



the Newton Conservators NEWSLETTER

Summer Issue

<http://chemserv.bc.edu/conservators>

June 1999

Message from the President

Annual Report

Delivered by Michael Clarke at the Conservators' Annual Dinner Meeting on May 26, 1999

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 our Conservation areas. We also contributed 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 birdwalk 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.

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 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 very happily turn over full responsibility for running the Newton Conservators.

Louise Bruyn Environmentalist of the Year

The Newton Conservators were delighted to recognize Louise Bruyn as our Environmentalist of the Year at our Annual Dinner Meeting. Louise is founder and visionary force behind Newton's Green Decade Coalition. Through her leadership, passion and commitment, the Green Decade has influenced essentially all of Newton's environmental policies. Louise has intensely argued for Newton to make a positive difference to stop global warming and to drive toward a sustainable environment through recycling, the sensible use of energy resources, and minimizing the use of chemicals. Just over the past two years, Louise has helped bring about the new Sustainability Commission, which will assist the Mayor in incorporating technologies into city planning that will lead Newton toward sustaining rather than draining the environment. She has also participated in the Mayor's Transition Task Force on the Environment, the Newton 2000 Environmental Task Force, and will probably influence the Framework Planning Committee's delineation of Newton's next Master Plan. She is a caring team leader for the Green Decade Coalition with a wonderful sense of humor.

In addition to her environmental advocacy, she has worked for peace and social change for over forty years. She has organized marches, sit ins, demonstrations, and has even walked to Washington, D.C. to promote peace. The thread that links these passions together is her desire "To create a world around children that is nurturing and safe so that they may grow into adulthood fully realized." Her ideas and energy are boundless. She also choreographed the first Christmas and Spring Revels, and conceived the original First Night procession.

Unfortunately, Louise took ill with a high fever on the night of the meeting and later was admitted to the hospital. Barbara Herson and a table full of Green Decade board members graciously accepted the award in her behalf. We're happy to say that Louise is back home and doing well.



**Barbara Herson of the Green Decade Coalition Accepts
Environmentalist of the Year Award for Louise Bruyn**

New E-Mail Alert Service for Members

by Lucy Caldwell-Stair

Starting this spring, members can choose to be notified via e-mail of new land use issues in Newton. The purpose is similar to this *Newsletter*: to let members know when an important new issue arises and for updates on a number of ongoing issues. Alerts will include mention of important meetings at City Hall and requests for comments from the membership on items the Conservators plan to take action. E-mail Newsletter updates are likely to go every month or so, particularly as issues arise between regular issues of the *Newsletter*.

If you would like to be included in the e-mail alert list, please send your name and e-mail address to electra@clark.net.

90 New Members from Membership Drive

by Lucy Caldwell-Stair & Mike Collora

A large membership mailing to Newton residents this spring produced over 90 new members and a large percentage of members renewing their 1-year memberships. Spring walks also enjoyed a surge of attendance due to the mailing. A flyer included in the mailing contributed to the record number of people attending the walks, which are free to the public.

Annual Meeting on NewTV

Thanks to Frank Howard, our Annual Meeting was taped and will appear some time over the summer on NewTV. Look for the times in the June 24 Tab!



Five Past Presidents of the Newton Conservators
at the Annual Meeting: Roger Feinstein, Bart Hague, Peter Kastner, Michael Clarke and Burton Elliott

Historic Preservation of Schools Can Save Open Space

by Mike Clarke

In times of low student population, school buildings are often sold or allowed to deteriorate. When the population rises, there is often an attempt to site new schools on public park or conservation land. The historic preservation organization, Historic Massachusetts, has been leading the charge to prevent the pattern of abandonment and destruction of older and historic school buildings caused by the reimbursement policies of the Massachusetts School Building Assistance Bureau. These buildings, many of which are beloved neighborhood schools or landmarks anchoring downtown districts, are threatened by shortsighted policies that encourage new construction over the renovation of existing facilities.

Historic Mass says that guidelines promulgated by the Arizona-based Council of Educational Facilities Planners, International for site size, appropriate methods of construction, are often used by school planners, but have not been adopted by the state DOE. These guidelines perpetuate an especially pernicious myth that suggests that renovation should cost no more than 50% of new construction and mandate state-subsidized sprawl in direct conflict with

Massachusetts' growth management and planning policies. Moreover, by pushing school construction to the edge of communities, municipalities decrease pedestrian activities in downtowns and increase the need for cars and busing.

