



*Working to preserve open space in Newton for 45 years!*

*the Newton Conservators*

# NEWSLETTER

Winter Issue

[www.newtonconservators.org](http://www.newtonconservators.org)

February / March 2006

## BURYING UTILITY WIRES IN NEWTON

The proliferation of overhead wires is gradually but steadily eroding the character of Newton's historic neighborhoods. As cable providers (Comcast, RCN, Verizon) upgrade their offerings, larger cables are being added to the overhead tangle, complete with clumps of associated hardware. Streets with well maintained Victorian homes and carefully tended lawns and gardens are beginning to look like industrial sites. Wire pollution is detracting from the streetscape and mutilates the many trees subjected to pruning to make room for the equipment.

Many other Massachusetts towns are addressing this blight with projects to bury utility wires and cables underground. At the urging of former alderman John Stewart, the Mayor formed a task force one year ago to look into the issue for Newton. The group, consisting of city staffers, aldermen and citizens, has been meeting monthly since then, investigating the feasibility of implementing undergrounding projects.

It is easy to find support for the idea of undergrounding—it's funding the effort that is difficult. Estimates of the cost per linear foot of wiring have ranged from a low of about \$200 to as much as \$500—between \$1 million and \$2.6 million per mile. The Task Force has recently established a Web site ([www.newtonundergrounding.com](http://www.newtonundergrounding.com)) that offers a way for you to learn about their activities and get involved.

As Task Force chairperson, I published an op-ed article in the Boston Globe last August that aimed to

*(Continued on page 2)*



*Tangle of overhead utility wires that detract from views and mangle street trees throughout the city. (Photo by Lois Beiner)*

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

## *High Time to Go Underground*

Like many of my neighbors, the view from my front yard has changed over the past few years. The number of above-ground telephone and cable wires keeps increasing as new companies and technologies emerge. There are now nine wires strung between utility poles in front of my house on Winchester Street. These have become my new view and the trees whose branches were cut to protect the wires are less in evidence.

*(Continued on page 3)*

wake people up to the ominous overhead developments (see reprint on this page).

The Task Force is currently working on several fronts to advance its mission of facilitating undergrounding and mitigating the negative impact of the existing overhead wiring. They are currently:

- Working with the Department of Public Works and Department of Planning and Development to include undergrounding on Needham Street as part of the road reconstruction project planned for 2007/2008. The most likely means for funding that project is through the establishment of a Business Improvement District being discussed with property owners.
- Consulting with the city's law department and Telecommunications Advisory Board to strengthen enforcement of current state and city ordinances regarding poorly maintained cabling, low-hanging wires and sagging poles (see examples of current violations in accompanying photos.)
- Developing a manual to simplify and clarify the procedures for individuals who would like to underground utilities on their own property.
- Exploring options for reducing the cost of undergrounding so that it becomes a feasible option for more Newton citizens.

The Task Force invites your comments and suggestions through its Web site:  
[www.newtonundergrounding.com](http://www.newtonundergrounding.com).

*Lois Beiner*



*Low-hanging wires tied (at center of photo) to keep trucks from knocking them down. (Photos by Lois Beiner)*

**The Boston Globe**

## ***Look up and see...wires***

*By Lois Beiner*

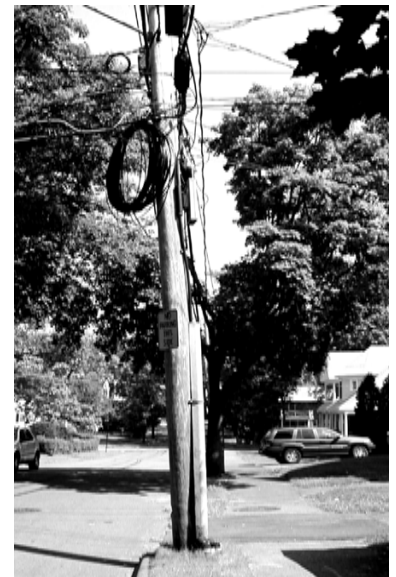
IN STARK contrast to the public outcry at the sight of a single wind generator on the Boston skyline, there has been relatively little response to the creeping wire blight outside most of our front doors. Utility providers are getting a free ride as they add more and more overhead wires and equipment. In addition to the visual pollution, the wires and poles are increasingly a safety hazard. Last July, Newton Centre was effectively shuttered when six utility poles crashed down on Beacon Street, most likely due to a truck snagging a low-hanging wire.

