a desired property comes suddenly up for sale. Judy Hepburn hoped that flexibility might be built into the Land Transfer Tax, because what might work in rapid-growth communities might not work effectively in Newton. She would like to see an option of linking a tax or % surcharge to the dollar value of special permits, so that use of this money is not left purely to aldermanic discretion but earmarked for open space acquisition.

In a similar vein, Bud Elliott mentioned that **air rights over the Mass Pike** will inevitably be coming up, with needs for special permits and zoning. He asked that the State Legislature be proactive in providing linkage of air rights to open space funds. Peter Kastner also added that applying a real estate tax in Newton only makes neighboring communities (Wellesley, etc.) more desirable, and that despite Newton's apparent wealth many new home buyers are already maxxed out.

Rep. Balser thought these ideas had some interesting potential. She saw conceptual similarities to the existing 10% affordable housing guidelines that are applied to large real estate developments and accountable through Committee Report Cards. Doug Dickson added that the State has put a squeeze on communities' ability to pay for anything but education, and it is becoming difficult to maintain even what we have; for example we have little funding to replace trees lost in the April 1997 storm. The state needs to recognize the "domino effect" of unfunded mandates. Doug added that

the State Highway funds can be used for planting but not preservation of trees; this is symptomatic of an infrastructure that needs to be made more flexible and accommodating.

- (5) Bud Elliott said that new **noise barriers that are being put up along Route 128 and the Turnpike** are very necessary but are currently ugly. He hoped the state would do more to beautify them with bushes, trees, etc. Others expressed hopes that our Representatives would push for additional noise barriers all along Rt. 128 and the Mass. Turnpike within 128, and that a general plan be devised for installing such noise barriers, rather than isolated village-by-village campaigns.

**Conservation Commission:** Doug was at the meeting and the major issue was the Chabad House, a temple planned for Dedham St. near Meadow Brook. After long discussion, there was a postponement until Dec. or Jan., largely because Chabad House has not been very forthcoming with information that the CC had requested.

**Parks & Recreation:** Someone has given a quarter million dollars for a **Millennium Park**, which is to occupy a triangle of lawn on the City Hall grounds, and P & R very quickly voted to add the donor's name to the park. Committee Alternates Peter Kastner and Mike Clarke saw a serious flaw in allowing the process to go forth so quickly without checking for possible conflicts. Doug added that there is to be a competition for the design, which is being made independent of any city employees. Since the property was originally part of an Olmsted design, he had concerns that a design incompatible to the site might be chosen.

The idea for Millennium Park predates the current mayor, but the large donation was recent and was handled by Mayor Cohen's office. Bob Platt, as Co-chair of Newton 2000, helped raise these funds and had a conflict of interest on this vote. Bud felt we should tell the Mayor that while we are not opposed to the donation or fixing up the area, the Conservators feel strongly that the process has been subverted. P & R's own policy and procedure were ignored (i.e., bypassing the 30-day waiting period) and matters were handled covertly.

Mike will ask for a private meeting with the Mayor to express our discontent and to ensure that the design processes is open, with opportunities for public comment and input. We will also thank the Mayor for raising the money.

The Newton North Little League's advocacy group has big ideas for **Albermarle Park** and now wants to build a press box there. Bud said we should also communicate our feelings about the potential overdevelopment of Albemarle to the Mayor at the same meeting, which met with general concurrence.

**Grants:** The Subcommittee was in favor of two new proposals. One was from Mason-Rice School for \$500 for an outdoor classroom involving planting a garden. Memorial Spaulding School wanted \$640 for an outdoor classroom focusing on attracting and

studying birds. The MOTION to approve were made, SECONDED and PASSED by voice vote.

**Ordway Park:** Nothing to report.

**Open Space:** BC's offer last month of \$20,000 for **Edmands Park** has been withdrawn, after the Conservation Commission 's counterproposal of a substantially larger sum. Boston College decided stick with its alternate plan for the soccer fields and has also removed more trees.

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 PM.

Judy Hepburn, Secretary

### **January 1999**

Newton Conservators, Inc.  
Board of Directors Meeting  
Jan 28, 1999 — 7:30 PM  
202 City Hall

**Attendance:** President Mike Clarke; Stephanie Bacon, Michael Collora, Carol Lee Corbett, Doug Dickson, Roger Feinstein, Sally Flynn, Judy Hepburn, Helen Heyn, Frank Howard, Colleen Minaker, Norm Richardson, Lucy Stair.

**President's Report:** Mike Clarke spoke with the mayor about **Rumford** and frustration over the DPW Report that was supposed to come out following capping of the landfill. The mayor's office says that the report has now been submitted. Martha Horne and the Planning Dept. are working on a \$5000 matching grant for the adjacent Wabasso St. site in order to determine its important natural features, so that the Mayor's select committee on the Rumford area can make informed planning decisions.

Mike also thanked the Mayor for raising \$250,000 for **the millennium park**. The Mayor felt that the usual 30-day waiting period requirement for naming a city park, as specified in the Parks and Rec. Commission's policies, might have been followed by the Commission. The Parks & Rec Commission has since changed its procedures so that a 3/4 majority vote will be needed to set aside a written policy of the Commission. The Mayor gave reassurances that the Millennium Park will go through normal design review procedures and take into consideration the original Olmstead plan.