Case studies by Historic Mass show that existing facilities can house extraordinary learning space, while providing a link to the past for community residents, protecting open space and discouraging sprawl. Renovations can be done under existing reimbursement rules, but communities must know what they want, must have a firm grasp of the funding process, and be insistent that their existing school buildings be retained. By comparing and contrasting the construction costs of over 20 recent school projects, Historic Massachusetts found that the overall cost per square foot of renovation is the same as or less than the cost of new construction.

The DOE can be fairly flexible on sites in response to a community commitment to reuse existing resources. Particularly in communities where there is no cost-effective alternative location, non-conforming sites can be creatively and effectively designed to accommodate the needs of the school without consuming any new land.

Newton State Representative Ruth Balser has just introduced legislation (H3816) that would require the MSBAB to approve reimbursements to renovate existing schools regardless of whether the community has other land available where a new school could be constructed.

Nahanton Park

by Frank Howard & Mike Clarke

On a beautiful April morning, we watched as a family took out their two canoes at the new dock on the Charles River at Nahanton Park, near Florrie's Path, the disability accessible path that runs along the river. Nahanton Park Supervisor, Judy Dore, led Community Development Planner Lowell Haynes, Paula Chasan and me beside the nature center along a different path toward the soccer field. Lowell Haynes asked our opinion as Friends of Nahanton Park about upgrading the path to a disability accessible path that would go beside the pond and connect with the road from Winchester St. He spoke of securing grant money that would facilitate the park goal of multiple use.

As the south end of the soccer field came into view, a striking change was evident. Part of the wildlife corridor in the wetland area that had contained sumac, small trees, blueberry bushes, and other plants had been cut down and replaced with grass seedlings. The news spread quickly to the Conservators and *Newton Tab* and NewTV's Newton News showed the cleared swath of approximately 8 by 120 ft in their stories. After visiting the site, Newton's Environmental Planner Martha J. Horn, wrote the Commissioner of Parks and Recreation, Russell Halloran. Halloran then arranged a meeting between representatives of the Friends of Nahanton Park and the Newton Youth Soccer League, which was responsible for the habitat destruction.

At the meeting, naturalist Paula Chasan spoke about the unique environmental qualities of the park. She called for full restoration of the habitat destroyed and provided a list of twelve plants and trees that could be planted. She read a letter from the Friends of Nahanton Park to Commissioner Halloran dated November 11, 1993 about NYSL's then proposed alterations that would extend the playing area in order to allow the soccer field to be rotated to more evenly distribute the wear areas. The letter stated that the "Friends of Nahanton Park will trim branches along the south boundary of the field;" consequently, there was no need for NYSL to trim the area itself.

NYSL's field coordinator, Stephen Fauteux, took full responsibility for the cutting and apologized for the trouble his action had caused. He said that he was unaware that clearing shrubs adjacent to a wetland required a permitting order of conditions to be set by the Conservation Commission. Using a 1993 aerial photograph for illustration, he maintained that, on his instructions, the contractor was merely restoring the original footprint of the playing field. At a subsequent meeting of the Conservation Commission, Michael Clarke, President of the Newton Conservators, pointed out that it made no difference whether the vegetation was there in 1993, it was simply illegal to destroy habitat in a wetlands without the permission of both the owner (the Parks & Rec Commission) and the Conservation Commission. Since the Parks and Rec Commission had not requested an order of conditions, the Conservation

Commission voted to support the enforcement actions of the Environmental Planner.

At the June Parks & Rec Commission meeting, NYSL is expected to assert its use of the area, which is in competition with the originally expected use for a handicapped-accessible pathway that would connect or be part of the Charles River Pathway system. Both the Parks & Rec and Conservation Commissions will also have to address the expected loss of wetland habitat as a result of either use. Complicating the NYSL request is a sounding by a local private high school for a second soccer field to be located between the parking area and the existing soccer field.

Perhaps the City should consider purchasing the Angino Farm land at the intersection of Winchester and Nahanton Sts. to provide for the ever-increasing popularity of soccer in the Garden City.



