

## **Minutes Newton Conservators Board of Directors Meeting**

**Wednesday, January 27, 2021, 7 pm**

**Online – Zoom Meeting**

**Participants** were Ted Kuklinski, presiding, AnnaMaria Abernathy, David Backer, Peter Barrer, Barbara Bates, Dan Brody, Mike Clarke, Henry Finch, Maurice Gilmore, Dan Green, Bill Hagar, Chris Hepburn, Katherine Howard, Ken Mallory, Nyssa Patten, Larry Smith, Beth Wilkinson

1. **Approval of Minutes.** Barbara moved, Pete seconded that the minutes from 11/24/2020 and 12/29/2020 be approved. Vote: 14 yes, 1 abstention (Peter Barrer).
2. **Treasurer's Report.** Katherine reviewed the previously circulated 2020 financials, which are almost final, with only small adjustments to be made. Overall, the results were approximately \$53K favorable to budget, due to high Dues/Gifts, low expenses including for Annual Meeting, Projects, and Grants, and high investment value at 12/31/20. The group briefly discussed status of the donor restricted funds, some of which are for specific properties. Barbara moved to form a committee on plans for the donor restricted funds, which passed unanimously (Barbara, Katherine, Pete G, Bill volunteered to serve). Katherine noted there may be presentation changes especially after the upcoming review by the CPA (Bo Wilson) and asked that in the meantime we approve the statements. Barbara moved and Pete seconded to approve the financial statements subject to any edits recommended by Katherine and the Audit Committee; the motion passed. Katherine presented the 2021 budget and explained the changes from 2020. It may need to be revisited when plans/costs for the new Trail Guide are known. Chris moved to accept the 2021 budget, which was accepted unanimously.

The \$45K approved from city CPA funds has yet to be received. The grant agreement is being reviewed by Diane Tillotson, a local retired litigator on real estate law, who has volunteered to assist us *pro bono*. Chris moved and Ted seconded to grant Ms. Tillotson free membership in the Conservators, which passed unanimously.

3. **Auburn St. - Commonwealth Ave Roundabout.** Larry noted that the proposed roundabout at the intersection of Auburn St. and Commonwealth Ave. would replace the current traffic light and would facilitate crossing for people walking along the Riverside trail. Public input has been favorable. The proposal must go through the City Council. Larry moved that he draft a letter in support of this project and Henry seconded it. The motion passed unanimously.
4. **Hammond Pond Parkway Redesign** – Dan B. related that the redesign of Hammond Pond Parkway would reduce 4 lanes to 2 lanes to accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists with a green strip and shared use pathway. There is one proposed crosswalk midway between the mall entrance and Beacon St to accommodate trail walkers crossing between Webster Woods and DCR Hammond Woods. There would be parking for hikers and geology walks on the east side of the parkway and for access to Webster Woods and Gooch's Cave. Dan G. said there would be also parking for the deer park. Discussion

ensued about needing a more substantial and safer crosswalk and some parking on the west side of the parkway. The deadline for comments is Feb 18, 2021. Barbara moved and Pete seconded that Dan B. draft a letter to DCR & Nicole Freedman in favor of the project and including a request to consider the crosswalk and parking issues, which passed unanimously.

5. **City Council Special Election** – The group considered whether we should send open space questions to NLWV for their candidate forum. These might raise issues such as more funding for Conservation and Parks and Recreation as well as passive versus sports recreation. It was decided that we could do this as individuals, but the Conservators board would not send questions.

6. **Newton Pollinator Action Plan.** Currently it is not legal to keep bees in city. Councilor Alicia Bowman plans to propose that the city develop a pollinator action plan to deal with such issues. She is organizing an action group to develop the policy and deal with related issues such as supporting native pollinators; Beth and Ted will be on the group.

7. **Charles River Cleanup Working Group.** Ted related that this is a new regional group being organized by Councilor Alison Leary and concerned with trash and invasives on the Charles River. One idea is to have businesses abutting the river sponsor or maintain their section of the river with an Adopt-a-Space program. Involved are state legislators from Newton, Waltham, and Watertown and also the Waltham Land Trust.

