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Subject: Newton Conservators e-Newsletter - January 13, 2008



*Working to preserve open space in Newton for 47
years!*

The Newton Conservators **e-Newsletter**

January 13, 2008

www.newtonconservators.org

Newton Conservators e-Newsletter

The CPA acquisition of 230 Lake Avenue (on Crystal Lake) is before the Finance Committee on Monday. This issue is mostly devoted to updates on this important open space project.

Recently, you received our first full email version of our printed Newton Conservators newsletter. The paper edition of the news is sent by mail to the membership of the Newton Conservators. PDF copies are available: <http://www.newtonconservators.org/newsletter.htm>. We have also been publishing separately an email newsletter called *Newton Conservators Nature Notes* which was issued as needed. This publication Newton Conservators e-Newsletter will replace that. We will still be putting out the paper edition about 4 times a year but we may perhaps consider providing just the email version to those who might want to save trees and lessen our mailing costs. Our format is a little different and now includes some photos (which will be kept somewhat low resolution) but should be fairly easy to print out. If your email is set to receive text only, there may be some settings in your email program to allow html formatted email. If you have difficulty please let us know.

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Crystal Lake Alert!

There has been a lot of recent attention and controversy surrounding the possible CPA acquisition of the property at 230 Lake Avenue which is on Crystal Lake. Our last newsletter gave some background on this (*Crystal Lake - One Great Pond*). 230 Lake Avenue is between Levingston Cove and the former Hannon property (which is next to the Crystal Lake swimming area and was recently taken by eminent domain). It fortuitously came on the market and would provide a continuous city owned stretch of Crystal Lake shoreline from the bathhouse to Levingston Cove - with wonderful open space potential for what might be called "South Cove Park".

The Newton Conservators have come out to officially support this acquisition and recently have agreed to a mechanism of holding funds for a Crystal Lake friends group. The project was recommended by the CPA Committee and has been reviewed by some aldermanic committees. It is slated to be reviewed on **Monday evening** by the aldermanic Finance Committee. If it passes that it would go before the full board of aldermen where it would require a 2/3 majority to pass.

There has been controversy on this project. Some would prefer that there be more of a plan for the site now. Others feel that resources should be used to maintain or improve existing facilities at Crystal Lake. Some don't see the benefit of having a continuous stretch of park on one of our prettiest natural features in Newton. The 230 Lake Ave property has an existing house on it and some feel the house should be preserved while others may wish it to be taken down for more open space (as was done with the Hannon house). There is a climate of fiscal conservatism these days fueled to some extent over the Newton North cost uncertainty leading some aldermen to question whether we can afford this now (70% is funded by CPA). All in all there are many unanswered questions.

On the other hand, the clock is ticking. The property owner has granted an extension to the city but they cannot wait too long. One of the main goals of the Community Preservation Act and the mission of the Newton Conservators is the acquisition of new open space. Prior to the CPA, properties that would come on the market would be lost to developers.

CPA provided the tools to move on many of the properties targeted by the city such as Angino Farm. This is a time for some long term vision on Crystal Lake and what it could become.

The Finance Committee is scheduled to meet on **Monday evening, January 14 at 7:45 pm in Romm 222 at City Hall**. The 230 Lake Avenue matter is scheduled for 8:10 pm but the room has limited seating (and is not generally open for public comment). There is also the question of a possible very large snowstorm that day so there is always the possibility of a reschedule.

The Finance Committee will need to pass this if the project is to proceed. How the Finance Committee will vote on this is highly uncertain. We have provided some additional information below by way of background on the project including a message to the Newton Tab by Judy Jacobson, CPA Chairperson, and a very recent piece by Robert Fizek, a Newton resident active in the effort to expand the City's waterfront park at Crystal Lake. There has been recent coverage of this project in both the Newton Tab (both by reporters, editorial, opinions, and letters) and the Boston Globe West. Hopefully you have been following the story and weighing the arguments. If you have opinions on this matter, now is the time to make them known to the aldermen (or the public via the Tab).

If the project makes it past the Finance Committee, then it is currently scheduled to go before the **full Board of Aldermen on January 22, at 7:40 pm in City Hall**. CPA funding will pay for 70% of the property cost (for Land). The remaining cost must come from the city (for the house). This will need to be approved by two-thirds(!) majority.