Ald. Geo. Mansfield, President Doug Dickson and Speaker Trudy Coxe at the Annual Dinner

BC Soccer Fields

by Doug Dickson

Boston College has reached an agreement with the city and the Friends of Cabot Woods that will allow BC to build a soccer field adjacent to Edmands Park within 200 ft of Edmands Brook. The soccer field will be closer to neighboring residences but somewhat shorter than was previously planned. BC will provide two \$10,000 matching grants for the development of Edmands Park and help prepare a plan to improve the park.

A liaison committee will be established, including Boston College, neighbors, Parks & Rec and the Friends of Cabot Woods, to deal with issues related to construction and operation of the facility. Among the future issues this liaison committee will deal with are placement of lights and fences, and parking.

The terms of this agreement are very similar to one the Conservators helped to broker last summer. Boston College chose not to pursue that agreement last year, but we are pleased that the parties have come together now. Credit for the current agreement goes to Mayor Cohen for getting the various groups with an interest in this matter to set aside their personal agendas in order to seek common ground. Our challenge is now to take full advantage of the opportunity created by this agreement to improve Edmands Park so that this mid-city jewel can provide passive recreation and enjoyment for generations to come.

Landscape Maintenance Task Force

by Doug Dickson

In December 1995, the Board of Aldermen unanimously passed a resolution that the Commissioners of Public Works and Parks and Recreation and the Director of Planning and Development collaboratively formulate a plan for "constant, effective, thorough landscape maintenance for sidewalks, parks and other public landscapes in Newton, emphasizing removal of litter and weeds and keeping turf, flowers, shrubs and trees healthy."

A motivating force behind this resolution was a well-researched and influential op-ed article in the *Newton Graphic* by Bill Saunders of Auburndale. Saunders made the point that in the face of budget limits, the city had cut back on landscape maintenance simultaneous with its attracting millions of dollars in federal, state and private funds to refurbish its parks and grounds. Unless creative ways were found to maintain the newly refurbished areas, a great deal of this investment would be lost. Already trees and shrubs had died and many more were threatened.

The Landscape Maintenance Task Force was formed to recommend solutions. In addition to those named in the resolution, the Task Force included representatives of the Newton Pride

Committee, the Urban Tree Commission, the Conservation Commission, the City Landscape Designer and interested residents.

The Task Force met monthly from December 1995 through April 1999. It drew a set of conclusions about the present state of the city's landscape maintenance, created a clear goal for its work, identified principles to guide its planning, and recommended an agenda of initiatives to the Mayor and Board of Aldermen. Following their approval, the Task Force has been working to implement and add to these initiatives.

Many of the issues identified are systemic. That is, they involve underlying issues that must be addressed in order to build a foundation upon which long-term improvements may rest. These changes extend beyond the many short-range solutions set in motion over the past three years. Implicit in these systemic proposals are long-term savings to the city, either in the form of cost avoidance or through better use of existing and future funding.

The Landscape Maintenance Task Force prepared the following six recommendations as a final step in responding to the problems it observed.

1. Make the Public Open Space Coordinator's position part of the city budget, to ensure continuation and expansion of volunteer contributions worth many times the Coordinator's salary.
2. Hire seasonal employees to maintain grounds, which saves \$35,000 to \$50,000 per year..
3. Acquire the services of a Landscape Manager, to head up the landscape maintenance and planning effort in the city. The position of Landscape Manager is as important as any other single maintenance position funded by the city.
4. Require each new project to include a maintenance analysis and a plan for long-term maintenance costs.
5. Create a landscape maintenance endowment fund to encourage contributions and bequests by private citizens, businesses and community groups.
6. Appoint a Landscape Advisory Committee on the model of the Design Review Committee, which would continue the work of Landscape Maintenance Task Force on a permanent basis.

The task force felt that it had achieved all that was possible, given its *ad hoc*, stopgap mission. A permanent, ongoing effort must now be made to institutionalize the work of the committee.

The Mayor has accepted these proposals in principle. Item 1 was included in next year's operating budget, recently approved by the Board of Aldermen. The next two remain as objectives for the following year. Items 4 and 6 are under development. A panel of candidates for the Landscape Advisory Committee is being prepared for the Mayor; anyone interested should contact Doug Dickson at 969-8661. Item 5 will fall to the new committee to undertake.

A copy of the full final report of the Landscape Maintenance Task Force can be obtained from Faye Hays at Parks and Recreation (ph: 552-7120, e-mail: fhays@mis8.ci.newton.ma.us).