The utilities have gotten away with it thus far because of the slow-motion nature of this pollution—initially a pole here and there, three or four slim wires almost hidden in the leaves. But poles that once held a few electric wires and a telephone wire now support nine or more. Heavy junction boxes and tension brackets make tracks across the wires and across our view of the sky. Poles are now sprouting permanent work platforms left there for the company's convenience. Coils of unused wire are left behind, perhaps waiting for the opportunity to bring in a new customer. It's as if you had a neighbor who parked his business's dumpster and inventory in your front yard.

Each new cable provider leases space from the pole owner and increases visual pollution for the rest of us. The most intrusive cable is the most recent one installed by Verizon as part of its multimillion dollar broadband fiber-to-the-premises deployment, known as Fios. How many more companies will add to the blight in the future?

*(Continued on page 3)*

***Look Up and See*** (continued from page 2)



*Coils of cable hang from poles despite city ordinance requiring removal within 24 hours.*

In Newton, city ordinances were designed to minimize the intrusiveness of overhead wires, requiring wires to be placed together in bundles and not strung helter-skelter along the streets. No unused coil or loose end of wire may be left on the ground or remain attached to a pole for more than 24 hours. All unused or abandoned wires must be removed in 24 hours, or the owner or lessee of the wire must pay the



*Permanent work platform for the convenience of Verizon technicians mars the view.*

expense of having the city do the removal. Poles must be maintained in good repair and upright. State law mandates that double poles, erected when a pole is replaced or relocated, must be removed within 90 days. Clearly, our ordinances are not enforced. Even after hearings before the state Department of Telecommunications and Energy, NStar and

Verizon still have hundreds of double poles in Newton in violation of state law.

What is to be done? The best option is to bury the wires in underground conduits. This is done in all new developments in Newton, but the cost of undergrounding in established communities is high—between \$500,000 and \$2 million per mile. According to current state law, this cost must be borne entirely by utility customers in communities served by NStar or Mass Electric via surcharges to their bills. This is an unpopular option, and an unfair one: NStar or Mass Electric shareholders end up with an updated, more reliable system at no cost to them. There are possibly other funding mechanisms, which our Newton Task Force is investigating.

Meanwhile, do we have to remain helpless while our graceful residential streets are being transformed into industrial corridors of dense cables and ancillary hardware? Do we have to permit our neighborhoods to function as storehouses for idle cable company equipment so that their stockholders can benefit from the free use of our environmental resources?

We must not remain passive while this abuse continues. We must, first of all, demand that these

companies respect our visual environment and not erect sloppy tangles of wires and hardware with the only goal of reducing their labor costs and increasing their profits. We must require that they pay fair value for access to our streets and that they contribute to a multi-year plan to place their infrastructure underground. We must add teeth to the current municipal ordinances and state laws and implement additional regulations that take account of new developments in fiber-optic business practices. At the very least, we need to look up and speak up.

*Lois Biener is chair of the Newton Task Force on Undergrounding Utilities*

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### ***President's Message, continued from page 1***

Additional cable companies will mean even more wires. It is time to go underground with utility wires for a more aesthetic and safe environment. Newton should consider placing utility wires underground as part of major road reconstruction and as village centers and other central locations are redesigned.

Some of the cost of placing utilities underground is saved by preventing the weathering of above-ground structures as well as damage from wind, snow and ice, falling trees and vehicle collisions. California has underground utilities to prevent major damage from earthquakes.

Many cities and towns in New England have already begun to place utilities underground. Towns like Lexington and Concord have worked to improve the attractiveness of their town centers and add realism to their annual battle reenactments. Others, including Arlington, Middleton, Needham, Natick, Reading, Sudbury, Wakefield, Watertown, Wellesley, and Winchester, have focused on safety as well as aesthetics in undertaking undergrounding projects.

