

Newton Conservators Nature Notes
Monday, November 22, 2004

This email newsletter provides information on upcoming nature and environmental related events, exhibits, and information in and around the Newton, Massachusetts area. The newsletter is sponsored by the Newton Conservators, the local open space organization in Newton and it also serves as the organization's means of sending out time sensitive information. Please visit our website at <http://www.newtonconservators.org>. Welcome to the many new readers of this free email newsletter. If you wish to be removed from this email list, simply reply with "remove" in the message or subject.

Urgent: Due to the pending Board of Aldermen vote this evening, this issue is primarily devoted to the topic of Angino Farm. Check also for information on this year's Christmas Bird Count on December 19 and other topics.

*** Angino Farm Update – Vote is Possible Tonight – Monday, November 22**

Angino Farm is the last remaining farm in Newton and the Newton Conservators had forth a proposal before the CPA Committee to save it. Details on the background of the proposal can be found in the Newton Conservators Newsletter to be found online at <http://www.newtonconservators.org/newsletters/spe04.pdf>. You can learn more details about this project at the Conservators website at <http://www.newtonconservators.org/linksfarming.htm> or at the site of the new Farm Group that has formed: <http://www.communityfarm.info/>. Much like the Stearns Farm in Framingham, MA, a real working farm is envisioned where community members can work together in Community Supported Agriculture to grow a self sustaining source of delicious produce in an eco-friendly farm where school groups and the community could participate in educational programs.

The Newton Board of Aldermen were scheduled to vote on this project last Monday evening but the matter was chartered partially due to the late hour. The aldermen are taking up Angino Farm again at a special meeting to be held tonight in the aldermanic chamber, 2nd floor City Hall at approximately 8:30 pm. They most likely first will be doing work on setting the city's tax rate, an important matter which was also put off from last Monday. Like last meeting, the timing for the Angino discussion is approximate - dependent on how long their first item takes. There will likely be more discussion of the proposal, about the cost, about the proposal to bond some of the amount, about alternative plans, and many other topics.

The bonding proposal (\$1M up front and \$1.5M bonded over 5 years) requires 16 votes (out of 24) in favor. The thought on this was to allow for more current CPA proposals to be funded. The alternative of paying the full amount up front avoids bonding interest and fees but might force delay of some CPA projects that were not as time sensitive. In any event, the voting is expected to be very close. The Newton Conservators organization urges its members to support this proposal and to attend the board of aldermen meeting this evening. As always, you can make your opinion known to your aldermen. Contact information is available at http://www.ci.newton.ma.us/Aldermen/pix/bios_index.htm. Two aldermen are expected to be absent tonight as announced last week. The aldermen who spoke against the proposal last Monday night were Verne Vance and Robert Gerst. Several others have indicated similar opposition. Paul Coletti and Steve Linsky, chairs of the Finance and CPA committees, spoke for the project as did several others.

Special thanks to the many people who came to City Hall last week to attend the meeting. Most stayed around from about 8 pm until after midnight when the item was chartered. It was unfortunate that there were so many other items that needed to be done that same evening last

Monday. It was a good lesson in how government works. You can see that the aldermen by and large do take their responsibilities very seriously. Hopefully this special meeting will take up the matter more expeditiously. It is not a bad idea to bring a book or something to read (and even a snack might be helpful for sustenance out in the lobby.) It is possible that the vote could be delayed until next aldermanic meeting on Monday, December 6. As of now it appears that a vote could be taken this evening.

All the aldermen had received a copy of the show "Saving Newton's Last Farm" produced by the Newton Conservators for NewTV cable last month. In addition, many aldermen came to the special showing of the video at the meeting of aldermanic CPA committee last month. This was helpful in showing them the farm and how the Community Supported Agriculture model could work there.

The Newton Tab printed an account of last Monday's meeting by reporter Sarah Andrews. It is available online at <http://www2.townonline.com/newton/localRegional/view.bg?articleid=126593>. We reprint below a wonderful commentary by Newton Conservators president Eric Reenstierna which was also printed in the Newton Tab (<http://www2.townonline.com/newton/opinion/view.bg?articleid=126582>).

