

President's Message

2021 is a certainly a very special year for the Newton Conservators — our 60th anniversary! Earlier this summer, we seemed to be on the road to recovery from the Covid crisis and were venturing out again seeing friends and family face-to-face rather than on a Zoom screen. We had planned a wonderful annual dinner meeting for this momentous occasion to celebrate. But, alas, the Delta variant seems to have put yet another delay into our return to normalcy!

Indeed, we will have our annual meeting and election on Wednesday, October 27, at 7 pm, but virtually once again. This year's meeting will look back at our past 60 years through the recollections of some of our past and present members. We have a proud legacy of open-space accomplishments, which are outlined in our lead article this month by Beth Wilkinson, AnnaMaria Abernathy, and Katherine Howard.

By the time you read this, the awards from 2020 announced last year may finally have been presented in person to our deserving recipients in an outdoor ceremony held near the new pollinator garden at City Hall. And given continued Covid recovery progress, we do hope for a return to our in-person annual dinner meeting next spring on Wednesday, May 4, 2022.

With Covid, we were forced to convert our previous spring and fall walk series into a webinar series that was very successful and well attended. As you can see in this issue, this fall we again have a great lineup of informative webinar events. But wait there's more — we have restarted our outdoor walk series as well, also listed in this issue!

Much of the beauty and reputation of our Garden City can be attributed to our wonderful parks, conservation areas, and other open spaces — which we often take for granted. You might be surprised to learn that many of our most beloved spaces were additions in the past 60 years, in part through the considerable efforts of the Newton Conservators. We owe a debt of gratitude to the early Conservators who realized the value of open space to our overall well-being — something rediscovered by so many during the current pandemic. We appreciate your support of the Conservators to help continue our work over future decades taking advantage of available open space opportunities and with a focus on the care and access for existing open space.

The Riverside Greenway is one of our important long-term projects, and we were delighted at the official opening of its first component, the Pony Truss Trail, earlier this year. Read all about this new resource in the article by Ted Chapman, project manager of the Riverside Greenway Working Group, of which we are members. Our invasive plant removal projects, the new pollinator garden at City Hall, and new pollinator related “Story Walks” in our open spaces reflects our continued concern for habitat protection and appreciation.

It has been a great privilege to serve as president of this organization, so it is with a bit of sadness to let you know that this is my 10th and last *president's* message. After taking over from Beth Wilkinson at our May 2019 Annual Meeting, little did we know what an unusual period for the Conservators this would be. Many thanks to our hard-working board, advisors, and volunteers for keeping us active in this difficult time. After the excitement of the Webster Woods acquisition that fall, the world changed as the pandemic gripped all aspects of our lives — but with a silver lining of increased appreciation of nature and usage of our open spaces. Hope to see you soon out and about in the wilds of Newton!

All the best,

Ted Kuklinski

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President, Newton Conservators