As Mr. Fizek has written, " We should all be sad - and our Civic leaders, sadly regarded - if next year thereafter, we pass by that divided Park land and say to each other things like: too bad we can't walk through to the 'other' Park, too bad the new owners..., wouldn't it have been great if

There is a long way to go before we realize the full benefit of this opportunity. It will involve City-wide interest and participation to celebrate and protect the unique natural beauty of this environment, to support the renewal of the public facilities there with the creation of a beautiful, sustainable waterfront park for sensible and safe water activities, and to provide for year-round passive recreation use for all of Newton's citizens. If you support a better future for Crystal Lake and want information, contact betterlake@gmail.com and visit <http://www.betterlake.com>.

Some Recent Press on Crystal Lake

Below are some press references (and excerpts) reflecting information and even some opposition to the project (e.g. the Newton Tab Editorial and commentary by Sonya Kurzweil, Levingston Cove abutter.)

Citing low funds, CPA committee delays decision to buy second Crystal Lake property

Newton TAB, Wed., October 3, 2007, by Leslie Friday

http://www.wickedlocal.com/newton/town_info/government/x1681077511

Newton - Citing a tight fiscal year and a crush of project proposals, members of the Community

Preservation Committee postponed a vote on allocating \$1.4 million toward the purchase of a second property along Crystal Lake....

Crystal Lake property gets \$1.4M nod

Newton TAB, Wed., October 31, 2007, by Leslie Friday
<http://www.wickedlocal.com/newton/archive/x1375671142>

Newton - The city is one baby step closer to purchasing more property along Crystal Lake and expanding the public shoreline. In their Tuesday, Oct. 23 meeting, members of the Community Preservation Committee voted 7-2 in favor of appropriating \$1.4 million toward the purchase of land at 230 Lake Avenue. Mayor David Cohen is expected to file a request this week with the Board of Aldermen for \$550,000 in city bonding, the cost of purchasing the lakefront home....

Swirling plans for Crystal Lake

Boston Globe West, Jan. 6, 2008, by Rachan Rathi
http://www.boston.com/news/local/articles/2008/01/06/swirling_plans_for_crystal_lake/

Crystal Lake enthusiasts are beginning to see their vision of an extended beachfront, renovated bathhouse, and waterfront park take shape, with Newton officials ready to demolish a city-owned house on Rogers Street, and two Board of Aldermen committees encouraging the purchase of an adjacent \$1.95 million property....

The Newton TAB's crystal ball for 2008 - Crystal Lake faces murky waters

Newton TAB, Wed. Jan 2, 2008
<http://www.wickedlocal.com/newton/archive/x1059346767>

Looking at the calm waters along Crystal Lake, no one would know the controversy and drama that surrounded its banks during 2007....

Reflecting on realities and visions of Crystal Lake

Newton TAB, Wed., Dec. 5, 2007, by Sonya Kurzweil
<http://www.wickedlocal.com/newton/news/lifestyle/columnists/x1720553871>

Newton - With the critical decision on the city acquiring another choice property at Crystal Lake quickly approaching, an overview of realities and visions leads clearly to one conclusion. Appealing as more open space may be, the tradeoffs for this are just not worth it when it comes to acquiring the house and property at 230 Lake Ave. The reality of this proposal is that it undermines making real progress in repairing and restoring the Crystal Lake area. The vision should be recreating and preserving....

TAB Editorial: Lake concept too deep

Newton TAB, Wed Dec 12, 2007
<http://www.wickedlocal.com/newton/archive/x1720559186>

Newton - In concept, the suggestion by Alderman Ken Parker (later embraced by Mayor David Cohen as if he thought of it himself) to purchase a second property along Crystal Lake is a marvelous idea with benefits for generations to come.



Hannon Property (after demolition) with 230 Lake Ave in background

Commentary by Judy Jacobson (CPC Chair)

To the Editor of The Newton TAB (in response to TAB Editorial above)

Dear Editor:

We are writing in response to a recent editorial questioning the wisdom of the city's proposed purchase of 230 Lake Avenue. Having taken the time to study this opportunity carefully, we have come to a very different conclusion.

Many of the proposals that come before the Community Preservation Committee have obvious merit and it is relatively easy to reach agreement about how best to move forward. Acquiring the Hannon property next door to this one on Crystal Lake is one such project. Others require more effort, more imagination, more resourcefulness. Angino Farm fell into this category and there were many who initially failed to see the potential of this property. After two successful harvests, most now agree that Angino Farm is a terrific community asset.