Many of these ideas were expressed in a report\* made to the Massachusetts Historical Commission back in 1993. The authors asked, "Do we have to be ugly?" and that certainly captures the incentive for action now to start placing necessary but intrusive utilities underground.

*Bill Hagar*

*\*Reference: "Do we have to be ugly? The ubiquitous utility pole continues to desecrate New England's village greens and historic sites," by Henry G. Pearson and Ronald Lee Fleming, © The Townscape Institute, Inc., 1993.*

## ***Impact of Overhead Utilities on Street Trees***

*The following Letter to the Editor appeared in the Boston Globe in September 2005:*

Overhead utility lines are indeed ugly (“Look up and see...wires” 8/27/05). They are also a threat to one of Newton's greatest assets: its 33,000 street trees, which contribute inestimably to the city's beauty, character, and property values. About half of those trees grow under, and into, utility wires. Each utility company (cable, telephone, and electric) installs its wires in its assigned location on the pole (cable wires below telephone wires below electric wires) and prunes to clear its passageway through the tree canopy, very often not following proper pruning guidelines. The trees are inevitably the losers: mutilated time after time, many bizarre shapes stand as stark reminders of the conflict between wires and trees. Burying the wires underground would avoid this conflict, allow more shade trees to be planted and nurtured, and help ensure that beautiful shade trees continue to grace our streets for generations to come.

*Katherine Howard, Chair, Newton Urban Tree Commission  
(Katherine is also treasurer of the Newton Conservators)*



*Pruning of street trees to provide clear passage for three sets of wires disfigures the trees, weakens their structure and shortens their useful lives. (Photos by Doug Dickson)*

## MISSION

**Newton Conservators, Inc.**

The Newton Conservators promotes the protection and preservation of natural areas, including parks, playgrounds, forests and streams, which are open or may be converted to open space for the enjoyment and benefit of the people of Newton. It further aims to disseminate information about these and other environmental matters.

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

*The Newton Conservators was formed as a not-for-profit organization 45 years ago in June 1961.*



*Improper pruning has promoted growth that will require even more extensive trimming in the near future.*

**The Newton Conservators Newsletter**© is published five times each year by the Newton Conservators, Inc. Issues usually appear in mid-February, April, June, September and November. Deadlines for these issues are the fifth of each month in which an issue is scheduled to be published.

We welcome material related to our mission from any source. Send proposed articles by email in MS Word or rich text format to [dgdickson@rcn.com](mailto:dgdickson@rcn.com). Digitized photographs, maps and diagrams are also welcome.

Editor: Doug Dickson 617-969-8661  
Production: Bonnie Carter 617-969-0686

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## ***PRESERVING THE DELL***

The Dell is a hollow that occupies several acres in Newton Corner. The Hyde Brook starts there at a spring and heads downstream through the hollow. A

few hundred years ago, the stream would have been a trickle in a forest. A lot has happened to The Dell in



*Hyde Brook flows through The Dell, recently donated to the Conservators for preservation. (Photos by Eric Reenstierna)*

a few hundred years: foundation holes that are lined with rocks, an abandoned gazebo and concrete at the stone banks of the brook. A two-car garage sits atop the spring. An occasional pipe marks a property corner. A hundred years ago, The Dell was cut up into people's yards. Today, it is a mix of lawn and woods. Much of it is going back to nature. Big trees have grown up on the untended parts. The Hyde Brook still flows down through its bottom. Wildlife makes its home in The Dell. Neighborhood kids go back there and find adventure.

Tony and Pamela Awtrey owned a part of The Dell until recently. Tony is a retired architect. He and Pamela bought a house in the 1970s that backs up to The Dell. They also bought a big, one-acre empty lot that ran downhill into The Dell.

Tony believes in what he calls the "missing teeth" in our suburban landscape, the empty lots and protected places that preserve a less disturbed past. The Awtreys pretty much let nature have its way with the land. In the 30 years they have owned it, the trees have grown. The foundation holes from the stable and the gazebo that aren't there any more have crumbled a little. Tony has seen plenty of wildlife in The Dell—deer, coyotes and wild turkeys. A brush pile and a big dead tree make good nesting places. Kids built up the foundation hole of the gazebo with branches and use it as a fort. Tony walks his dogs out in the woods.