Mike inquired over the improvement plans for **Crystal Lake's cove**, for which \$95,000 has been available since at least last June. There has been no movement on the issues of **Kessler Woods** or the **Andover-Newton sale**.

The new, enlarged **Chestnut St. antenna tower** was approved by the Aldermen, and the company building it will provide a **conservation restriction on 4 acres near the river** and help fund the eventual development of this area as part of the Charles River Pathway.

**Annual meeting:** Sally Flynn will chair the committee for the annual meeting for the last time; Carol Corbett and Bud Elliott volunteered to help. A date of May 26 was chosen, with May 27 as back-up.

Mike has already sent a letter inviting the former MA Dept. of Environmental Affairs Secretary Trudy Cox, who is now CEO of the Newport Preservation Society, to be our annual **speaker**. Mike requested a list of all past presidents and officers. Carol said she has stored records going back to 1961. Doug suggested that it would be good publicity if we videotape the banquet speaker and have the speech run later on NewTV. We could also get still photos of our speaker for the newspapers. Mike suggested Bud Elliott for photographer. We need suggestions for **Environmentalist of the Year**.

**Treasurer's Report & Membership:** We made \$2600 above expenses in 1998 and have about \$86,000. Bud Elliott will chair the annual **audit committee**.

Mike Collora said we did not get a flood of December renewal letters, and we should send a reminder to existing members to renew. He also wondered whether we should track such things as the level of membership, which we are currently not doing. Mike Cl. said that there is no practical reason for the levels of membership in terms of advantage, privileges, etc. However knowing our members level of support could be useful for fund raising. There are also some life members.

Mike Collora also reported that our membership list has little market or trade value. Groups like the Nature Conservancy already have a targeted list of 900 Newton residents, and our list is not in a useful format for other groups (i.e., in Excel, not ASCII). Another problem is that two mailings are typical, but some lists restrict to one-time use.

Mike Co. is aiming for an **appeal to go out in early March**. We will eliminate the \$10 introductory membership and make the appeal at the standard membership rates. Mike Co. also asked about how we might thank new members. Judy mentioned that new members used to receive our map of Newton parks. No one present at the meeting was sure if we still had these maps, or if new maps would be printed. Mike Clarke indicated that he was working with Rudy Hon at Boston College and with the City to develop new GIS-based maps, but that it would be at least 6 months and probably much longer before these were available. There are some maps of parks on our web site. Judy suggested that perhaps we could provide colored maps for new members, based on these GIS maps.

**Conservation Commission:** The construction of **Chabad House** was rejected by a 3-2 vote, based on the Rivers Protection Act; the temple is not appealing the decision. The Chestnut Hill Mall is planning to move on their plans for expanding their parking closer to **Hammond Pond** and are looking for ways to appeal to the city and get around the

Historical District designation on the land. There is nothing official on the next meeting's agenda but there may be some discussion of the mall project.

**Ordway Park:** Doug Dickson got bids on the removal of the big hollow oak tree, which we did not take down last fall and deferred for spring. Bids ranged from \$572-\$1100. Carol MOTIONED to accept the low bid from D. J. Synder; the motion was SECONDED and PASSED unanimously.

**Parks and Recreation:** On the morning of the last P & R Board meeting, Terry Morris of the Newton North Little League meeting canceled his scheduled presentation of a proposal for lights and a two-story press box for the **Albemarle Park ball field**. Despite the absence of Terry Morris, the Board did hear discussion from a number of abutters, a League of Women Voters rep, etc. who had turned out. Almost all who spoke were steadfastly against the plan.

**Open Space:** The proposed **Boston College soccer field** is under appeal, but many trees have already been removed from the site. B.C. does not want to provide a conservation restriction (CR) for the outcrop of Cambridge Slate, which is on the site and has long been designated for a CR in the City's Open Space Plan. Nevertheless the outcrop is safe for the moment, partly because of its obscurity. A CR should be suggested if a compromise arrangement concerning the soccer field can be brokered.

The City's latest capital improvement proposal has money earmarked for Edmands Park, which is high on the list. Mike Cl. will speak with Fran Towle of Parks & Rec about the details of the Edmands plan. The Planning Dept. also has earmarked Kennard Park and Dolan Pond for improvements.

**Newsletter-Spring Walks:** Mike requested submissions by mid-February for the next newsletter as well as the spring walks list. Members suggested Hammond Pond, a tree walk, Kennard, a replay by popular demand of Dolan Pond, and a new section of the Charles River Walkway as possibilities. The canoe trip will be on April 10.

**Grants:** No new requests; however this is also addressed under the Newton 2000 Task Force.

**Nominations:** Frank Howard reported that the nomination committee has met and proposed the following slate of candidates: Doug Dickson, President; Mike Clarke, past-President; Judy Hepburn, Secretary; Mike Collora, Treasurer. A candidate for Vice-President is still needed. Lucy Caldwell Stairs agreed to join the board, Lee Breckenridge will be asked, and other recommendations for Board members are welcome.

**Newton 200 Environmental Task Force:** Doug Dickson reports that the task force has narrowed their millennial projects down to three or four. One is the planting of 2000 trees, and a February 4 meeting will focus on this project. He asked that the Newton Conservators take on a **project for signage of Newton's conservation areas and**

**walking trails**, in conjunction with on-site information boxes, etc. Bud Elliott has already agreed to work on this project, and it would require both some money and some time from the Conservators. Martha Horn has done some preliminary work, and is requesting \$2000 (4 signs) for this project in the FY2000 budget.