We believe that 230 Lake Avenue is this kind of project. By linking existing city-owned properties along Crystal Lake, it opens possibilities that didn't previously exist. The true value of this acquisition will be easier to see 10, 20 or 30 years from now than it is today. It will take hard work and creativity to put the pieces of this puzzle together, but when it is complete, we'll all look back and wonder why it seemed so difficult.

We recognize the issues raised by The TAB. All of us would have liked more time to develop a detailed plan for the site. Unfortunately, the market doesn't always allow that kind of certainty. There are other worthy projects and CPA funds are not without limit. But we looked at other proposals and concluded that this is indeed a high priority for the city. Specific issues were raised about use of the building, impact on the neighborhood, parking, city support over time, maintenance and fundraising. We were satisfied in the end that each of these issues can be resolved. In fact, a community group is already forming to raise funds for maintenance and to advocate for this new lake-side park.

In its six-year history, the Community Preservation program in Newton has funded more than 60 projects in all areas of the city. We have acquired more than 30 acres of open space, enabled creation of 100 units of affordable housing, helped preserve historical resources and acquired or created recreation facilities. We are fortunate that CPA funds, matched by the state on a dollar-for-dollar basis, have been available to support these projects. With tight city budgets, we would otherwise have missed most of these opportunities. 230 Lake Avenue is another project whose timing is just right? Thanks to the CPA, we have the money to go along with community support and public commitment to do the right thing, both for those who will enjoy this new facility now as well as those who will thank us years into the future.

*Judy Jacobson, Chair
Newton Community Preservation Committee*

(Funding for the 230 Lake Avenue acquisition was recommended by seven members of the CPC with two members, Ken Kimmel and Charlie McMillan, voting against the proposal)

Commentary by Robert Fizek (Citizens for a Better Lake)

The following was sent by Robert Fizek to the Members of the Finance Committee, and Board of Aldermen:

Now that the 20 Rogers house has been cleared from the scene we can marvel at the new open space and views to the lake there. It's also much less challenging to imagine the aesthetic and planning advantages in acquiring 230 Lake Avenue- and the creation of a complete park at the South cove of Crystal lake. From so many 'angles' it is even clearer that this is the 'right' thing to do. Yet, current fiscal concerns may yet be clouding the consideration of this acquisition. It has been said that this action may not be a "fiscally prudent" thing to do- but let's look carefully at the situation as a "Civic Investment".

This situation gives us the opportunity to 'develop' this unique parcel -and "special place" as part of the Civic Trust (or 'portfolio'). We 'own' three of four parcels on the south cove waterfront and have the ability to acquire the remaining intervening portion; To complete our precious 'holdings'; to make them 'perform' together; and 'protect' them from abutter conflict or 'encroachment'.

This alone would seem to be sufficient motivation for this 'investment'. Any smart 'developer' would move quickly to acquisition, with the above knowledge, and the understanding that it will surely 'benefit' and 'profit' from the situation- and would do so- in advance of having finished a "Master Plan" for the site.)

Fortunately this 'deal' has even further advantages:

1. An independent funding source (CPA) for 70% of the cost.
2. A voluntary source of committed 'consultants' and 'advocates'.
3. Voluntary sources of property care and stewardship support.
4. Potential 'co-investors' for minor and major improvements and betterments.

Note: The extent of the above advantages are highly related to the City's effective and efficient leadership, encouragement, and commitment in completing the south cove acquisition.

The house on the property may also be an asset to the future plans, though its' value, carrying costs, and compatibility with the open space master plan must be carefully considered, and we may seek other 'co-investors' to assure adequate cost benefit.

There are some 'costs' to be considered too; Tax revenue from the property is lost, but values for the neighborhoods, and the entire area- if not the city- will surely compensate. Some additional maintenance costs will be incurred as this landscape joins the others. And capital investments will be needed to gain maximum 'returns'. Still this 'investment' (with minor preparations) will perform: immediately, everyday, and without fail as soon as it is provided for our use and enjoyment.

The present fiscal conditions may not make this purchase easy, but the reasoning clear. This would be a right and proper investment- available only at this time; And providing immeasurable 'returns' to the health, spirit, and well-being of our Community- and that we - and future generations- shall ALL be able to share in this 'investment' and enjoy its' natural qualities.

Thank you for your diligence and consideration.