* **The Upside of Unintended Consequences**

By Eric Reenstierna/ Guest Commentary
Newton Tab, Wednesday, November 17, 2004

Everyone knows about unintended consequences.

Adopt an amendment to the Constitution that guarantees free speech, go away for 200 years, and come back to find that the free speech you've guaranteed is not just political speech but the XXX Rated First Amendment Video Store on the corner by the ice cream shop. Spray DDT on the vegetables to make them bug-free, and find that you've killed not all the bugs but all the birds. Invade Iraq, remove Saddam from power, and find that you've opened up not a new democracy that's friendly to all its neighbors but a big anarchy that's a mecca for terrorists from everywhere. Every time, not the thing you had intended when you began.

Nine times out of 10, it seems, an unintended consequence is on the negative side. But then there is that other one in 10. In Newton, we are lucky. We got an unintended consequence on the positive side.

The Community Preservation Act was adopted by Newton as a fairly dry proposition, to support "community preservation" by funding protection for open space, historic buildings and housing affordability. These are all good things, even if they are things without much "sizzle."

But with the proposal for the Angino Farm, we got much more. We got not just community preservation. We got community creation. What we have is the birth of a community, built around farming. In a city where farming was once everyone's livelihood and where it has now dwindled to one lone, closed-down farm, farming as a community activity can live again!

The Angino Farm at the corner of Nahanton and Winchester streets has been a target property on the city's open space acquisition list for decades. Because Duane Hillis of the Conservators was alert, when the farm came on the market, the Conservators were in a position to put it under agreement before it could be bought by a developer. Under our plan of action, we would get funding for the acquisition from the city's Community Preservation Fund.

Our initial thinking was that this was about open space and historic preservation, that the financial cost was high, and that, to protect the farmhouse, barn and fields at a price that would be

palatable to the Community Preservation Committee (the CPC), it would be necessary to sacrifice part of the property to residential development, as was done at Kessler Woods. We took our proposal to the CPC. The CPC took one look at our proposal and said no. For one thing, they said, it was too much money. For another, they said, we don't want to see this new housing you want to allow to crowd the landscape. And, most important, where was the farm? There was no "farm" in the farm.

That opened the door. A group of farmers, led by Jon Regosin of the Conservators, had been standing on the sideline with its own idea for this farm. Their vision was a place where people from Newton could buy shares, or memberships, could taken part in the operation and the work of the farm, and could get a family-sized share of the organic produce that would come from the farm each year. Beyond that, the farm could be used for education, to show school kids what a working farm worked like. We had people from the Angino family who had worked the farm and could tell us about its rich history - how and when to use the cold frames that were still in storage and what was the purpose of the flower beds (to keep bees around, to pollinate all the plants). The farm could be self-supporting. Farms like this operated from Weston to Framingham and beyond. Why couldn't it work here? Newton could have a farm of its own.

Some kids are all about baseball. Some are about skateboarding. Some are about advanced math, and some are about dolls. Some kids just want to get their hands in the soil, to learn farming, as part of a real, working farm. Some of the kids who want to do that are 30, 40 and 50 years old. Farming has an appeal to the kid in many of us, including some who are not kids at all. Kids are different. What engages one kid and helps him or her to grow is not necessarily the same thing that helps the next kid. A community that is rich and diverse provides a richness of opportunities. A community with a farm is a richer place to raise our kids.

Maybe the Angino Farm won't have cows or chickens or horses. (Some kids love animals and would love a chance at that.) But it can have rutabaga, turnips and squash. If we from the Newton Conservators and all the others who want to join us can prove to the aldermen that this farm can be self-supporting, the chances are, Newton will have this farm. And then we will have something no one much expected when Newton took on the Community Preservation Act. We will have a new community. We will have a community farm.

Farming is a lost part of Newton's heritage. Part of that may be just as well lost. Who, after all, is volunteering to get up and milk the cows at 4 in the morning in the dead of winter, day after day? But to see the turnout the night that this proposal was brought to the CPC - 30 or 40 farmers with dirt under their fingernails, overflowing one of the meeting rooms on the second floor of city hall - is to know that the spirit of farming lives here and is strong.