**New Committee for Cable TV:** Carol Corbett suggested that the Conservators do a program on Newton's open spaces for NewTV, which requires a trained crew but does not have to be very complicated. Doug Dickson proposed an interview with Dan Driscoll, filmed outdoors at some of the new Charles River overlooks. Others thought that the Lost Pond film, which we partially funded with a grant, should be provided to NewTV or a voice-over added to Jean Husher's Newton Historical Cemetery slide presentation.

Frank Howard and Colleen Minaker agreed to form a preliminary planning committee to develop cable programming for the Conservators. Bonnie Carter will also be asked to serve on it.

The **Environmental Science program** (Cole Stanton, Advisor) will be invited to provide their brochure and application information, to be made available on our website [post-meeting addendum from the President]

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 PM.

Judy Hepburn  
Secretary

### **February 1999**

Newton Conservators, Inc.  
Board of Directors Meeting  
Feb. 24, 1999 - 7:30 PM  
202 City Hall

**Attendance:** President Mike Clarke, Margaret Albright, Bonnie Carter, Michael Collora, Carol Lee Corbett, Doug Dickson, Bud Elliott, Sally Flynn, Bart Hague, Judy Hepburn, Helen Heyn, Frank Howard, Peter Kastner, Lucy Caldwell Stair. Guest: Louis Orzack

**President's Announcements:** DPW's Jim Hickey has submitted his report on the **Rumford site**. The DEP has to accept before it is sent back to Hickey and the Land Use Committee to declare the property surplus. Parks & Rec. and the Conservation Commission have a consensus on passive use for the land.

There is a **proposed light -trespass ordinance**, for which our president wrote a letter of support. Margaret added NJ and Vt. have lists of recommendations for light to act as possible guidelines.

Trudy Cox has accepted our invitation to be the **Annual Mtg. speaker**. Mike requested a list of past awardees for Environmentalist of the Year, so that he can avoid duplication.

Our **GIS mapping project** with Boston College is underway. The Sustainable Environment Commission wants an **environmental mission statement for the city**, and Mike would like to involve the B.C. Environmental Studies program in making it.

Mike and Bonnie Carter would like a volunteer willing to learn how to format the **newsletter**.

Louis Orzack of the Newton Democrat City Committee announced a meeting on March 10 on **planning for the future of Newton**. It is at 7:30 PM, Post 440 (California St.) and involves the Mayor, Planning Chair, and the Planning Framework Committee; all are invited to attend.

**Treasurer's Report.** No report

**Membership.** The committee has put together a list of 1500 names to solicit for new memberships. Mike Collora demonstrated the style of envelope to be used and suggested why the design of our December solicitation did not yield good results. Lucy will keep up the mailing list and put in into a working database. We also need to eliminate gratis memberships to politicians, etc. no longer in office.

Bart Hague suggested we should publicize what we offer: maps, walks, etc. We will call Linda Plaut or Judy Dore to be sure we're included in the next new city booklet put out by the Mayor's Cultural Office. New copies of our old map could be printed; the art is all on floppies in Freehand software.

**Ordway Park:** Carol Corbett spoke for Jim Broderick, who could not attend. He would like Board volunteers to help spread a big mound of wood chips on April 10, 9-12 PM. D.J. Snyder had to cut down 4 additional trees to get to the rotted oak and the bill came to \$75 over bid.

**Conservation Commission:** The next meeting will focus on the delineation of wetlands at the **Mobil gas station on Rt. 9**. This was the first gas station along the Worcester Turnpike, and Jim Sullivan wants to make it an historic landmark, which would eliminate frontage and make it harder to develop the land in the back. Mike Clarke will write a letter urging the city to look at these plans comprehensively.

The Mayor is separately negotiating with Boston College over the proposed soccer fields, to include funds for improving **Edmands Park**; the talks are still in progress.

The purchase and sales agreement for **Andover-Newton land** will likely happen soon. Management Sciences for Health has to carve out its parcel first, before Terraces (the housing development) knows what parcels it has to work with. There are odd lots off

Cypress St. that no one especially wants. Terraces is going to want 60 units on 8 acres, and to give these 6 acres of less desirable land for open space. Our only option now to fight for A-N open space is by influencing the comprehensive permit.

Lack of written guidelines and the City's requirement for only one hearing puts the public and "outsider groups" like the Conservators at a serious disadvantage. Mike Clarke suggested that Newton should do what Wellesley does: there everyone follows the same, written rules for site plan approval. Peter Kastner thought Zyg Platter at the B.C. Law School might have a student who could draft such regulations and procedures. Mike concurred that Zyg's involvement would be desirable.

**Grants:** Bill Hagar could not attend. However he discovered why we had no new grant applications from the city's schools. There's a new person in charge of grants who failed to redirect this information to the individual schools.

Bud Elliott would like to use some of our grants money to support the **Newton 2000 signage project**. No conservation lands currently are signed. Bud showed two of Martha Horn's design plans: (1) a simple ID sign (approx. \$200-300 each) that can be placed at entrances, and (2) a kiosk that might hold laminated maps, etc. (\$500 each).