#### 8. **New Open Space Related Organizations:**

- a. Friends of Albemarle Park ([friendsofalbemarle.org](http://friendsofalbemarle.org)) is nonprofit 501(c)(3) group that advocates for the 17 acres of green space in Albemarle Park (The Halloran Recreation Complex).
- b. The Newton Athletic Fields Foundation ([fixnewtonsflds.com](http://fixnewtonsflds.com)) is concerned with funding for athletic fields, particularly space for rising sports such as soccer and lacrosse. A possible renovation of the Old Cold Spring Park baseball field was discussed relative to its effects on open space and birding.

#### 9. **Updates**

A. **Orienteering.** Henry indicated that the Parks, Recreation, and Culture Department (PRC) has started offering beginning orienteering courses on permanent paths.

B. **Environmental Science Program (ESP).** David said that ESP went virtual in 2020, and that 2021 is the last year that the City Planning Office will provide administrative support for the program. There has been some discussion with Nicole Banks as to whether PRC could take on program. PRC does not do generally overnights as part of its camp programs but does so in their special needs program. David will proceed as usual for now in making arrangements, and also for the ESP's summer AMC overnight trip, which will also depend on when vaccinations become available. Bill Hagar presented the grant application from the ESP for \$2000, which was recommended by the grant committee. Dan G. moved and Barbara seconded to approve the grant. The vote was unanimously in favor.

- C. **Parks, Rec, and Culture Commission.** Beth related that the Newton Open Space Plan (OSP), which lacked ADA information that PRC has now supplied, should be approved by the state. The city is applying for state funds for the Crystal Lake bathhouse and Gath Pool. Beth is the PRC delegate on the Farm Commission. The farm is in need of capital repairs, which the city is not responsible for, but the Farm Commission may seek funds through the CPC.
- D. **Conservation Commission.** Dan G. reported that 145 Warren St. near Webster Woods is to be converted to duplexes. The Con Comm will likely request to update trail signs to coordinate QR codes with locations on the Conservators website.
- E. **Nominating Committee Report.** The Nominating Committee has begun collecting names for new board members. Mike suggested that it might be time for the Nominating Committee to begin a dialog with the DEIJ team about the needs of the organization relative to new board members. Barbara noted that DEIJ experts recommend against adding a single minority to an organization saying it is best to add two and preferably three minority board members at once.
- F. **Diversity Equity Inclusion and Justice (DEIJ) Team.** Nyssa will make a presentation to Mass Land Trust Coalition meeting regarding Newton Conservators efforts at DEIJ from the perspective of a small land trust. There was a discussion as to prioritizing the amended Tasks 1 and 2 as well as possible speakers for the annual meeting that might address forwarding the objectives of Tasks 1 & 2. Barbara moved and Peter seconded a motion for the DEIJ-Team to prepare a roadmap of prioritized tasks and present them at our next meeting. This passed unanimously.
- G. **60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Annual Meeting** is planned to be held on Wednesday, October 27, 2021 at Post 440 with Maria's Catering.
- H. **Spring Webinar Series.** Beth and Barbara indicated that five webinars have been arranged, including: Apr 7, Barbara on vernal pools; May 5, Alan Noguee and Katherine Howard on an Overview of Cold Spring Park; May 12, Pete on birding in Cold Spring Park; May 19, Beth on pollinators and their plants; and June 2, Eric Olsen on the Pollinator Meadow at Brandeis. Other suggestions were Don Lubin on club mosses & horsetails and/or Brooks Matheson on wolves of the forest floor (salamanders) but Brooks is not available due to his current workload.
- I. **CR Monitoring.** Chris indicated that most CR reports were in.
- J. **Nahanton Park.** A stop work order had been issued on 499 Winchester St. The house and garage have already been demolished.
- K. **Woods Property.** Ted has tried to reach the owner and will coordinate this with Henry.
- L. **The Riverside Greenway** working group is trying to find ways of connecting the Greenway to trails in Weston.
- M. **Houghton Garden.** Ted reported that donations are still being collected and are sufficient for the remaining work to be completed in spring. There was a meeting recently

between the parties involved in Houghton Garden to initiate planning for additional plantings and work in the spring.