Tony and Pam wanted to see their part of The Dell preserved as open space. In December, they

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made a gift of their half-acre that is in the hollow to The Conservators. The Conservators will manage the land as the Awtreys have, as open space. The Awtreys gave us an easement through their side yard so that we can get at it, to observe what is happening with the land. We will watch for downed trees that may pose a hazard. We will take an inventory of the trees and other growth there. In time, we may perform selective thinning, to favor native species and remove invasives. The Awtreys accompanied their gift of land with an endowment for its management. They also included their neighbors in the gift. They gave each neighbor a "view easement," a right to a view of the land in its natural state. That part of the gift enlists the neighbors as a group to help provide good stewardship for the land.



*An old tree provides nesting, shelter and shade for wildlife in The Dell in Newton Corner.*

The Conservators and the Awtreys hope that others may join in dedicating other chunks of The Dell for protection. A place like The Dell is important to a neighborhood. Our vision and the Awtreys' is that more and more of The Dell will come under protection so that the community can always enjoy it as open space.

*Eric Reenstierna*

## ***February and April Environmental Shows Focus on Local Wildlife***

Students at the Horace Mann Elementary School seemed to have a little more in common with their

counterparts at Hogwarts recently when a great-horned owl took up residence for most of the morning on a baseball backstop at Albemarle Field, adjacent to the school. The magnificent foot-tall bird, nicknamed "Winky" by the children, was apparently unfazed by the rapt attention of all the teachers and students who came out to view quite closely this unusual live exemplar of wildlife in Newton during their recess. Winky even appeared serene in the face of dive bombing from nearby crows.



*Winky (upper right) poses for his admirers at the Horace Mann School. (Photos by Ted Kuklinski)*

Teachers, some of whom were taking pictures of the celebrity owl with their cell phones, viewed this as a learning opportunity for their charges. Back in class, the kids quickly became familiar with owl facts, worked on drawings, wrote stories and even sculpted some owl figures in the snow outside.

Such wildlife encounters are becoming increasingly common in cities such as Newton. In recent years, a bald eagle was spotted feasting on fresh Charles River fish on the same field, an otter was found cavorting in a West Newton swimming pool, a turkey was harassing a postal worker in Newtonville, a wild moose chase occurred in our fair city, and deer, coyote, fox, Newton Conservators N



*Winky, a wild great-horned owl, gets up close and personal with students.*

and even fisher sightings are more common than ever.

This month's Environmental Show, entitled "Living with Wildlife in Newton—Part One" is presented by the Newton Conservators. In the show, Colleen Olfenbuttel, a staff biologist with the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, provides some perspective on the phenomenon of why we see more wildlife locally these days, based on her slide-show lecture at the Newton Library last December.

After hunting and the clear cutting of Massachusetts forests for farming led to a decline in animal populations, the re-growth of forests has led to a return of many species. Animals find the suburban habitat and available food sources well suited to their needs. The show explains the habits and characteristics of many of the creatures who have adopted Newton as their home.

The proximity of wildlife sometimes leads to conflict. "Living with Wildlife—Part Two", to be broadcast in April, deals with practical steps that can be taken by residents to minimize such conflicts and to help residents coexist peacefully with their wildlife neighbors.

The Newton Conservators alternate presentations of the Environmental Show with the Green Decade Coalition each month. The Environmental Show is currently shown on NewTV's Blue Channel ([www.newtv.org](http://www.newtv.org)) on Monday (3 pm), Tuesday (1:30 am, 11:30 pm), Wednesday (11:30 am), Thursday (12 pm, 4 pm, 7:30 pm), and Saturday (10 am).