*Robert Fizek
Citizens for a Better Lake
and Crystal Lake Conservancy Team*

Action - What you can do

If you have some opinions on this or other issues before the Finance Committee or Board of Aldermen, why not use the democratic process and let your elected officials know of your concerns? Contact information for the Board of Aldermen can be found on the city website at <http://www.ci.newton.ma.us/Aldermen/index.asp>. Check it out and get to know your aldermen!

If you are expressing an opinion to the Finance Committee by phone or email we have provided contact information below. In addition, to make it easy, there is a list of email addresses that can easily be pasted into your email composer if you wish to go that route either the Finance Committee or the full board.

FINANCE COMMITTEE CONTACT INFO.:

Paul Coletti (Chairman), 617-965-3654, Nesi49@aol.com
 John Freedman, 617-243-9509, johnfreedman@comcast.net
 Leonard Gentile (Vice-Chairman) 617-527-5446, lennypmgi@aol.com
 Marcia Johnson, 617-965-4920, marcia@marciajohnson.org
 Kenneth Parker, 617-965-3723, ken@kenparker.org
 Scott Lennon, 617-584-5723, sflennon@comcast.net
 Anthony Salvucci, 617-244-2509, asalvucci@newtonma.gov
 Sydra Schnipper, 617-965-2331, Sydra_Schnipper@verizon.net

Lisle Baker (President of the board), 617-566-3848, AldermanBaker@comcast.net ,
 David Olson (City Clerk), dolson@newtonma.gov

The following is the email string for the aldermanic Finance Committee, plus the City Clerk and board president.

Nesi49@aol.com, johnfreedman@comcast.net, lennypmgi@aol.com,
marcia@marciajohnson.org, ken@kenparker.org, sflennon@comcast.net,
asalvucci@newtonma.gov, Sydra_Schnipper@verizon.net, dolson@newtonma.gov,
AldermanBaker@comcast.net

The following is the email string for the Board of Alderman members (except for Alderman Merrill who does not list an email) plus the City Clerk. The is derived from the contact information on the city website at <http://www.ci.newton.ma.us/Aldermen/index.asp>

AldermanBaker@comcast.net, aldermanswiston@gmail.com, allancicconejr.comcast.net,
asalvucci@newtonma.gov, bill@billbrandel.org, byates@newtonma.gov,
Clappin@newtonma.gov, gmanfield@newtonma.gov, jayharney@rcn.com,
johnfreedman@comcast.net, ken@kenparker.org, lennypmgi@aol.com,
marcia@marciajohnson.org, mfischman@daylor.com, Nesi49@aol.com, sangiolo@rcn.com,
salbright@newtonma.gov, sflennon@comcast.net, slinsky@newtonma.gov,
Sydra_Schnipper@verizon.net, tedhess-mahan@rcn.com, Vdanberg@aol.com,
vvance@rcn.com, dolson@newtonma.gov

Community Preservation Notes

There will be a PUBLIC HEARING on all regular-round FY08 PROPOSALS for community preservation funding on Wednesday, January 23, 6:30 pm at the Newton Free Library Auditorium, Homer Street. There is a snow date of Wednesday, January 30, 6:30 p.m., at the Newton Senior Center, 345 Walnut Street. All fy08 proposals are now ONLINE from this web page: www.ci.newton.ma.us/Planning/CPAC/08applications.html. Here are the project proposed for this year:

- City Archives (\$76,076)
- Edmands Park Wall (\$102,000)

- Farlow & Chaffin Parks (\$38,000)
- Heritage Landscape Inventory (\$10,000)
- Newton Centre Playground (\$320,000)
- Newton Fire Department Headquarters Historic Doors (\$5,082)
- Newton History Museum Archives (\$357,400)
- Newton Upper Falls Playground (\$450,000).

CONTACT:

Alice E. Ingerson, Community Preservation Program Manager
617.796.1144 or aingerson@newtonma.gov .

Shop at Bloomingdale's on February 27th and Help the Newton Conservators at the Same Time!

Mark your calendars for **Wednesday, February 27th**, 10am-10pm, to go shopping at **Bloomingdale's** in the Chestnut Hill Mall. The Newton Conservators are participating in a special event that day called "**The Shopping Benefit**" where there will be discounts (15-20% throughout the store on almost everything), special events, live entertainment, and fashion presentations. Special tickets for this event are available for a \$10 donation to the Newton Conservators. If you enter the store that day with your ticket, Bloomingdale's will contribute an additional \$5 to the Conservators to support our programs, and will donate even more if 70 folks with our tickets attend! Watch for further details on our website and e-news. You can donate when you renew your membership or mail a check to The Newton Conservators, Inc., PO Box 590011, Newton Centre, MA 02459. Note "The Shopping Benefit" and we'll send you the tickets when they are available in mid January. If you would like some tickets to sell to your friends, let us know (dolanpond@aol.com).