- N. **Website.** The City has redone their website and changed many links utilized by our website, which have now been reconnected by Dan B.. Pat Fryenseinger's work on the aqueduct trails will be put on website by Barbara. Ted suggested a new "Nature" website section with possible subsections on topics such as Birds, Pollinators, etc.
- O. **Newsletter.** Ken reported that the next Newsletter would be printed in late February for delivery in March. It was suggested that the Newsletter consider featuring book reviews including wildlife books for children.
- P. **Trail Guide.** Dan B expects to spend funds on developing the Trail Guide in 2021.
- Q. **Publicity.** Ellen Seaward's Tik Tok videos are well received by a growing audience and are getting larger numbers of views.

**Adjournment.** Barbara moved adjournment, which Dan seconded. The vote was unanimously in favor. The meeting adjourned at 9:40 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michael J. Clarke

**Minutes Newton Conservators Board of Directors Meeting**  
**Wednesday, February 24, 2021, 7 pm**  
**Online – Zoom Meeting**

**Participants:** Ted Kuklinski, presiding; AnnaMaria Abernathy, David Backer, Peter Barrer, Barbara Bates, Dan Brody, Bonnie Carter, Mike Clarke, Margaret Doris, Pete Gilmore, Bill Hagar, Chris Hepburn, Katherine Howard, Ken Mallory, George Mansfield, Larry Smith, Beth Wilkinson, and guest Samantha Corbin.

1. **Welcome and Volunteer Introduction.** Ted opened the meeting with the introduction of a new member and volunteer, Samantha Corbin.
2. **Approval of Minutes.** Mike noted some emendations to the minutes and moved approval, which passed unanimously.
3. **Treasurer's Report.** Katherine reported she had sent the Form 1099s out, filed the 3ABC, and obtained tax-exempt accounts at Home Depot and National Lumber. The accountant is working to review the 2020 financials; after that the board will review the financials and the Finance Committee will meet. Save the Cove is doing some additional fundraising for Ware's Cove. The CR grant agreement from the City has been finalized (after review by our attorney Diane Tillotson and a good meeting with the city attorney Andrew Lee and CPA coordinator Lara Kritzer), and Katherine has emailed it to the board for review. In order to keep the grant funds separate from our other funds (a city requirement), we will open a new Fidelity investment account. After some discussion the board voted unanimously to accept the grant agreement and to open the new Fidelity account
4. **Levingston Cove –Letter of Support for Parks, Recreation & Culture (PRC).** Ted related that Luis Perez Demorizi of PRC has asked the Conservators to write a letter of support for the anti-erosion project at Levingston Cove that has been approved by the PRC. The project is currently in the design and development stage that Weston & Sampson, which has received the contract, projects will last about a year. A letter of support from the Conservators will help PRC secure CPA and City construction funding. Barbara moved that Ted write the letter of support, which passed with 16 yeas and 2 abstentions.
5. **Membership Meetings.** The Executive Committee felt that additional membership meetings might benefit the Conservators mission, broadcast the mission, increase member involvement and recruit a diversity of new members. Peter suggested that board members should undertake coordinating these meetings. There being no objection, Ted will proceed with the idea.
6. **Updates**
  - A. **Environmental Science Program (ESP).** David has finalized his list of summer counselors and has developed a list of topics. He has scheduled bike, canoe and Mt. Washington trips.
  - B. **CR Monitoring.** Chris indicated that all the CR reports are in and are in the process of being sent to appropriate agencies.