The proposal for the Angino Farm is community preservation in the biggest sense of the words. They say you make your own luck. However it happened, for this unintended consequence, we are lucky. We are lucky for the Angino Farm.

*** Newton Conservators Position – Presented to the Board of Aldermen Last Monday**

Reasons to Support Funding for the City's Acquisition of the Angino Farm

- The Angino Farm is the last intact farmstead in Newton—complete with a historic farmhouse and barn, this is the last chance to save a link to Newton's farming history.
- In recognition of the open space, historic preservation, and scenic values of the Angino Farm, this parcel has for many years been an extremely high priority for protection in the City's Open Space Plan.

- Should this acquisition be funded, the Angino Farm will be operated as a non-profit community farm, providing an almost limitless potential to provide real benefits to Newton residents of all ages for generations to come. These benefits will include (1) farm fresh organic produce grown made available to all Newton residents at the Cold Spring Park Farmer's market, and grown sustainably right here in Newton; (2) educational programming on farming, the environment, and Newton history (we are already working with Newton high school students on an oral history project for the farm site); (3) recreational and volunteer opportunities for Newton residents at a community farm that will be open to the public; (4) a program to provide food to a local food pantry or soup kitchen through the tax-deductible donation of produce shares by farm supporters.
- A farm group of committed Newton citizens has been formed to organize a community farm at the Angino site. This group has demonstrated repeatedly that an economically viable and self-sufficient community farm can be operated at the Angino site, despite its small size. Over 75 Newton families have pledged \$500 each to obtain a share of the produce and to support the farm. In addition, the farm group has received \$95,000 in pledges toward farm start-up costs and building improvements. The farm group and the Newton Conservators have developed detailed budgets for farm operations and capital improvements to farm buildings. The operating plan for the farm has been developed in consultation with professional community farmers from nearby communities including Weston, Waltham, Framingham, and Dover, all of whom have confirmed that an economically viable non-profit community farm can be operated at the Angino site.
- The community farming operation will convert an empty field into a vibrant community resource where Newton residents of all ages will come to enjoy and participate. The farm will run educational programs for Newton school children and a program to help feed people in need.
- 50% of the funding for the purchase of the Angino Farm will be provided by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, providing outstanding leverage for Newton Taxpayers.
- If this purchase is not funded by the City, the Angino farmhouse and barn will be torn down, and, at minimum, three large single family homes will be spread across this 2.26 acre site at the high-visibility corner of Winchester and Nahanton Streets.
- Over the past few months, hundreds of Newton residents have come forward to express support for saving Angino Farm. It is the people of Newton that will turn this community farm into a reality and insure its success for generations to come.
- To put it simply, Newton is not the kind of community that fails to protect its last remaining farm. Newton is the kind of community that has the vision, energy, and entrepreneurial spirit to convert this farm site into a unique community open space.

*** Vance Memo to Board of Aldermen**

In the interest of providing full information, the following is the text of a memo provided to the Board of Aldermen before the meeting last week by Alderman Verne Vance in opposition to the project.

MEMORANDUM

To: Board of Aldermen

From: Alderman Verne Vance

Date: November 10, 2004

Re: Angino Farm

I am sending this memorandum at the suggestion of several of you that I set forth the reasons for my vote at this week's joint meeting of the Finance and Community Preservation Committees not to approve the application for some \$2,560,000 of Community Preservation Act Funds to purchase the Angino Farm property at the intersection of Winchester and Nahanton Streets in Ward 8 for the purpose of establishing thereon a community farm.