Bart and Frank both thought we should emphasize the little-known small open spaces in any signage program we do. The 5-acre Oakdale Woods would be a good place to start. Judy said this could be a good on-going series for the Newsletter, i.e., featuring a different small open space in each issue. Mike Clarke thought we should start with kiosks; they're better at explaining the nature of the space and better showcases for the Conservators' maps, literature, etc. A simple name plate signs will only confuse people into thinking the Newton Conservators is the Conservation Commission. He also thought we should focus on conservation lands that abut parks.

Martha has already requested money for 4 signs, which Bud said is all she feels she can currently handle, but this is not yet funded. Peter said he has discussed the needs for signs with the mayor, but we will only get them if there is a public demand. Helen mentioned that when Paul Fireman donated the Hahn Brook Conservation Area to the City, he gave \$25,000 support money that as of 10 yrs. ago was producing \$500/yr. The City could use this for signage. Peter said our grant ought to be linked to matching funds from the City. After discussing several ways of leveraging the city with matching funds, Bud MOTIONED that we donate \$1000 to \$2000 for signs over 2 years, to be matched by city money. Carol SECONDED the motion and it PASSED.

**Models for Open Space Preservation.** Lucy Caldwell Stairs passed out literature, and discussed three new programs that might help Newton acquire open space, and discussed what other communities have recently done. (1) The Community Preservation Act, which was reintroduced in the MA legislature and stands a good chance of passing. (2) Chapter 61 is already in place to give cities first purchase refusal rights in exchange for property tax breaks. (3) Past acquisitions in Newton have been funded with self-help state reimbursements, with appropriations by the Board of Alderman. From the last plan,

only the 9.2 acre Kessler Woods remains to be acquired. Mike said we should go on record in support of the **Community Preservation Act**.

**Nominations Committee:** For **Environmentalist of the Year**, nominees under consideration are former Mayor Concannon, Louise Bruyn of the Green Decade Coalition, and David Delporto; other nominations are still invited. Bill Hagar has been offered for next year's Vice-President.

**Parks and Recreation:** No change on the proposal of lighting **Albermarle Park**; there is much opposition. Parks & Rec has agreed that proposed **advertising signs** for Lyons Park are structures, which means two public hearings must be held and letters written to neighbors. Halloran appears not as committed to allowing these signs as in the past. Bud asked if we could go on record with the Board of Alderman in opposition to these signs. Mike Clarke said he'd write a letter.

Plans are going ahead to rebuild **Livingston Cove and Cronin's Cove at Crystal Lake**, with \$50,000 appropriated for drainage infrastructure and landscaping, and \$40,000 for handicap accessibility. Parks & Rec also conducted a thorough discussion on the naming of **Balsamo Park**, airing differences about the procedures followed. (This issue is also discussed in our Feb. 1999 newsletter.) Peter said one on-going problem is that there are numerous ad hoc boards and commissions in Newton, and new members are given no orientation regarding their legal relationship to city government. This is especially acute now that we have many new Newton 2000 Task Forces.

Judy Hepburn  
Secretary

### **March 1999**

Newton Conservators, Inc.  
Board of Directors Meeting  
March 30, 1999 - 7:30 PM - 202 City Hall

**Attendance:** President Mike Clarke; Margaret Albright, Jim Broderick, Bonnie Carter, Michael Collora, Carol Lee Corbett, Doug Dickson, Bart Hague, Judy Hepburn, Helen Heyn, Frank Howard, Ted Kuklinski, Ald. George Mansfeld, Colleen Minaker, Marty Sender, Roger Swain. Guest: Anatole Zuckerman.

**Announcements:** Mike Clarke has a meeting with the Mayor over several issues, with the following to report:

- (1) The final report on **Rumford** has to come back from DEP before the 30 capped acres can be declared surplus. The Mayor will have a committee in place by then.
- (2) The Mayor is working on **Kessler Woods** issues, but Edison is not yet eager to sell until several corporate matters are cleared.

- (3) The Mayor will match our offer for **signs for Newton's conservation land**, and Martha Horn will not have to delve into the Hahn Brook Trust Fund for the money.

**Other announcements:**

- (1) There are no new developments at **Andover Newton**. We need to work for a conservation restriction on the odd lots (about 6 acre) that will be set-aside when the 60 units of affordable housing are built on 8-acres. We also need to aim for set-backs on those 8-acres and a restriction on the view from the top of the hill.
- (2) The Historical Commission has decided the **Boylston St. Mobile station** is historical, which means nothing can be done for a year. This may also be a 21E site that the various gas companies first have to clean up.
- (3) The first **student GIS mapper** has started.
- (4) The **Community Preservation Act** (House bill H3202; Senate S1513) is having a public hearing on April 7, 1 PM at the State House. Ruth Balsler will be a sponsor on the house bill, likely Kay Kahn also. We should contact Cynthia Creem in the Senate on the bill's behalf.
- (5) Following our newsletter article, the Zoning Board of Appeals will formalize its comprehensive **zoning appeals procedures** in writing, Zyg Plater will be involved.

**February Secretary's Report:** ACCEPTED without changes

**Treasurer's Report and Membership:** Mike Collora has a Quicken volunteer. Bud Elliott will try to reconcile the reporting of T-bills with this program. Two thousand letters are ready to be sent out for the **Membership Drive**, at a cost of \$1100. Lucy Caldwell Stair is now maintaining the mailing list.