- C. **Stewards.** Katherine reported on a number of updates from the December Land Stewards meeting, touching on the Upper Falls Riverwalk and planned stairs to the Greenway, Deer Park invasives removal and plans to open the park to the public, trail “blazing” at many parcels, poop stations, availability of bird and bat boxes, etc.
- D. **Parks, Recreation, and Culture Commission (PRC).** Beth said PRC is applying for a CPA grant for the renovation of Gath pool, which is leaking substantial amounts of water.
- E. **Spring Webinar Series.** (see previous minutes and Newsletter). Beth suggested showing appreciation in some way for all Eric Olson has done over the years. This may be a card signed by the Conservators to be presented at an upcoming meeting or possibly contributions to a Nicaraguan environmental project.
- F. **Pollinator Policy City Committee.** Alicia Bowman has formed a Pollinator Policy Committee to advise and influence the City on such matters as allowability of honeybee hives. Beth is on a subcommittee recommending plants, and Ted is on a subcommittee deciding where to post relevant material, perhaps to be hosted on the NC website. The consensus of the meeting was in favor of hosting a pollinator page on the website. Samantha suggested that social media would be useful in disseminating pollinator information.
- G. **Website.** Ted suggested a page on birding as part of a nature section. Ken indicated he would like to expand the section on artists in nature and has an artist who would be interested in displaying her paintings of birds there.
- H. **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice (DEIJ).** Nyssa indicated that the DEIJ team’s intention was to replace Article II §1 with a more modern, streamlined purpose/mission that can easily be recalled and can act as our “brand” in our Newsletters, etc. This means replacing all of Article II §1 with suggested lines, such as “The Newton Conservators promotes acquisition and stewardship of natural and recreational open spaces in Newton for the benefit and enjoyment of all people.” Several board members suggested including both our education and conservation roles in the mission statement. Barbara has consulted with appropriate land trust lawyers as to what needs to be in the charter declaration. The vision, values, etc. statement that has been circulated would not need to appear in the charter. It was agreed to continue discussion at a future meeting.
- I. **Nominating Committee / Board Vacancies.** Pete indicated that Chris had sent him a list of possible nominees for the three positions available. Chris suggested that we should fill at least some of the open positions in order to handle our workload and bring in needed expertise. Barbara pointed out that in order to be credible and attract diverse members they should be added several at a time. There was discussion on creating a list of criteria for board members, and it was agreed board members will send the DEIJ team suggested criteria. Samantha suggested that we use social media to advertise that we have board positions open. This will be a continuing discussion. Ted solicited the board for any interest in the upcoming vacant President position.

- J. **Annual Meeting - Wednesday, October 27.** Ted observed that this would be our 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary meeting and would hopefully be a hybrid meeting of in-person and online. Ken has been preparing a list of suggested speakers from the board and will circulate that along with supporting information.
- K. **Hammond Pond Parkway Project.** Ted reported that our letter to DCR became part of a joint letter of support with other groups such as Green Newton, Bike Newton, and Friends of Webster Woods, as it was desirable to present a united front. A separate letter from City Councilors favored additional crosswalks on the Parkway to connect Webster Woods with the Hammond Pond DCR area.
- L. **Riverside Greenway.** Ted indicated that the \$3M funding for Riverside open space projects is not affected by the proposed change to add biotech lab space to the development plans.
- M. **Newsletter.** The content for the spring Newsletter is essentially complete.
- N. **Publicity.** “Meet Up” is a way of gathering discussion groups together and provides a means to sign up participants for activities. Pete said that Brookline birders have used this, but because of covid, the group did not fully utilize the service. Ted said that the ukulele group of Boston uses it successfully and that it might be helpful in expanding our diversity efforts.
- O. **Woods Property.** The owner has been unresponsive to phone calls, mail, email, and visits to his house. Ted continues to follow up.
- P. **Land Trust Events.** The Mass Land Trust Coalition meeting will be held virtually in March, and board members are invited to participate in them. Barbara had reviewed recently the Land Trust Alliance (national industry group) website resources and noted the possibility of becoming an accredited land trust; however, becoming an accredited land trust, would require a substantial effort and investment.
- Q. **City Council Election – March 16.** Open space has not been a notable topic for candidates this year, but please vote in any case.

**7. New Business.**

- a. Claire Rundelli sent out a message asking for our schedule of invasives pulls; Katherine will follow up (the City provides disposal services). Newton Serves will likely not be available as a platform this year.
- b. Beth suggested that the DEI team might need a special dedicated board meeting to further their goals. Nyssa and others concurred.