I am cognizant that the voters of Newton accepted the Community Preservation Act at the 2000 general election by a narrow margin. President Bush chose to interpret his razor-thin victory in 2000 (if indeed it was truly an electoral victory at all) as a mandate to basically ignore the one-half of the country who voted for his opponent and to do whatever he pleased. Unlike him, I view the narrow margin of support for the CPA in Newton as a directive to the Board of Aldermen to carry out its fiduciary obligations with respect to the taxpayers' CPA funds with special care to ensure that we get the kind of value for the community from those funds that we would seek in investing our own funds. That does not mean, of course, that in assessing this issue of value we consider proposed CPA projects in purely financial terms. We must make that judgment of value of CPA proposals on the basis of the amount of CPA money to be invested in relation to the anticipated value of achievement of the CPA objectives of preserving open space, preserving historic resources, providing community housing, and providing community recreation. In my view, the more CPA funds we are asked to invest in a particular project, the greater must be the return to the community in terms of achieving objectives of the CPA. And in making this judgment of value with respect to any particular project, we must be cognizant that our CPA funds are not unlimited and that many other CPA projects will be coming along seeking funding from the limited resources available.

To apply this approach to the Angino Farm proposal, I have carefully reviewed all the materials relating to that proposal and the video presentation on that proposal, and have visited the property itself. After doing that, I have simply not been persuaded that it is a sound investment of \$2,560,000 taxpayer dollars to re-establish a small, marginal farming operation that ceased some twenty years ago, at a location which is already surrounded by a significant amount of open space from various sources and which is not overly crowded with dense residential uses and the traffic congestion that attends such uses. The modest amount of open space that would be preserved by this expensive purchase would not be community open space readily available for use by the general public but is space that would be used exclusively for the proposed community farming operation. Having grown up in Nebraska in close proximity to many, many real farms, I am simply not impressed by this as a piece of property that can ever function as a real farm, as I know it. Furthermore, the farmhouse and barn, while apparently old, are not particularly distinctive or distinguished as historic farm buildings, in my judgment. There are many other historic resources in the city that, in my view, are more appropriate for preservation through the use of more than \$2 million of CPA funds.

The proponents of the project also argue that it would achieve the CPA objective of providing a recreation facility through the opportunity for people to engage in "passive recreation" farming at the property. It would certainly be news to the sharecropper farmers of the south, to those migrants and others who have worked the farms of California, and the many others who have toiled at farming over the centuries to learn that they have actually been engaged in passive recreation rather than damn hard work. To my mind, calling farming "passive recreation" is like the Reagan Administration calling ketchup a "vegetable" for purposes of the balanced school lunch program in the 1980's.

Preservation of the farm would preserve the housing unit for the operator of the farm and his/her family, which would presumably be affordable through an appropriate rental arrangement. To my mind, this provides very little community housing value for the funds being invested.

As a business enterprise, the proposed community farm would be, as most people acknowledge, a marginal proposition. For an enterprise that is supposed to function as a business, the proponents have submitted no credible business plan that gives me any comfort that this farming

operation is a viable one. But if the city buys the property, and the farming operation subsequently fails, then the city must find an alternative use that provides value for the city in achieving CPA objectives by other means. But for now, the only proposal that we have before us for action is the community farm proposal. For the reasons set forth above, I do not believe that that proposal provides sufficient value to the community for the amount of funds to be invested. And I am not prepared to vote to spend the \$2,560,000 of taxpayer CPA funds for possible future but undetermined other uses of that property.

Finally, in assessing the overall impact on the taxpayers from approval of the Angino Farm proposal, we must be cognizant that by such approval we would be taking off of our property tax rolls a piece of property that, by right, could be redeveloped into three sizeable single-family units that could carry a total assessed value of at least \$5 million of new taxable property tax growth. As noted above, those units would be located in an area that already has substantial open space through various sources and that is not overly congested with present residential uses. So by approving the Angino Farm proposal, we would not only be expending \$2,560,000 of taxpayers' funds to buy the property, but we would be also be removing from the tax rolls a valuable piece of developable residential property in an area where such residential development, if it were to occur, does not seem inappropriate.

By the foregoing I do not mean to disparage in any way the contrary views of others with respect to the Angino Farm proposal. I write this simply to explain my own view that the approval of this proposal is not in the best interest of the city or its taxpayers.

*** Community Preservation Committee Memo to Board of Aldermen**

The following is a response to some of the objections in Alderman Vance's memo by Doug Dickson as chairperson of the Community Preservation Committee.