*Ted Kuklinski*



## **Pesticide Awareness Month and Integrated Pest Management**

Newton's Alternatives to Pesticides Month and the city's Integrated Pest Management policy go hand in hand. Both are city traditions dating back to 1997 and both exist for the same reason: to get us to think about the consequences of our habit of adding unnecessary toxins to our city environment. They also help us learn about alternatives and how to reduce the use of toxics in our homes and yards as well as in our city buildings, parks, and grounds.



March is Alternatives to Pesticides Month, as it has been for ten years now. This year's theme is "Pets and Pesticides" and the featured event will be an Environmental Speaker Series presentation at the Newton Free Library on Monday, March 27, at 7 pm. Guest speakers will be Chip Osborne and Pat Beckett, co-founders of the *Living Lawn* Project and Marblehead Pesticide Awareness Committee, and Regina Downey, a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine at the Coastal Animal Clinic. They will present "How to Keep Your Pets Healthy and Grass Green." The event is free and open to the public and is co-sponsored by Green Decade Coalition of Newton, the Newton Free Library, SPIN (Stray Pets in Need) and Buddy Dog Humane Society, Inc.

Educational outreach to the community is a major part of Alternatives to Pesticides Month. In addition to the Speaker Series, there will be a display at the library with information about pamphlets, newsletters, books, newspapers, videos and even a board game. Other related information will be in the TAB and on the NewTV Environmental Show.

An important part of Newton's effort to seek and use alternatives to toxins is the Integrated Pest Management program. IPM is a set of practices and strategies that evolved from widespread agricultural research started in the late 1950s in response to pesticide misuse problems, non-target effects and increased resistance by the targets of pesticide treatments. The science of IPM is sophisticated and has taken advantage of advances in computing, operations research, systems analysis and modeling. But in the end, IPM comes down to common sense: it's safer, more effective and more economical to "outsmart" pests with non-toxic methods. Pests can be any living thing that shows up where we don't want it to be. Pests can range from insects, birds or rodents to poison ivy and crabgrass. Poisoning these pests is not only a dangerous approach with unintended adverse affects, but over the long term, it is less effective than IPM strategies, such as controlling points of entry, eliminating dampness or standing water, or removing food sources.

The Massachusetts Children's Protection Act of 2000 requires that schools and other child care programs prepare and file IPM plans with the Massachusetts Department of Agriculture Resources. Newton, the first municipality in the state to establish a comprehensive IPM policy, has complied with this

law. But work continues on full implementation of IPM in all of Newton's buildings and landscapes.

Watch for an upcoming series of articles in the TAB Environmental Pages on Integrated Pest Management in Newton.

*Ed Cunningham*

Green Decade Coalition Speaker Series Presents

### ***Pets & Pesticides: How to Keep Your Pets Healthy & Grass Green***

Monday, March 27 at 7 pm, Newton Free Library

*Free and Open to the Public*

Guest Speakers: **Dr. Regina Downey**, Medical Director at the Coastal Animal Clinic, and **Chip Osborne & Pat Beckett**, co-founders of the *Living Lawn*, an eight-year-old organic lawn and garden demonstration project. It has won numerous awards, most recently a Massachusetts Environmental Purchasing and Sustainability Award in 2004 and *Natural Homes and Gardens* magazine Earth Movers award in November 2005.

Family pets are often doubly exposed to pesticides in our attempt to rid them of pests and keep our lawns weed free. In America, residential use of pesticides is dramatically increasing as agricultural use declines. Last year, the EPA announced a major manufacturer of flea and tick treatments was pulling off the market several products associated with a range of adverse reactions, including hair loss, salivation, tremors, and numerous deaths in cats and kittens. Our guest speakers will discuss the risks involved with many common pesticides and safer alternatives for use at home.

Join us early at 6:45 for a sneak preview of "**The Truth about Cats, Dogs, and Lawn Pesticides**," a documentary video under production by Jody Shapiro and Sanford Lewis of the Strategic Counsel on Corporate Accountability.

*Lucia Dolan, GreenCAP*

## **Kessler Woods Update**

The Kessler Woods agreement with Cornerstone Corporation is producing more open space for Newton than was originally planned. The additional open space is the result of negotiations between the developer of the housing (Cornerstone) and the city's Planning Department.