**8. Motion to adjourn** passed unanimously at 8:48 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Clarke

**Minutes Newton Conservators Board of Directors Meeting**  
**Wednesday, March 24, 2021, 7 pm**  
**Online – Zoom Meeting**

**Participants:** Ted Kuklinski, presiding, Peter Barrer, Barbara Bates, Dan Brody, Bonnie Carter, Mike Clarke, Margaret Doris, Henry Finch, Pete Gilmore, Dan Green, Bill Hagar, Chris Hepburn, Katherine Howard, Ken Mallory, Nyssa Patten, Larry Smith, Beth Wilkinson, and guests Samantha Corbin and Mark Feldhusen.

1. **Welcome and introductions.** Ted welcomed Samantha Corbin back again and introduced Mark Feldhusen and welcomed him. Mark has been working on the Pollinator Project with Beth Wilkinson.
2. **Approval of Minutes:** A motion was made to approve the minutes of the Board Meeting of February 24 that Mike Clarke had disseminated. The motion was seconded, and the Minutes were approved unanimously.
3. **Treasurer's Report.** Katherine noted that we are taking donations for the latest Save The Cove clean-up effort (Ware's Cove), and recently disbursed \$5,000 to DCR. She had agreed in conversations with Jerry Reilly and Ellen Katz to accept more donations to the Upper Falls Greenway, for a stairway from the Greenway to the Charles River Walk. Katherine has paid Scott Lewis' renewal for his continuing maintenance work on our web site. The group then discussed the 2020 financial statements as prepared by the CPA Bo Wilson, that had been sent for board review. Katherine agreed to incorporate various suggested edits to the footnotes. The group discussed that the Ordway Endowment fund (income from which was originally intended for both improvement and maintenance) has not yet reached that level of income, so we have continued to pay maintenance from unrestricted funds. The board then voted to approve the CPA-reviewed 2020 financial statements.
4. **Wellington Park Pollinator Pathway.** Ted and Mark Feldhusen explained this proposed CPA project and an imminent fundraising campaign by Friends of Wellington Park. Barbara put forward a motion that we fiscally sponsor the group and accept community-raised donations to match a CPA proposal to build a pollinator pathway that would also give wheelchair access to this park at an entrance not currently accessible. The motion passed with 16 ayes and one abstention (Ted).

**5. Updates**

- A. **Conservation Commission:** Dan Green reported the following actions were taken by the Concom. The number of honeybee hives in the Deer Park and Norumbega Park will probably be limited to two per park. There will be coordination with Parks, Rec, and Culture with regard to emergency responses to bee and hornet interactions with people. There will be an orienteering program at Flowed Meadow this weekend.
- B. **Parks, Recreation and Culture:** Beth reported that the Gath Pool needs repair. When Crystal Lake will open for swimming has yet to be determined. Usage fees for the fields is a topic of discussion. The Newton Community Farm is up and running for this spring.
- C. **Grants.** Bill made a motion to approve a grant of \$340 for eagle scouts to set up an orienteering course in Kennard park. It would amount to 4x4 wooden posts with QR codes on them. Chris asked about whether treated wood was being used, lest the posts be eaten or rotted in a few years. The motion was made pending an answer to this question, as well as



consulting the Friends of Kennard Park about their opinion on this matter. The motion passed with 16 in favor and one abstention. It was pointed out that the Friends of Nahanton Park are funding a similar orienteering course for that park.