DATE: November 14, 2004

TO: Board of Aldermen

FROM: Doug Dickson for the Community Preservation Committee

RE: Angino Farm—Response to Alderman Vance's Memo

With all due respect to Alderman Vance for the conclusions outlined in his memo dated November 10, we believe that many of his assertions overlook important points. The purpose of this memo is to call your attention to those points.

- In selling the CPA to the electorate, Angino Farm and Kessler Woods were regularly profiled as two primary targets for acquisition if the CPA was approved. More individuals said they voted for the CPA to protect open space than for any other purpose.
- This proposal has generated broad-based community support, far greater than any project except Kessler Woods. We believe this provides not only a sense of direction about how we should approach this project but also a measure of its likely success.
- We respectfully suggest that the Board and the CPC would be taking their fiduciary obligations just as seriously if CPA had passed by a landslide as by a narrow margin.
- The farmhouse and barn are not pristine historic structures, but they are distinguished by the contribution of the farm over the years to the socio-historic fabric of the city and their unique place in our community as the last remaining structures of their kind.
- Small New England farms were never comparable to large mid-western spreads, but were economically viable and important to the life of their communities just the same.
- As a public amenity, the community farm would be accessible to any resident who wished to visit and/or participate in the activities of the farm.

- The paid farmer would probably not see his work as recreation, but resident-volunteers would in fact engage in this activity for pleasure. The CPA definition of passive recreation specifically includes “community gardens,” of which Angino Farm would rightly be considered a form.
- The farm proposal envisions a not-for-profit Community Supported Agriculture model, by definition a “marginal” operation. If this were designed as a profitable business venture, the proposal would be to grow organic herbs for high-end restaurants, or the like, and we wouldn’t be recommending that the city buy the property.
- We believe Angino Farm will add an important amenity to the fabric of our community, making it a more attractive place for residents and adding to the value of the tax base in excess of taxes lost by removal of this property from the tax rolls.
- One purpose of CPA is to preserve vital elements of the community that are at risk of being lost to development. Few projects fit this objective as closely as Angino Farm.

The purpose of this memo is to respond to questions that have been raised regarding the viability of the proposed CSA model for Angino Farm as well as the alternative uses to which the property might be put if the farm should fail.

*** Memo on Angino Farm, Business Plan, and Alternative Uses**

The following is a followup memo from the CPC on alternative uses for the farm should there be a problem with the operation as a CSA farm.

Date: November 19, 2004

To: Honorable Board of Aldermen

From: Doug Dickson for the Community Preservation Committee

Re: Angino Farm, Business Plan, and Alternative Uses

Farm Business Plan

The business plan for Angino Farm has been developed based on the experience of, and with input from, other CSA-model farms in eastern Massachusetts. In particular, proponents have relied on Brian Donahue, a Brandeis professor and nationally recognized expert on CSAs, who has written two books on community farms in New England. This experience strongly suggests that the **CSA model has an excellent chance to succeed in this location.**

A full range of first-year contingencies has been accounted for in the proposal and **118% of the budget has been pledged for the first year**, creating a healthy reserve. The budget for subsequent years will be adjusted (in terms of share prices, rents and fees, fundraising, etc.) to account for first-year experience and keep the farm financially sound.

Alternative Uses

If the CSA model proves not to be viable at Angino Farm, there are other farm models that can be considered. These include growing produce for sale in farmer’s markets and other outlets in the area and intensive farming of selected, high-margin crops. These options could be used in combination with CSA (by reducing the number of shares) and coupled with community and educational programs, as proposed as part of the CSA model.

If none of the farm models succeeds, then uses for the land would be determined by the needs and priorities of the community at that time. Because this could occur well into the future, it would be highly speculative to guess how those factors might affect property re-use decisions.

However, there were a number of proposals made early in the process, and they suggest other potential uses consistent with CPA guidelines. These ideas, some of which could be used in combination, include: a greenhouse and nursery beds for Newton Pride's beautification program; community housing in the house and barn, with possible additional units in the same area; open space; programming and storage for the Newton History Museum; outdoor classrooms and/or summer camp programs focusing on horticulture, the environment and/or agricultural crafts.