Woodland T Site - 175 New Apartments

by Bryna S. Klevan



Bulldozed Green Space at Woodland T Station

The Woodland T parking lot is slated to be reduced from 448 spaces to less than 200 to make way for the construction of 3 apartment buildings containing a total of 175 rental units. The MBTA plans to lease the property to developer Ted Tye of National Development of New England. Mr. Tye intends to bypass the Board of Aldermen and apply for a "comprehensive permit", thereby limiting public review.

On May 25, 1999, the Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency (MHFA) issued a Site Approval for the construction of no more than 175 apartment units at the Woodland MBTA site (3.66 acres). This determination does not guarantee that the agency will provide financing for the project. The approval signals the "green light" for the developer to proceed with the application to the Newton Zoning Board of Appeals for a comprehensive

permit to construct low or moderate-income housing.

The MHFA review indicates that the developer should address the following concerns in applying for MHFA financing: (1) a transportation study to evaluate and address any potential adverse impacts of this proposed development, including traffic on Washington Street (Route 16), and traffic, parking, and safety on neighboring residential streets; (2) site drainage issues to ensure that the development will not increase flooding problems; (3) Design of a site drainage system in accordance with the Department of Environmental Protection Stormwater Management Standards to the extent that site drainage enters the City drainage system and discharges into the Charles River to ensure that the Charles River water quality is not adversely affected; (4) A site and building design to adequately shield both the Golda Meir House on Stanton Avenue and Longfellow Road homes from road and rail noise due to the proximity of the MBTA Green line and Washington St., and to provide these properties with safe access to the MBTA parking lot.

Under the current plans, the MBTA parking lot will be moved behind the existing parking lot. Some trees from the rear section have already been removed in anticipation of the proposed development. The existing open space for the parking lot will be developed with 3 tall apartment buildings of five to six stories.

The neighbors in the area have formed a neighborhood association called the Woodland Community Association. For more information, please contact Bryna S. Klevan, Chair, 70 Longfellow Road, Newton, MA 02462, 617-332-1102, or e-mail at attybsk@aol.com.

Membership Dues Reminder

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

Rumford/Flowed Meadow Planning

by Mike Clarke

The Mayor's select Flowed Meadow Planning Group has begun meeting to decide the best use of land that DPW is expected to declare surplus around the capped Rumford Dump site.

In the past few years, the City has acquired property along Wabasso St., a private access road that on paper connects Riverview St. in Waltham with the MDC Forest Grove Rd. This area on Purgatory Cove is an important link that should unite Nightcap Corner in Auburndale with the MDC Grove Park, Flowed Meadow Conservation Area and Auburndale Park. It also may provide a canoe access to Purgatory Cove.

At an initial tour through the area, local historian, Sam Picariello, explained that after the mill dam was built in Waltham in 1813 and created the lakes district of the Charles River, an arm of the Charles reached through Flowed Meadow, the Rumford site and circled back to Cram's Cove in Waltham. Beginning with a dam between the end of Forest Grove St. and Auburndale Park, the area was filled in partly by both the dump and industrial sites. Now a brook flows out of Flowed Meadow instead of in. In heavy rains, Flowed Meadow floods requiring a pump house at the dam site to lower the water level.

Steve Rourke, a member of the group as a Waltham resident and member of the Island Neighborhood Association, explained that Waltham has an analogous landfill on Crams Cove, which might also be considered in a regional plan for the area.

Issues the planning group will deal with are: What sorts of passive recreational use is the area best suited for? Should there be scenic overlooks onto Flowed Meadows and Purgatory Cove? Are picnic areas appropriate? Where should trails run; how should they connect with the Charles River Pathway; and how should they be surfaced?

The planning group expects to meet twice-monthly beginning on July 13 until the end of the year. It will begin with presentations from the various stakeholder groups, including the Newton Conservators, the CRWA, the Conservation and Parks & Rec Commissions, Neighborhood Associations, the MDC, *etc.*



Monarch Butterfly on Clintonia Flowers

Tree Preservation Ordinance

by Douglas Dickson, Chair, Newton Urban Tree Commission

Nearly two years ago, The Newton Urban Tree Commission began a discussion about the loss of trees in the city and what might be done about it. A new member of the Commission, Phil Shabecoff, had recently moved from Chevy Chase, Maryland and described an ordinance that sought to preserve certain trees for the good of the community. The ordinance had been in place for some time, was well accepted by the community and appeared to be achieving its goal. Soon thereafter, Mike Kruse arrived from his prior position as Planning Director in Highland Park, Illinois. He described a similar ordinance there. As more information was gathered, it became clear that these were not isolated efforts, but part of a trend that is gaining rapid acceptance all across the country.