- D. **Newsletter.** Ken reported that the summer newsletter is ready for June delivery. Eric Olson has an article on invasives, Mike Clarke has a second installment on the history of Newton's parks & playgrounds and Beth Wilkinson has an article on pollinator gardens. Samantha will do a future article on aquatic invasive issues. She also has talked to Eric Olson about invasives issues and gotten good leads from him.
- E. **Spring Webinars.** Beth reminded everyone that the first Spring webinar will be by Barbara Bates on Vernal Pools on April 7 at 7 PM. We have five new webinars in total this Spring. Ken observed that the links to sign up are on our web site now. Ted may look into live streaming as an option if the number of signees is much larger than our webinar capacity of 100.
- F. **Pollinator Working Group.** Mark Feldhusen and Beth reported that the working group has created a robust gallery of 65-70 native plants for the website, with columns indicating sun, shade, season of the year, what pollinators are attracted, and the moisture and soil needs for native plants. Also included are photos of the plants as well as good sources of information about these plants. Chris suggested an indication as to which are rabbit resistant. It was suggested that wire fences may be the only workable defense. In the future there are plans to include which larvae use which plant. The Newton Community Farm will be encouraged to have some pollinator plants included in their seedling offer in the spring. Peter Barrer is mentoring our computer intern, Veer, who is working on establishing the web page for the pollinator plant information.
- G. **Web Site.** Peter will put the Farm's seedling sale up on the site soon. Ted reported that a birding page is planned, which will include links to our birding videos, newsletter articles, birding hotspots in Newton and ebird links to these areas. The Murmuration Project will be included as a link. It is an-open-to-all spreadsheet of information on popular birding locations, how to bird there, and local safety precautions and how to be safe.
- H. **Invasive pulls.** Katherine is compiling a list of volunteers. Care will be taken to use Covid precautions. Katherine is finalizing the schedule for invasive pulls, including those on Newton Serves day (May 2) and notifying the city DPW for pickups. There is a growing list of places where people want to coordinate for invasive removals including: the CRWA for aquatic pulls, the Greenway, the Church of the Good Shepherd, and Riverside Park.
- I. **Riverside Greenway.** Larry reported that a new sign for the new Pony Truss Trail has been constructed and installed at the Pony Truss Bridge.
- J. **Mass Land Trust Conference (MLTC).** Nyssa, Barbara, Ken, Ted, and Beth attended. Much of this conference was in the area of DEIJ topics. There were sessions on recruiting members, getting donors, social media, communications and marketing, edible plants, and more. There was a breakout series of sessions on indigenous peoples, their cultural easements and food gathering connections to the land. Various land trust organizations are conducting white-tailed deer culling. The main speaker, Carolyn Finney from Middlebury College in VT, was very dynamic. The DEIJ talk by Nyssa and Barbara was well received. There will be access to the recorded sessions for about 60 days. A view only ticket for logging on and viewing any of the presentations up to six sessions for \$100 will be available. Barbara Bates will circulate a list of videos and resources on the plenary DEIJ issues. A common theme was that of building authentic relationships through face-to-face encounters.

- K. **Walks.** Ted said that Newton Community Education was doing outside nature walks and wondered if we could do any this year. Pete suggested this might work with a limited number of people, which would depend on the individual site. Brookline Bird Club is doing walks with a limit of 8 people.
- L. **DEIJ Committee.** The group has recently concentrated on getting their presentation ready for the Mass Land Trust Conference and considering the feedback. The DEIJ group wants to have a board meeting solely on DEIJ issues, possibly facilitated by someone from outside the board. Barbara will send out a list of resources on DEIJ issues to the board.
- M. **Nominating Committee.** Ted reminded the Board that he will be stepping down by the Annual Meeting in October. There was no immediate volunteer to take his place as president. He will circulate a copy of a job description to the Board soon. Pete will contact a few possible people after that has been sent around. Ted reported that there are six vacancies on the Board, now. There are several possible candidates. The DEIJ committee would like to reserve three positions for BIPOC candidates.
- N. **Annual Meeting.** This is our 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary meeting. Ted will send around a list of possible speakers together with links to videos of their talks. Each board member should go through this information and pick their top three nominees by March 31.
- O. **Publicity.** Ellen, Samantha and Ted will form a social media group to get the word out on our activities, such as invasive pulls. This group gets us on TikTok, Instagram and Twitter. Ken can put our webinar schedule on the Green Newton web site.