**Parks and Recreation:** Mike Clarke has drafted a **manual** detailing the Parks and Recreation Commission which includes a mission statement, policies, organizational chart and current membership, various guidelines, definitions and procedures that have been established.

At present, Mike is not gifting this manual to the City, but he wants to provide copies for P & R Comm. members and city officials. We then VOTED FUNDS to do so.

One problem Mike identified is that the Parks and Recreation budget has always been rubber-stamped and P & R has not fought for increased funding. In inflation corrected dollars the P & R budget since 1993 has been flat, while school budgets increased >30%. Thus there may be some validity to Little League claims that Parks and Recreation aren't maintaining playing fields adequately.

However, at their last meeting P & R Comm. once again did not follow its own procedures, which define signs as structures, and quickly approved **signage for Lyons Field** in behalf of the Newton West Little League. There will be a final Land-Use Hearing on May 11 over the issue. Mike Clarke urged that the Conservators be there, write letters, and make separate individual arguments at the meeting -- each with something different to say. Margaret Albright volunteered to organize our opposition effort for the May 11 meeting.

Several members voiced some of the arguments that might be presented: (1) NWLL has not explored alternative fund raising methods, but only wants signs because two other Leagues have them (Marty). (2) NWLL claims it needs this money to improve fields and not increase fees for the players. But the NWLL now already generates a \$30,000/yr. Surplus -- equal to their budget -- and has the lowest fees (Marty). (3) The NNLL, which currently has such sign at their field, does not provide the required audits, and none have been filed with the Attorney General's Office since 1994 (Margaret). (4) NNLL was also putting up signs year-after-year, though some of the companies were not contributing money to the league any more (Colleen), (5) Despite P & R guidelines, one of the existing signs advertises a bar.

George Mansfield said we must be sure to direct our opposition to members of the Land Use Commission, and only after that do we need to blitz the Board of Aldermen with letters and calls. He pointed out that in the past the Little Leagues have prevailed by either circumventing the process (NNLL) or by filling the chambers with parents and children dressed in their softball uniforms (NELL). Members of the Land Use Committee to target are: Susan Basham, Chair; Christine Samuelsen, Myra Tattenbaum, Bob Dulles, Dick McGrath (however, a strong past sign supporter), Calvucci, and Terri O'Halleran.

Doug Dickson, arriving directly from a meeting on the **proposed Boston College soccer fields**, reports a reversal. Contradicting earlier statements, BC now admits it may want to install permanent outdoor lighting. BC's plans would likely not be affected by the proposed Light Trespass Ordinance, which at any rate has not progressed (Mike Clarke). BC hopes to have the larger field built by the fall. Money for **Edmands Park** is still on the table; talks continue.

**Conservation Commission.** The **gas station** was the only major issue at the last meeting (see above).

**Ordway:** The path maintenance day has been changed to April 3. There is a truck load of wood chips to be spread and saplings to be uprooted with mattocks. The 5-yr. old American chestnut tree provided by Frank Howard can be planted where a tree was removed earlier this spring.

**NewTV Committee:** A topic for the first effort has yet to be chosen. Creating a program is not simple, and Bonnie suggests working in conjunction with the more experienced Green Decade Coalition.

**Banquet / Environmentalist of the Year:** The committee proposed Louise Bruyn for Environmentalist of the Year, for her years of contribution to the community and its Green Decade Coalition. Helen Heyn voiced support; Mike Cl. seconded, and the choice was APPROVED by acclamation. We should keep in mind the Weeks Field Group for next year, and to include Steve Fateaux of the Soccer League for efforts there. The banquet is set for May 26

**Grants:** No new grant proposals were submitted. Day Junior High will be asked to make a poster summarizing their water quality project, to be displayed at our banquet. Ted and Carol Lee are working with a teacher at Burr School to integrate Dolan Pond into a class project. She plans to make a proposal to purchase ponding equipment and water testing kits soon.

**New Business:** The Board of Alderman has voted 13-11 to allow individual homeowners and businesses to install **second water meters**. As passed, metered outside water usage will not be subject to the sewer charges imposed on the City by the MWRA. These charges are currently based on the entire water bill and now run approx. 3x higher. Passage came quickly after a sudden, surprise lobbying effort involving some of the 400 residents and businesses who currently have second meters. A reconsideration was filed to recommend the measure back to the Finance Committee, which had not yet looked at the bill.

Ald. George Mansfield presented to us a proposed compromise plan that will be brought before the Board on Monday, April 1. It will allow second meters but only waives the 26% of our sewage effluent that reflects household usage (74% of the sewage effluent comes from groundwater, leaking in, and illegal hookups). Unless this reconsideration passes, the previous vote will become an ordinance and the average single-meter household will pay \$130/yr more. Ald. Mansfield thought that the compromise plan was now the only alternative, because 3 members of the Board would have to change their vote. Susan Basham (Ward 6), Mike Lipof and Rick Lipof (both Ward 8) are thought to be the most likely prospects. It appears unlikely that *legal* conflict-of-interest issues can be raised against Ald. McGrath or McGuire. The Charles River Watershed Assoc. has also asked us to join them in opposition.