Conclusion

Based on the depth and breadth of community support for this project—perhaps greater than any other project CPC has recommended, the willingness of proponents to back up their commitment with pledges of financial support, and the affirmation of community farm experts, we have become increasingly comfortable with both the short-term and long-term prospects of this enterprise. We believe it has a high chance for success.

If, for reasons we cannot now anticipate, the farm does not succeed, we believe that preserving this property still makes sense. (This has repeatedly been called for in the Recreation and Open Space Plan and our rationale in support of preservation has been outlined in previous memos.)

There are a number of potential uses that would reflect both city needs and CPA criteria and, while it is helpful to think about what those possibilities might be, we believe it is important to leave the door sufficiently open to allow the property re-use decision to accommodate city priorities at the time.

* Annual Christmas Bird Count – Sunday, December 19, 2004

It's getting to be that time of year again. Sleigh bells, wreaths, shopping malls, and ... birds! While spotting a partridge in a pear tree is unlikely, if you have an interest in our feathered friends, perhaps you'd like to take part in the annual Greater Boston Christmas Bird Count on Sunday, Dec. 19th, sponsored by the National Audubon Society and the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. Begun in 1900 and done all over the country by teams of birders, the local counts are done within a specified circular area. According to the Audubon Society, "More than 50,000 observers participate each year in this all-day census of early-winter bird populations. The results of their efforts are compiled into the longest running database in ornithology, representing over a century of unbroken data on trends of early-winter bird populations across the Americas. Simply put, the Christmas Bird Count, or "CBC", is citizen science in action."

Any birds seen during the count are recorded as to the species and the number of individuals. The amount of hours and distance traveled by count participants are also recorded (which helps to normalize results to the effort expended). Changes in numbers of our most common birds over the years help to spot environmental trends. Over the history of the count in Newton, over 90 species have been tabulated.

Parts of Newton are within the count circle centered on Boston. The Newton Conservators are helping to organize this year's count in Newton. Newton participants will gather at 6:45 am at the home of Conservators board member Chris Criscitiello (2 Raeburn Terrace) near Cold Spring Park for coffee and to pick up maps. Beginning at 7 am, about five teams fan out all over Newton to count as many birds of all types as they can especially in conservation, park, and cemetery areas. Any woody areas near water are usually quite productive. Larger open space areas are the focus in the morning, with smaller pocket areas and residential neighborhoods checked later

in the day as time permits. For the early risers, there is usually an owling party which heads out much earlier. Typically, the group could get great looks at screech owls and occasionally Great Horned and Barred Owls.

Representative members from the teams gather back at the meeting place around 4 pm to pool the results from Newton. It's always exciting to hear what the other groups have found, especially any rare or unusual sightings. Later, our local results are taken over to Mass Audubon's Habitat in Belmont where other town coordinators gather to pool the data for the entire Boston count circle. Consider that this same process is done all over the country in roughly the same time period, and it helps to get a handle on the bigger environmental picture.

Experienced and non-experienced birders are welcome. Newcomers will be paired with an experienced group. Even if you would like to participate for only a few hours, you are welcome. It should be noted that the count occurs rain, shine, or snow. There is a participation fee of \$5 which goes to National Audubon to help tabulate the data. Participants receive a report from them on the national count results. For more information, please contact Cris Criscitiello by phone at 617-244-6397 or email at [mgcrisci\(AT\)massmed.org](mailto:mgcrisci(AT)massmed.org). Further information on the 105th count may be found at <http://massbird.org/bbc/ChristmasBirdCount'04.htm>.

* **Open Space Groups in Neighboring Communities**

There are groups in other neighboring towns that also sponsor walks and open space related events. Among these are the Brookline Green Space Alliance, <http://www.bgsa.net/>, Weston Trails and Forest Association, <http://www.westonforesttrail.org/calendar/>, the Wellesley Trails Committee, <http://www.ci.wellesley.ma.us/nrc/trails/walk.htm> and the Waltham Land Trust, <http://www.walthamlandtrust.org/calendar.html>. Please check out their websites for more info to help you get into the local outdoors.