A 1984 study published by the University of Pennsylvania identified fewer than 100 communities nationally with tree protection ordinances. By 1989, a survey found that more than 100 communities in California alone had adopted tree protection ordinances. A December 1993 Zoning and Planning Law Report asserts that, "The protection of trees and vegetation through municipal ordinances has become one of the fastest growing areas of land-use law at the local level." The National Association of Home Builders reports that local tree protection has become one of the hottest development topics. "Tree and woodland

preservation appears to be the next emerging environmental issue," according to HomeBuilders.

In Massachusetts, only Springfield has so far adopted a tree preservation ordinance. Their approach has been to focus on historic trees, an important but relatively small portion of the total. A couple of other communities say they are working on ordinances, but though more limited in its approach than first envisioned, Newton would have the first significant tree preservation ordinance in the state if our proposal is enacted. Once again, Newton has an opportunity to lead the way with a reasonable step in the direction of protecting a resource that provides benefits that we collectively value and that serve a valid public purpose.

The benefits of trees become more and more clear from horticultural and environmental research, cost studies and other sources. The more we learn about trees, the more we learn to appreciate the amazing array of benefits they offer. We enjoy these benefits in proportion to the number of trees that reside in our community. More trees yield greater benefits; fewer trees suboptimize those same benefits.

The public health and environmental benefits of trees are increasingly measurable, as indeed are the economic benefits. As the tools for such analysis are perfected, we will be able to quantify the public good that derives from trees and calculate the ideal number necessary to produce those collective benefits. Aesthetics and livability fall into a different category, and although just as important, particularly in terms of real estate values and quality of life, these issues remain more the subjects of art than science.

In drafting this ordinance, the Urban Tree Commission has defined the following objectives:

(a) To preserve trees as an important public resource enhancing the quality of life and the general welfare of the city and enhancing its unique character and physical, historical, and aesthetic environment;

(b) To preserve the essential character of those areas throughout the city which are heavily wooded and in a more natural state;

(c) To enhance and preserve the air quality of the city through the filtering effect of trees on air pollutants;

(d) To reduce noise within the city through the baffle and barrier effect of trees on the spread of noise;

(e) To reduce topsoil erosion through the soil retention effect of tree roots;

(f) To reduce energy consumption through the wind break and shade effects of trees when they are properly placed;

(g) To preserve and enhance nesting areas for birds and other wildlife which in turn assist control of insects;

(h) To reduce storm water runoff and the costs associated therewith and replenish ground water supplies;

(i) To protect and increase property values.

The ordinance consists of three parts. First, it defines what trees are protected and the circumstances under which removal may lawfully take place. Second, a requirement to protect trees during construction is spelled out. And third, the terms under which trees that are removed must be replaced are identified.



Apple Tree in Nahanton Park

For the purpose of this ordinance, we have focused our attention on new development. This would encompass lots that are currently vacant and undeveloped, including lots that have been or will be subdivided for the purpose of development. It also includes lots on which a building has been torn down to make way for new construction.

This ordinance does not apply to remodeling, additions, landscaping or hardscaping around an existing building. Any change to an existing home or building would not be affected by this proposal,

even if trees that might otherwise be saved are taken down as part of that change. This ordinance also does not apply to dead, diseased or hazardous trees, or trees with a dbh (diameter at breast height--4 1/2 feet off the ground) of less than eight inches. A hardship exemption is also provided.

The ordinance is intended to apply to construction of all types on the parcels identified, including development that falls into comprehensive permit and site plan review categories. The only two categories to which the ordinance does not apply are developments subject to special permits and trees covered by the state Public Shade Tree statute. One objective of this ordinance is to level the playing field so that all new development is subject to the same high standards with respect to tree preservation that is generally accorded during the special permit process and the through the Public Shade Tree law.