The city partnered with Cornerstone in the successful bid for Kessler Woods in 2003. Since then, Cornerstone has presented the Planning Department with its design for condominiums on the high ground at the north end of the parcel on

LaGrange Street near the Brookline town line. Later, the plan will go to the Board of Aldermen for a special permit.

Tom Southworth of Cornerstone spoke to the Conservators' Board of Directors at its January meeting and took questions. Mr. Southworth compared the original plan to the current plan. The original plan called for multiple townhouse buildings and surface parking lots spread across the entire hilltop. The new plan calls for most of the units to be consolidated into a single, main building at the middle of the hill. All the parking is to go into a central garage under the building, requiring less land. The development will require removal of ten feet of ledge, on average, where the buildings will stand to keep parking below grade and to allow the buildings to achieve a low profile. Land along LaGrange Street that originally was planned for townhouses is to remain in its wooded state, leaving the streetscape as a natural corridor.

Materials to be used in the exterior of the buildings are stucco and stone. The Conservators have advocated for "green building" technology in new public buildings in the city. The condominium is not a public building but we support the technology here as well. Mr. Southworth indicated that the plan is not yet well enough developed for him to say whether green building technology will be used.

During the last city-wide election, some candidates tried to make Kessler Woods an issue, suggesting that public money was being used to aid a developer and to buy a swamp. In the heat of a campaign, facts can be lost. For the record, here are the facts:

- Cornerstone paid \$10 million for 11.5 acres of upland that is the actual site of its developments (the land inside the "hay bale line").
- The city paid \$5 million and got protection of 30.5 acres, or 73% of the land.
- The land the city got contains more developable upland than the land Cornerstone got.
- Half the city's \$5 million is from Newton taxpayers and the other half is matching funds from the state.
- Cornerstone has agreed to pay \$75,000 for installation of new trails.
- 20% of the new housing at Kessler will be affordable, helping to meet an ongoing and serious need in Newton.

The \$2.5 million actually paid by Newton taxpayers went a long way. The purchase was a bargain from any perspective. The 30.5 acres of open space at Kessler are a link between existing city-owned conservation holdings along the Saw Mill Brook, creating a contiguous 55 acres of mixed upland and wetland habitat (see map on next page).

Martha Horn of the Conservation Commission indicates that the Commission, which has control of the \$75,000 for trails, will likely use part of the funds to hire a wildlife biologist, who will make recommendations about trail locations and management of the land. One existing path is atop a drain easement that runs from LaGrange Street to Saw Mill Brook. The Conservators have advocated for a trail to reach the high rocky outcrops on the edge of the proposed condominium parcel. Hikers go to the high ground for the views available there over land to the south. Siting a trail there requires sensitivity, because some of the best locations for views are adjacent to the proposed new buildings.

Brookline abutters near the proposed condominium have opposed the new construction. A Brookline state representative filed a legislative proposal to extend the boundary of land regulated under the Rivers Act to 1,000 feet at this location, whereas a margin of 200 feet applies at this and all other similar locations across the state. The proposal would prevent Cornerstone's development. The Conservators opposed the effort in a letter to the chair of the committee hearing the proposal. One reason

*(Continued on page 9)*

***Kessler Woods Update, continued from page 8***

for our opposition was that denial of the development could be seen as a failure of the city to complete an agreement with a developer, making the city a less reliable partner in future agreements. And, we argued, an extension would do harm to the Rivers Act itself. The Act has become an important tool for the protection of land along rivers and streams. If it can be extended and re-worked simply as an anti-development tool at the discretion of neighbors, the Act itself is weakened and could some day face repeal. The Mayor and others from the city met with the committee chair at the State House to argue against the proposal. Mr. Southworth reports that the proposal appears unlikely to pass.

Kessler Woods was a success the day the bids were opened and the City of Newton/Cornerstone



partnership won the bid. The plan protects the land from much more extensive development and assures public access to a large open space that could have been shut off in a development of single-family house lots. The changes the city has achieved through

negotiations since that time have created further protections for open space in that area of our community.