* **Holiday Gift Ideas from Mass Wildlife**

Looking for a wildlife-related gift for the outdoors/wildlife enthusiast on your holiday list? The following experiences and items are available for both youth and adults. A two year subscription to Massachusetts Wildlife magazine (\$10) delivers eight full color issues of the Commonwealth's best wildlife publication. For the budding conservationist try a copy of the recently revised "Critters of Massachusetts" book (\$5). "Critters" is a perfect gift for the curious youngster or the beginning adult naturalist with an interest in backyard wildlife and beyond. For the more advanced naturalist, "Field Guide to Dragonflies and Damselflies" (\$20) or "A Field Guide to the Animals of Vernal Pools" (\$10) might be just the ticket. In-depth descriptions and detailed photographs help the reader identify and learn more about these creatures. The Massachusetts Wildlife Viewing Guide (\$8.95) listing 67 sites across the state where a variety of wildlife can be seen is a perfect gift for the outdoor explorer or a visitor to the state. Click the Publications button at <http://www.mass.gov/masswildlife> for more details. And don't forget the great Newton trail guide described below.

* **Walking Trails in Newton's Parks and Conservation Lands**

The map guide put out by the Newton Conservators is a great resource for those who would like to explore Newton's open space. It would make a great stocking stuffer – it fits nicely in a stocking or in a back pocket. Many folks have been observed out in our conservation areas, trail guide in hand. It is available by web, mail and also at Newtonville Books and New England Mobile Book Fair. Walking Trails in Newton's Parks and Conservation Lands may be purchased

for \$7.95 online at www.NewtonConservators.org or by mailing a check payable to The Newton Conservators, Inc. to The Newton Conservators, P.O. Box 590011, Newton Center, MA 02459. Sales benefit The Newton Conservators, a nonprofit citizen advocacy organization which actively promotes the acquisition, creation, and preservation of natural open spaces for the people of Newton. Since its formation in the late 1950's, The Newton Conservators has been instrumental in safeguarding more than 200 acres of open space in Newton, creating several major public parks, and enacting ground-breaking environmental ordinances with respect to the protection and preservation of trees, wetlands and clean air, and the conservation of energy.

*** About the Newton Conservators**

This email newsletter is sponsored by the Newton Conservators, a local organization that promotes 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 the City of Newton, Massachusetts for scientific study, education, and recreation. It further aims to disseminate information about these and other environmental matters. 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. Please visit our website at <http://www.newtonconservators.org> or contact us at 617-969-6222 or the address below.

If you would like to join the Newton Conservators, please send your name, address, phone and email address (if you wish email alerts) to The Newton Conservators, Inc., P.O. Box 590011, Newton Centre, MA 02459. Membership Options are the following: Individual \$25, Family Member \$35, Sustaining Member \$50, Donor \$75, Patron \$100. Membership is tax deductible. Your membership includes the Newton Conservators Newsletter and emails and invitations to participate in guided tours of local conservation areas, lectures, and other programs and activities. You will also receive by mail a copy of the new Newton Conservators open space map book, "Walking Trails in Newton's Park and Conservation Lands".

The Board of Directors of the Newton Conservators meets monthly usually on the third Wednesday of the month at 7:30 pm (usually at City Hall). Members are welcome to attend. If you wish to attend you can contact the us to confirm the date, time, location, and agenda.

*** About Newton Conservators Nature Notes**

If you would like to be more directly kept apprised of future nature related events, walks, lectures, and exhibits, you are invited to join the Newton Conservators sponsored "Newton Conservators Nature Notes" email list by sending an email request to dolanpond@aol.com or contacting Ted Kuklinski (617-969-6222). Newton Conservators Nature Notes is automatically sent to members of the Newton Conservators who provide their email addresses as one of their membership benefits. Newton Conservators Nature Notes may be found online at <http://www.newtonconservators.org/naturenotes.htm>. You are welcome to submit any items for this sporadic newsletter via email to the same address. Please feel free to forward our newsletter to others you feel might be interested in the information contained herein.