January Environmental Show on NewTV's Blue Channel GENETICALLY MODIFIED CROPS" WITH JACK KITTREDGE

Jack Kittredge of the Many Hands Organic Farm in Barre is Beverly Droz's guest this month. He exposes the challenge to his profession presented by the introduction of genetically modified (GM) crops. GM can now be found in 60% of processed food and, if the animal model carries true to humans, poses a danger to health.

More information about the January program is available at greendecade.org/environmentTV. The Environment Show is broadcast on the NewTV Blue channel (Comcast Chan. 10, RCN Chan. 15, Verizon Chan. 34):

Mondays 3:00 p.m.
Tuesdays 1:30 a.m. and 11:30 p.m.
Wednesdays 11:30 a.m.

Thursdays: 12:00, 4:00 and 7:30 p.m.
 Saturdays: 10:00 a.m.

Videos of The Environmental Show programs from October 2004 through September 2007 (including those of the Newton Conservators) are now available for viewing online at <http://www.greendecade.org/environmentTV.html>.

Green Decade Notes

We provide some information from the Green Decade Coalition.

ENVIROJAM AT NEWTON NORTH HIGH SCHOOL

Rock to Reduce Your Carbon Footprint!
 Thursday, January 17, 2008 7:30 - 9:30 pm
 \$5.00 at the door
 Newton North High School, Little Theater
 360 Lowell Ave., Newton MA 02460
 617-559-6400

EnviroJAM is a musical event sponsored by the Environmental Club of Newton North High School, featuring acts by teachers and students. All proceeds will be donated to the Green Decade Coalition/Newton and the New England Wind Fund. The Green Decade will be there with a resource table and representatives. This event is CARBON NEUTRAL -- download the poster !

ENVIRONMENTAL SPEAKER SERIES: "THINK OUTSIDE THE BOTTLE", DEBORAH LAPIDUS

"Think Outside the Bottle" with Deborah Lapidus, Corporate Responsibility International
 Monday, January 28 at 7 pm
 Newton Free Library, Druker Auditorium
 Co-sponsored with the Newton Free Library
 330 Homer St. (corner of Homer & Walnut Streets)
 Newton Centre, MA 02459

Is the availability of clean water a human right for all people, or is it a commodity to be bought, sold, and traded in a global marketplace? Join us for a screening of the award-winning documentary Thirst and a talk by Deborah Lapidus of Corporate Accountability International's Think Outside the Bottle Campaign . Ms. Lapidus is a National Organizer with Corporate Accountability International, a membership organization that protects people by waging and winning campaigns that challenge irresponsible and dangerous corporate actions around the world. All ESS events are held at the Newton Free Library, Druker Auditorium, at 7 pm, usually on the 3rd Monday of the month, January through June. For more information about the series, contact 617-965-1995 or Environmental Speakers Series on our

www.greendecade.org.

JOIN THE GREEN DECADE FOR 2008!

Now is the time to join the Green Decade, for as little as \$25 for an individual/family membership and \$50 for a business membership. There is also have a new Student membership at \$10 for the year! Early renewals are always welcome -- renew now and help us conserve paper and postage during the January 2008 Annual Membership Appeal. Join or renew on-line and pay by credit card or download the membership form and mail with your check made out to GDC/N, to PO Box 590242, Newton, MA 02466. Membership forms are also available in each issue of the Green News. For more information, contact 617-965-1995 or e-mail membership@greendecade.org.

Voting with the Environment

This seems to be a busy political season. Find out how candidates are positioned on environmental issues. The League of Conservation Voters offers an easy-to-use, web-based facility to do just that at <http://www.lcvf.org/programs/vote-environment>. Express yourself in local, state and national races. And for a guide to the presidential candidates check out <http://www.lcv.org/voterguide/>

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 47 years ago in June 1961.

Newton Conservators Membership Form

PO Box 590011, Newton Centre, MA 02459 • www.newtonconservators.org

*celebrating 47 years
of open space advocacy
in Newton*

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.**

**Please renew today.
And consider a tax-deductible gift to support our work!**

Start the year off right. [Easy ways to stay in shape](#) in the new year.