*Eric Reenstierna*



*Map of Kessler Woods showing two areas currently owned by the city (outlined in white) and an area of conservation restriction, which will be deeded to the city once the condominium project is complete. The Conservators will hold conservation restrictions on each of these parcels to further protect the land. The current plan for the condominium project is shown in the lower right hand corner. Just above it is the 13-lot single-family home project currently under construction.*

*Land on the left side of the map labeled "City of Newton" is Saw Mill Brook Conservation Area (20 acres), acquired by the city in 1979-1985. Another parcel at the top center, also labeled "City of Newton," is Bald Pate Meadow Conservation Area (5 acres). These two properties are linked by the Kessler Woods acquisition. On the far left side of the map, Saw Mill Brook Conservation Area connects to a cemetery in West Roxbury, then to Brook Farm (179 acres, owned by the state DCR) and the new Millennium Park in Boston (100 acres). Just off the map at the upper right corner lies the Kennard Park and Conservation Area in Newton (48 acres) and the Lost Pond Reservation and Conservation Area in Brookline (58 acres). Because of these contiguous and/or proximate parcels, Kessler Woods creates a near-perfect link in a chain of open spaces that covers well over 400 acres of land.*

*(Map courtesy of Cornerstone Corporation)*

earlier this year. The house, which will add to the supply of NHA family housing, recently received a brand new roof thanks to mild January weather. Interior renovations are underway and a new furnace has been installed. The contractor is Vareika Construction Company and the estimated cost for all exterior and interior renovations is about \$164,000.

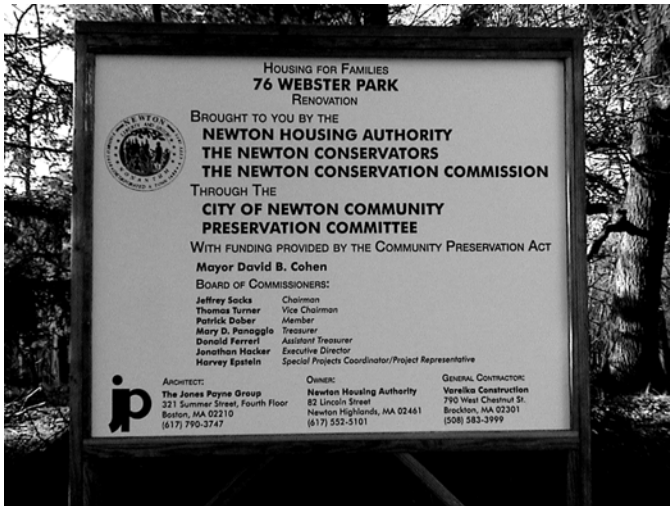
The NHA has a new sign on the parcel: "Housing for Families - 76 Webster Park – Renovation," which indicates the participation of

## ***76 Webster Park CPA Project Moves Ahead***

At long last, some serious work has begun at the 76 Webster Park CPA site. The Newton Housing Authority (NHA) received a building permit for renovations to the Forte house on the property

the Newton Conservators in bringing this project forward in cooperation with the NHA and the Newton Conservation Commission.

Habitat for Humanity has a new Executive Director for the Boston area, Lark Palermo, who has become familiar with the project. Habitat is in the process of obtaining a building permit and plans to break ground on the rear double-housing unit in the spring. There will be a call for volunteers this spring, which will be handled through the city's volunteer coordinator, Bev Droz.



*Sign at the Forte property at Dolan Pond, crediting work being done by the Housing Authority. (Photo by Ted Kuklinski)*

The Conservators, NHA, Habitat for Humanity, and the city are working to finalize all legal requirements. Conservation Restrictions have been cleared by the state Department of Environmental Protection and the city's Conservation Commission. The agreements should be executed in the near future, which will lead to conveyance of the NHA, Habitat and Conservation Commission parcels. The 76 Webster Park project, combining aspects of open space, community housing and historic preservation, is finally coming to fruition this year.

*Ted Kuklinski*

of weeks. The farm will operate on a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) model, as expected, with most of the produce sold to shareholders who pay their fees in advance. Produce will also be sold at the Farmer's Market and at a stand on-site.