There was general AGREEMENT that we should take a position opposing the second meter, supporting at the very least the 26% compromise, and send a letter to the Board before April 5. Arguments will include taxpayer equity (Hague) and an overall need to conserve water resources (Swain). Mike Clarke thought we should support the compromise but that the tone our letter should basically voice our concerns over *any* measures that encourage excess water use. Judy Hepburn agreed to draft the letter to the Alderman, with input and revision by Roger Swain and Mike Clarke before it is sent.

Anatole Zuckerman presented a **proposal to create a canal** at the western edge of Rumford. This will enable better flow through Purgatory Cove and Crans Cove and return a spur of land to its former status as an island. He thought the plan integrated well

with the MDC greenbelt and efforts to prevent the infilling of Purgatory Cove. He is wanting to write an outside grant proposal to study feasibility and needs the backing of an organization such as ours to front the proposal. Mike Clarke will ask the Grants Committee to handle the matter.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 PM,

Judy Hepburn, Secretary

### April 1999

Newton Conservators, Inc.  
Board of Directors Meeting  
April 28, 1999 - 7:30 PM - City Hall, Room 202  
(Minutes as corrected and approved at June meeting)

**Attendance:** President Mike Clarke, Margaret Albright, Stephanie Sewall Bacon, Jim Broderick, Bonnie Carter, Carol Lee Corbett, Doug Dickson, Bud Elliott, Sally Flynn, Bill Hagar, Judy Hepburn, Helen Heyn, Frank Howard, Peter Kastner, Ted Kuklinski, Colleen Minaker, Lucy Caldwell Stair Guest: Anatole Zuckerman. Guests: Alderman Dick McGrath, Con Woolley, Anatole Zuckerman.

**Secretary-Treasurer:** March minutes were APPROVED as corrected.

No Treasurer's report given.

### **Announcements:**

- Doug Dickson is attending a meeting this very evening with Terraces and Management Sciences for Health who are presenting plans for **Andover-Newton development** and will update us.
- The **Boylston St. Mobil Station** public meeting was on 4-27, but it didn't address open space. Their plans call for high-density development: 69-71 units; no mention of cluster housing. They need a special permit; no Notice of Intent has yet been filed with the Conservation Comm. (within 100 ft. of wetlands).
- **Newton West Little League** (NWLL) has come up with a compromise offer to put up a single sign (approx. 4'x6') on each backstop of their 6 maintained ball fields, instead of general advertising (approx. 43 signs) on the fences. They would be tasteful NPR-type signs, thanking supporters rather than advertisements. They'll be taken down at end of baseball season. This is the subject of a timely debate on NewTV for which Ald. McGrath requests E-mail or fax feedback. McGrath expressed his general support at tonight's meeting for either the sign compromise or giving money to maintain the ball fields directly (with no signs). Our main concern now is that the proposed compromise does not set limits; other organizations could request similar signs.

- The cost-benefit of producing a professional **NewTV video** is too high (\$75/hr). We will plan on making a tape of Trudy Coxe and our award at the banquet, doing this ourselves. Frank voiced concerns that we can get the equipment but will need help in editing.
- **BC soccer field proposals** are making progress but still in negotiation stages.
- We need to consider whether to co-sponsor planting 2000 trees for **Newton 2000**. Bud commented it is mostly harmless, just lending our name. We have already planted one American chestnut at Ordway, thanks to Frank Howard.
- **Community Preservation Act** (H3203, S1513) had a state house hearing on 4-14 and only two spoke against it. It is widely supported by Newton organizations. An amendment has been made to create the flexibility so that a community could rescind the tax at a later date.
- **ZBA** is now writing up its procedures for obtaining Comprehensive Permits.
- Ald. Dick McGrath spoke to us about **MBTA plans to develop Woodland T station and later Riverside**. The MBTA is out to maximize its profits through land development and has designated National Development of New England (NDNE) as developer of the 3.5 acre Woodland site. The MBTA planning to retain 200+ parking spaces for its riders but the parking plan is currently vague. The MA Housing Finance Agency (MHFA) is reviewing an application submitted by NDNE that calls for 140 market rate units (38 1-bedroom; 102 2-bedroom units), 35 low-income units (11 1-bedroom; 24 2-bedroom) and underground parking. The proposed affordable units comes under special permit provisions, which allows the Newton zoning to be bypassed. Our ZBA probably wouldn't grant a permit, according to McGrath. The MHFA site approval process is offered to protect sponsors who will apply for a comprehensive permit under MGL Chapt. 40B.

While McGrath supports low-income housing in principle he considers the site terrible for such intense development. NDNE is contacting the neighbors to involve them in a community process, but NDNE and the MBTA have a tight time schedule and want to go through the various steps fast. It is very vague whether they really plan to deal with any neighborhood input. The only concrete plan right now is for Woodland, where a filing is imminent, but Riverside Sta., which abuts a great deal of open space, will be next. Mike Clarke wanted to know if the city has a way to scale back the project while maintaining economic benefits? McGrath said the developer and MBTA are unwilling to do this. Susan Glazer is the contact in the Newton Planning Department.

- Ald. McGrath reiterated his position on the **second water meter issue**, which was to say they is plenty of Quabbin water that goes over the spillway and is wasted. Mike Cl. voiced the Conservator's opposing viewpoint, saying that infrastructure is everyone's responsibility.

