

President's Message

As I write this on a beautiful sunny day (seemingly a rare occasion this spring), a migrating Northern Parula Warbler is singing its buzzy but rising optimistic song nearby, and it makes me glad to live in Newton, the Garden City!



Conservator board meeting at the Waban Library

We had our annual Newton Conservators' dinner meeting last week with over 100 attendees, and it made me proud to belong to an organization with such great members devoted to open space. Congratulations to our deserving awardees this year, Eric Olson, Don Lubin, Maria Rose, and the Friends of Kennard Park (represented by Carolyn Kraft, Larry Burdick, Michelle Cusick, Dorothea Buckler and Pam Ward). Newton Conservators was delighted to recognize their dedication. And what an enlightening talk we had from

Jonathan Way, who stepped in on short notice when our original speaker had the flu, on his studies of the eastern coyote (or more properly coywolf as he pointed out). If you missed it, check out the video of Jon's talk soon to be on our website.

This annual meeting also represented a time of transition. Beth Wilkinson has led our organization skillfully and enthusiastically as president for the past FIVE years — a very long period in Conservator time! She has chaired and guided over a huge number of board and committee meetings, attended countless more city and other organization meetings on our behalf, and is currently chair of the Mayor's Webster Woods Advisory Panel. She has dutifully written and answered thousands of emails and letters and likely as many phone calls, even cheerfully redirecting many mistaken inquiries, e.g. permission to have a wedding in one of the parks listed in our trail guide.

Over Beth's tenure, the Newton Conservators' organization has put on hundreds of events — bird walks, hikes, canoe tours, lectures, farmers' market tables, and countless invasive removal projects. However, she will continue to play a critical role on our executive committee in her new position of "Past President," and we will benefit from her experience and skills in navigating open space issues. In short, she has been a gem to us and was honored at the annual dinner with a hearty round of applause and a beautiful sweet fern and hydrangea for her garden and flowers for her table in appreciation of her service.

We are also blessed with an extremely hard working executive committee, a talented board of directors, and an outstanding board of advisors, who all continue to bring their varied skills to bear in service to our mission. If you are reading this, you are probably a good friend of open space, and we need your help! We would love to have you take an active role and use your skills as a volunteer in some way — lead a walk, write an article, remove invasives at your local park, help us publicize our many events, promote us at a farmers' market table, help us monitor conservation restrictions, and many more. See our website for opportunities to help. Please tell your friends about the Conservators. It's always a puzzle how an organization that has been around almost 60 years and does such important work can still be so unfamiliar to some Newtonians. We are grateful for your support and membership in the Newton Conservators as we forge ahead in the coming year!

All the best,

Ted Kuklinski

Ted Kuklinski
President, Newton Conservators