Designating trees for protection is only half the battle. The good intentions of the city and cooperative developers can be quickly undermined by careless construction activities on a site. Bulldozing near a tree's roots, digging utility trenches, storing heavy materials within the root zone, compaction from the weight and wheels of heavy machinery, dumping construction waste near a tree, or smothering roots through grade changes around trees--all of these actions can result in de facto removal of a tree that was designated for preservation. The death may be slower, but it is just as certain. Unfortunately, trees often show a delayed reaction to construction damage. The consequences of injury may not manifest themselves until 18 months, three years or in extreme cases, five years down the road. The cause and effect relationship between the tree's death and the initial insult may not always be clear in retrospect. But with more knowledge about the risks than has previously been available, we can predict what factors will likely produce serious injury and take care to avoid them. That is what this provision of the ordinance is designed to do.

Finally, the ordinance creates a standard that makes clear the basis upon which trees that are removed must be replaced. Using the dbh of the trees taken down, our proposal requires replacement on an inch-per-inch basis. That is, if an eight-inch tree is removed, it can be replaced by two four-inch trees or four two-inch trees. Ideally, the

replacement trees will be located on-site. If this is not possible or desirable, the developer is required to contribute an equivalent dollar amount into a tree replacement fund. These funds are then used to plant trees in other places throughout the city on public property.

In this way, we hope to retain the equivalent benefits of large trees that must be removed by replacing them with a larger number of smaller trees. This pattern, combined with the preservation of large trees that might otherwise be taken down or damaged during construction, should serve, over time, to reverse the trend toward overall loss of trees that we have observed in recent years. At worst, we believe we can hold the line against further overall loss of trees and the benefits they provide. At best, we may be able to turn the trend toward growth in the city's tree population and the aggregate health, environmental, economic and aesthetic benefits we gain from these remarkable plants.

This proposed ordinance is currently before the Programs and Services Committee of the Board of Aldermen. If you support the preservation of trees in our city, please let the members of this committee know how you feel. They are: Carleton Merrill (ward 1), Bob Antonellis (ward 2), Lenny Gentile (ward 3), Amy Sangiolo (ward 4), Paul Coletti (ward 5), Ken Parker, chair (ward 6), Lisle Baker (ward 7), and Myra Tattenbaum (ward 8).

Board of Directors Meeting

Members are welcome to attend the open meetings of the Board of Directors of the Newton Conservators, Inc. Meetings are usually on the fourth Wednesday of the month. The next meeting will be on Wednesday, June 30 at 7:30 pm in Rm. 202, Newton City Hall. Members are invited to attend

The Newton: Conservators Newsletter appears three or four times a year. President: Michael Clarke. Production: Bonnie Carter, 969-0686. We wish to thank the contributors to this edition of the **Newsletter**: Mike Clarke, Doug Dickson, Burton Elliott, Bryna Klevan, Jim Broderick and Frank Howard. We also thank Boston College, for the use of its word-processing equipment.

Paths & Trees in Ordway Park

by Jim Broderick

Last year the Conservators surveyed the trees in Ordway Park and started a process of improvement and renewal. A number of damaged and dying trees were removed and most of the remaining large trees were pruned to remove low, broken or crossed branches. This year a large oak on the Grant Ave. hillside had to be removed because of a split towards its top. With these changes the Park now seems more open and the encroachment, if that is the word, of Norway Maples is quite striking, especially on the Grant Ave. slopes.

When one compares these maples with the departed oak (whose rings we counted to 168 and estimated an additional 20 less defined outer rings) one can better appreciate the kind of woodland garden Patricia Ordway created. So it is a source of special satisfaction that not far from that oak stump and closer to Grant Ave. we now have a chestnut tree grown, donated and tended by Frank Howard. This chestnut tree (whether or not it proves resistant

to the blight that has almost wiped out the native tree) may at least serve as a reminder of the oak - chestnut forests that once covered Massachusetts hills.

We are now completing a plant inventory of the Park. The last inventory and map of the Park was done some twenty years ago by Lynn Margulis, then a Gibbs St. neighbor. Our next goal will be to set out a yearly maintenance process that will pay particular attention to removing unwanted tree saplings and to planting from time to time both trees and shrubs.

The removal this spring of the large oak left us with a few truckloads of wood chips, which we are using to lay out two major pathways. The longer path runs parallel to Everett St. and Grant Ave., about ten feet in from the streets. The shorter, and steeper path, loops up the hill and connects to the two edge paths. These paths were lovely this past month as they took one through beds of lily of the valley, vinca, scilla and bluebells and past flowering azaleas, rhododendrons and dogwood.

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