- There will be a public workshop to discuss Newton's future on 4-29, 7-9 PM, War Auditorium. .

### **Committee Reports**

**Conservation:** Funding for feasibility study to look at the Rt. 9 drain affecting Hammond Pond and also for Houghton Gardens passed . Zoning and Planning will contribute money for conservation land signs that the Conservators will provide.

**Walks:** We are grateful to Stephanie Bacon who volunteered on short notice to lead the Hammond Pond walk, after Lawrence Kaplan could not do it for medical reasons. The Kennard Walk and the Charles River canoe trip were both well attended.

**Membership:** The new mailing (2000 people) was sent out to our current mailing list plus others obtained through trade. There's been a good response and about 300 recently paid members, including 110 that renewed through the mailing that hadn't from the earlier newsletter. New members include 21 from Trustees of Reservation, 19 from MA Audubon, 11 new homeowners, and 10 from Charles River Watershed Assoc.

**Newsletter:** The spring newsletter is out. The option of leaving an E-mail address regarding timely local issues is proving popular. We need volunteers to learn to edit and format future newsletters.

**Parks and Recreation:** P & R voted 4-3 to support the Community Preservation Act, with all alternatives voting. Peter said handbook for P & R prepared by Mike Clarke has been favorably received and regarded as quite useful -- in the spirit of the Mayor's comprehensive planning effort.

The NWLL compromise was also discussed. Peter K. said he's inclined to go along with the small plaque compromise and to support this as a citywide solution to an ongoing problem; Mike concurs as long as there's only one plaque per site. Bud would prefer to see other find-raising options but was told that the Little Leagues find this too much work. Since they've fenced in Lyons, they are getting free use of public space and their argument of "maintaining Newton's property" is fallacious, he argued. Colleen added that NNLL violates their permits all the time.

**Andover Newton:** Doug arrived with the latest: (1) purchase and sales agreement is signed, still based on only est. acreage, (2) plans still conceptual, not detailed, (3) frequent perhaps monthly meetings are planned, with a commitment to community input, (4) a dog leg on Cypress St. will be maintained as open space, (5) Management Sciences for Health, who has 2-3 acres, will site their building so as to extend a buffer zone along Langley Rd. (6) 60 units of cluster housing (15 low-income) will maintain a perimeter of 40' along Langley Path and retain maximum trees. Height restricted to 270' above s.l. exclusive of chimneys, which preserves the view from the hilltop (at 285').

**Annual Dinner:** Sally reports the annual meeting will be structured similar to past years, but we have a new Czech caterer and the price of the hall rental at Andover-Newton has doubled.

**Nominating:** Current board members will be asked if they wish to continue on the Board, as Advisors, etc. Doug thought we should in the future give a board seat to Friends of Cabot Woods, once BC issues are resolved. Mike Cl. suggested Dwight Golann from that area, who spoke effectively at the NNLL sign meeting. Bart Hague would like to move to advisors but stay active in special projects. He would like to resign from Newton Commonwealth Golf Course committee too, but wants to ensure a good successor, with Conservator input. Ted Kuklinski was introduced as new board member.

**Ordway Park:** Frank H. is watering the new 5' chestnut tree frequently. There was also an Easter egg hunt in the park for local children, sponsored by Nick Margoulis. While Jim B., Ted K. and his son worked on the paths, there are more chips to spread. May 22 from 9:30 to 12:30 is set as the date; a sign up sheet was passed around.

**Grants:** Bill Hagar reported on a grant request from **Burr School** for Dolan Park studies on aquatic life. We VOTED unanimously to fund it with \$450, as long as Martha Horn finds it compatible. Ted mentioned that last year Burr parents did path chipping there with Martha's support.

Bud E. says the Mayor is providing \$2000 for **conservation signage**. We are expending our \$2000 toward signs in 1999 and 2000, but advanced in 1999 if requested. Judy mentioned that poor signage at Kennard was widely voiced on her recent walk there; Bud will raise this point with Martha.

**New Business.** A member asked Mike Cl. that we bring up the issue of senior citizen's discounts on membership. It was soundly DEFEATED by acclamation.

Meeting adjourned at 10:15 PM.

Judith Hepburn, Secretary

### **May 1999**

Presented by Michael J. Clarke  
at the Annual Meeting of the Newton Conservators, Inc.  
Wednesday, May 26, 1999  
in Noyes Hall of the Andover-Newton Theological School

The past year has been a very busy one for the Newton Conservators. Lucy Caldwell-Stair and Mike Collora have increased our membership through a direct mail campaign, and our membership is now at a record high of 400 households. After ten years of producing our marvelous and even influential Newsletter, Bonnie Carter is stepping down as the editor, for which we owe her our heartfelt thanks for a job long done well.

Bud Elliott and Bill Hagar report that our grants program continues strong, and this year we funded grant proposals for: the Cabot School Outdoor Classroom Project, Memorial Spaulding School Ornithology project, Burr Elementary School Dolan Pond, the Mason Rice School and the Underwood School Garden Project. In addition we contributed to the Newton Pride Wildflower planting effort. We are particularly pleased that the Mayor is matching our grant to the Conservation Commission to create new kiosk trail signs that will denote trails and educational material for several of our Conservation areas. We also contributed significantly to the development of an information manual for use by the Parks and Recreation Commission, which should help that Commission to function better.

