

THE NEWTON CONSERVATORS

LAND SELECTION CRITERIA

ADOPTED NOVEMBER 17, 2004

MISSION STATEMENT (as related to conservation goals)

The Newton Conservators promote the protection and preservation of natural areas, including parks, park lands, playgrounds, forests and streams, which are open or may be converted to open spaces for the enjoyment and benefit of the people of Newton for scientific study, education, and recreation.

A primary goal is to foster the acquisition of land and other facilities to be used for the encouragement of scientific, recreational, educational, literary and the other public pursuits that will promote good citizenship and the general welfare in the City of Newton.

The 'Conservation Values' and the 'Requirements and Considerations' (below) list the criteria the Newton Conservators will use to determine whether they should become involved in an effort to preserve a property.

Summary Outline:

CONSERVATION VALUES:

**OPEN SPACE and SCENIC VIEWS
PUBLIC POLICY
ECOLOGICAL / HABITAT / WILDLIFE SIGNIFICANCE
WATERSHED PROTECTION**

REQUIREMENTS AND CONSIDERATIONS:

**ORGANIZATIONAL ISSUES
PHYSICAL ISSUES
FINANCIAL ISSUES
STEWARDSHIP ISSUES
COMMUNITY ISSUES**

Detail Outline:

CONSERVATION VALUES:

OPEN SPACE and SCENIC VIEWS:

1. The property has natural character or is a scenic landscape, visible from publicly accessible sites, which would be impaired by modification.
2. The property lies in close proximity to conserved properties which similarly preserve the existing natural habitat
3. The property provides its vicinity with relief from urban closeness and the deterioration of the natural state of nearby land.

PUBLIC POLICY:

4. The City of Newton has listed this area in its Comprehensive Open Space Plan.
5. Another governmental body has listed the property as an ecological, natural, or scenic resource.
6. The property should be preserved pursuant to a clearly delineated federal, state, or local conservation policy.

ECOLOGICAL / HABITAT / WILDLIFE SIGNIFICANCE:

7. The property contains significant natural habitats in which animals and plants thrive in a natural state.
8. The property provides vital corridor wetlands and upland wildlife habitats which serve as a connection for wildlife movement and create a natural "greenway" between other natural areas.
9. The property supports rare or endangered species.

WATERSHED PROTECTION:

10. The property provides important natural land within a watershed and helps to ensure the quality and quantity of water resources for the area.
11. The property includes frontage on a river, stream, or lake.
12. Sections of the property are situated on hillsides with slopes greater than 20% that are adjacent to or in close proximity to a body of water or stream; the vegetated slopes would be highly susceptible to erosion damage and accelerated stormwater runoff that could adversely affect water quality if trees or other vegetation were removed.

REQUIREMENTS AND CONSIDERATIONS:

ORGANIZATIONAL ISSUES:

Requirements:

1. The acquisition is consistent with the Conservators' mission.
2. The transaction is legal and ethical.
3. Good title can be obtained (for a fee simple acquisition) or suitable terms can be negotiated for an easement or other use restriction.

Other Considerations:

4. This project will positively affect the Conservators' public image.
5. The property is big enough to make the Conservation Values meaningful.
6. The owner will accept our preference and terms for the acquisition.
7. The acquisition is likely to motivate other property owners to protect open space that is under their control.
8. We have identified a party which will be willing and able to take over our role if we dissolve as an entity.

PHYSICAL ISSUES:

Requirements:

9. The boundaries of the property are clearly defined on a plan, and markers on the ground are permanent and visible.
10. The site is free from contamination and dumping (or the resources are available for needed remediation) and can be kept so.

Other Considerations:

11. The property is in a natural state (or it is likely to be able to be naturalized within whatever budget is available)
12. The property is stable, not subject to erosion or other adverse condition that may require expenditure for correction (or the resources are available for needed maintenance).
13. The land is safe, and not an attractive nuisance.
14. The site has available, or does not need water or other, utilities for proper maintenance.

FINANCIAL ISSUES:

Requirements:

15. We have estimated the likely costs of acquisition and ownership or stewardship, in terms of both money and time.
16. We have identified funding for our costs.

Other Considerations:

17. There will be an endowment for the property.
18. Our interest will not be subject to taxation
19. We will not be asked to pay for road betterments, such as for curbing or street work.
20. We will not be taking on an unusual cost for insurance as a result of hazards at the site.

STEWARDSHIP ISSUES:

Requirements:

21. The prohibited and allowed uses of the property are well-defined and can be easily monitored.
22. Pertinent City Ordinances and Board Orders have been identified and are manageable.
23. We will have appropriate access to the property.
24. We have considered and are satisfied with public access issues. (Does the public use the property now?)
25. A member of the Conservators is available to monitor the property for violations, encroachments, etc. at least once a year for a period of years.
26. We can place appropriate signage, including identifying the Conservators' role.

Other Considerations:

27. We have formulated a management plan for this property.
28. We will have baseline documentation at closing. (for owner to sign, if a CR)

COMMUNITY ISSUES:

Requirements:

29. Neighbors and the community support preservation of this property.

Other Considerations:

30. We have decided how to make our ownership known to neighbors and the community.
31. There is a community leader who will assume some responsibilities.
32. We have identified specific educational opportunities related to this property.