A contract between NCF and the Angino Farm Commission, the board that administers the farm for the city, is still in negotiation. Most details have been worked out, but two remain to be resolved. If the farmer hired by NCF has young children, then the Angino house will need to be de-leaded, an expense that was not anticipated in the budget for repairs provided through CPA funds. Whether the work is needed, and who will pay for it if it is required, is not yet clear.

The other outstanding issue is a requirement for an extensive annual audit be completed and paid for by NCF. The audit required by the Board of Aldermen in the Angino Farm ordinance would cost NCF between \$5000 and \$8000 each year, steep for a fledgling non-profit. It is hoped that some middle ground can be reached between what is actually needed versus what is specified.

Work to make the house habitable for the farmer and other purposes is nearly complete. Improvements include a new roof, a new furnace and sewer service from the street. Only the lead paint issue remains as a significant item. A beam in the barn needs to be replaced but it is otherwise

*(Continued on page 11)*

*Angino Farm, continued from page 10*

in excellent condition.

NCF received permission to erect a greenhouse for growing seedlings on the back property line last fall. An early December snowstorm delayed installation, which will now occur in the spring. Seedlings for early planting will be purchased this year instead of being grown on-site.

*Doug Dickson*

## ANGINO FARM UPDATE

As spring approaches, work continues on the activities required to get the farm up and running. Newton Community Farm, Inc. (NCF), the group that will operate the farm, has prepared a business plan and is interviewing applicants for the farmer position. The field of applicants is surprisingly strong but a decision is expected in the next couple



*Commemorative bench at Angino Farm, which reads "To Celebrate and to Honor the Angino Family Farm."*

## Meeting Calendar

**Newton Conservators Board** meets the third Wednesday of every month at 7:30 pm, usually in a City Hall meeting room or the City Hall cafeteria.

**Angino Farm Commission** meets the first Thursday of every month at 7:00 pm in City Hall Room 209.

**Community Preservation Committee** meets the last Wednesday of every month at 7:00 pm in City Hall Room 209.

**Conservation Commission** meets the fourth Thursday of every month at 7:30 pm in City Hall Room 209.

**Parks and Recreation Commission** meets the third Monday of every month at 7:30 pm in City Hall Room 209.

**Urban Tree Commission** meets the third Friday of every month at 7:45 am in City Hall Room 202.

**Aldermanic Committee on Community Preservation** meets the last Tuesday of every month at 7:45 pm in City Hall Room 222.

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**If you haven't paid your membership dues for 2006, now is the time. Please renew today!**  
**And consider a tax-deductible gift to support our work!**



*Celebrating 45 years  
of open space advocacy  
in Newton*

### Newton Conservators Membership Form

PO Box 590011, Newton Centre, MA 02459 • [www.newtonconservators.org](http://www.newtonconservators.org)

- ☐ YES, I'd like to start/renew my one-year membership with the Newton Conservators to help preserve open space in Newton. I'll receive informative newsletters and emails and be invited to participate in guided tours of local conservation areas, lectures, and other programs and activities.
- ☐ I'd like to make an additional tax-deductible contribution to support the work of the Newton Conservators: \$\_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Please do not share my name and address with other groups.

#### MEMBERSHIP OPTIONS

- ☐ Individual member \$25
- ☐ Family member \$35
- ☐ Sustaining member \$50
- ☐ Donor \$75
- ☐ Patron \$100

*All amounts are tax deductible*

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

STREET \_\_\_\_\_ VILLAGE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ Make checks payable to **Newton Conservators, Inc.**

February/March 2006 Newsletter



# *the Newton Conservators* **NEWSLETTER**

## **IN THE WINTER ISSUE:**

- Burying Utility Wires in Newton page 1
- Preserving The Dell in Newton Corner page 5
- Local Wildlife on NewTV page 6
- Pets and Pesticides at the Library page 7
- Kessler Woods Update page 8
- And more!

## **WATCH the Environmental Show on NewTV!**

- *February—Wildlife in Newton: Why is there more?*
- *April—Wildlife in Newton: Peaceful coexistence*



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NEWTON CONSERVATORS, INC.  
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