The Ordway Park Committee, chaired by Jim Broderick, undertook an extensive improvement of the park. We cleared a lot of small brush, laid out woodchips on the pathways, saw our daffodils emerge and even planted an American chestnut tree donated by Frank Howard.

Our Walks program, chaired by Judy Hepburn, remains very successful. Attendance was at record numbers due to a fine publicity program by Marty Sender. I had 8 canoes on the water on the spring canoe trip in April, and the Dolan Pond bird walk had well over 20 people on it. Special thanks to Stephanie Bacon for taking over the Hammond Pond walk at the last minute, which also went very well. The Conservators have mediated a transfer of the City's geographic information system (GIS) mapping data to Boston College. BC students are now adding GPS-determined trail maps to the data base, which will be available to the City and to the Conservators for the next edition of our map of the City's open spaces.

The 20 of the 40 acres of land now surrounding us here on the Andover Newton Campus is in the process of being sold. We are continuing to work with Andover Newton, Hebrew College, Management Sciences for Health and Terraces, LLC an affordable housing developer to preserve as much of this beautiful open space as possible. We have also been trying to influence the proposed development nearby at the intersection of Langley Rd. and Rte. 9, to preserve both the historic gas station at this corner and also the wetlands behind.

Paralleling the affordable housing development on the Andover Newton Campus is a similar one proposed for the Woodland T Station. Somewhat alarming was the precipitous bulldozing of the open space area over the weekend, without the promised consultation with the neighbors or waiting to see if State Representative Kay Khan's legislation requiring the T to plan comprehensively for such developments would pass.

Both the affordable housing developments on the Andover Newton Campus and the Woodland T station would come under Comprehensive Permits, which must be granted by the Newton Zoning Board of Appeals. The editorial in our February Newsletter and our letters to City Hall asking that the Zoning Board of Appeals write down their procedures for granting Comprehensive Permits, so that both developers and the general

public would be able to influence the process, seem to be bearing fruit. Such rules have now been submitted to the City Solicitor and we can expect them to be discussed soon by the ZBA.

The long-standing controversy about advertising signs on our city ball fields may be approaching a resolution. The Newton West Little League has agreed to acknowledge donors that help support field maintenance on a single 4 x 6 ft plaque rather than on 43, 4 x 8 foot signs. Hopefully, the same solution will apply to the two remaining Little Leagues that have not yet requested permission for such signs. Perhaps, the other two Little Leagues that now erect large numbers of advertising signs may be induced to adopt the same solution. Partly as a result of NWLL claims that ball fields in the city were unsafe, we attempted to increase the Parks and Rec. operating budget.

Bud Elliott and Norm Richardson have been participating in the Mayor's important Framework Planning Committee. The draft open space guidelines distributed at the public meeting on the Framework Plan at the end of April appeared to be an excellent start. The Conservators will have to make sure that strong open space guidelines survive to the final new Master Plan for the City.

The Conservators long-standing support of the advancement of the Charles River Pathway continues to have results. The MDC is about to send out a request for proposals to design the next sections of the Pathway from Bridge St. to Farwell St., which would require a new footbridge across Cheesecake Brook.

The Mayor's Flowed Meadow Committee meets even as we speak, and there are a number of people there tonight who would be in attendance here, and some here, including myself, who would be there, if it were possible. This committee should design a comprehensive plan for conservation, passive recreation, the Charles River Pathway and even a canoe launch site on Purgatory Cove. The plan should integrate the capped Rumford landfill, the Flowed Meadow Conservation area, the MDC Grove Park, Auburndale and Lyons Parks, the Charles River Pathway and subsidiary trails connecting these and the surrounding neighborhoods.

After considerable legal wrangling and sputtering negotiations, Boston College, the Friends of Edmands Park and the Conservation Commission have finally reached an agreement, which will allow BC their soccer fields, but also provide a comprehensive plan for Edmands Park and money for improvements. Our thanks to Doug Dickson for representing the Conservators in this process and contributing to its success.

Finally, we have garnered the support of the Conservation Commission, the Newton Housing Partnership, the Newton Historical Society, and the Parks and Recreation Commission for the Community Preservation Act. This bill is now before the state legislature and would enable all communities in Massachusetts to hold their own referendum to decide whether to provide funds for open space, historic preservation and affordable housing. Communities on the Cape and Islands have already been empowered

to introduce new taxes for open space, if they so choose, and the process has been very successful.

I am also pleased to report that our finances remain solvent. Our income last year was \$16,393 against expenses of \$13,767, yielding a net income of \$2,605. Our investment and bank account portfolio stands at \$95,797 against liabilities of \$5,338 giving us a net equity of \$90,459.

In summary, I am pleased to say that the Newton Conservators, Inc. has made substantial progress in its advocacy for open space in Newton. I am happy to turn over a strong, well-functioning, and very effective organization to our soon to be elected new officers. I would particularly like to thank our most recent past presidents, Roger Feinstein, whose literary eloquence I have tried to emulate, Peter Kastner, whose opinions on public policy I freely plagiarized, and Bud Elliot for always telling me what I ought to be doing. Finally, my thanks to Doug Dickson for sharing the responsibility with me and to whom I will very shortly and very happily turn over full responsibility for running the organization.