**Motion to Adjourn.** A motion was made to adjourn at 8:50 PM, seconded and unanimously passed.

Respectfully Submitted,

Pete Gilmore

**Minutes Newton Conservators Board of Directors Meeting**  
**Wednesday, April 28, 2021, 7 pm**  
**Online – Zoom Meeting**

**Participants:** Ted Kuklinski, presiding, David Backer, Peter Barrer, Barbara Bates, Dan Brody, Mike Clarke, Henry Finch, Pete Gilmore, Bill Hagar, Chris Hepburn, Katherine Howard, Ken Mallory, Nyssa Patten, Larry Smith, Beth Wilkinson, and guests Alice Ingerson, Ted Chapman and Mark Feldhusen.

1. **Welcome and Land Acknowledgement.** Nyssa voiced the land acknowledgement that we are on the land of the Wampanoag. Ted welcomed Alice Ingerson, Ted Chapman and Mark Feldhusen as guests.
2. **Approval of Minutes:** Mike moved to approve the minutes of the Board Meeting of March 24 previously distributed with the agenda. Ted thanked Pete for drafting the minutes. The motion was seconded, and the Minutes were approved unanimously.
3. **Treasurer's Report.** Katherine presented the 3/31/21 financials. Activity included paying the accountant's \$1500 fee (as budgeted) and receiving Save The Cove donations plus some final grant payments for Riverside trails. We received \$30K from the city CPA for CR monitoring, but not until April so these were not reflected on the March statements. The CPA funds have been invested in the Fidelity 4 in 1 fund. There is a coming review of the IRS Form 990, which is more thorough than previous reviews particularly with regard to the CRs. The 990 forms must be reviewed by the board, but do not have to be approved by the board.
4. **Riverside Greenway Working Group (RGWG).** Ted Chapman, coordinator for RGWG, requested that the Newton Conservators consider hosting the content currently on the website <https://riversidegreenwayma.wildapricot.org>. Barbara asked why RGWG wanted to migrate to the NC Website. Ted C. replied because of increased visibility and functionality. Donations made on the website go to the NC Trails fund, but most of this came from the Solomon Foundation with very few individual donors. \$12-14M have come to the RGWG on other projects. Ted K. said that we are partners with the RGWG and that only 5-6 web pages would need to be supported. Beth said the NC has guaranteed some of the matching funds that have gone to the RGWG. Katherine said that the NC are committed to fundraising for the RGWG and that the look and feel of the website were considerably different from that of the NC website. Ted K. felt that Chapman and some of the NC/RGWG directors might help with web maintenance and that it could be made compatible within the NC website. Barbara suggested that she, Ted K. and Ted C. discuss this and report back.
5. **Newton Highlands Playground.** Mike suggested that the Conservators inform the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Commission (PRCC) of the inappropriateness of Joseph Lee's name being the official name of the Joseph Lee (Newton Highlands) Playground. There has been significant new scholarship on the life of Joseph Lee, "the Father of the Playground Movement", which highlights the racial exclusion part of his career as a leader of the Immigration Exclusion League. Ted agreed to talk with Commissioner Nicole Banks and PRCC Chair Arthur Magni about this.
6. **Avery Woods Encroachment.** Dan moved that the City Council take the following steps with regard to the city's encroachment on the Avery Woods land: 1. The 2.5 acres (106,889 square feet) of land that the 1968 agreement allowed to be used for the school should be subdivided into a separate parcel, which would stay under the control of the School Department. 2. The remaining 6 acres of land from the original Avery parcel should be transferred to the control of the Parks, Recreation, and Culture Department, and named "Avery Memorial Woods." 3. The

city should grant to the Newton Conservators a conservation restriction on Avery Memorial Woods and grant monies to the Conservators for enforcement. The motion was seconded by Barbara and Bill, and passed unanimously.

7. **Aqueduct Protection** (Whole Foods Area). Ted related that Ken Parker recently contacted the Newton Conservators about a recent settlement with a developer who had purchased a property adjacent to a portion of the MWRA's Sudbury Aqueduct that is located to the east off Walnut Street south of Whole Foods in Newton Highlands. The developer had apparently illegally removed some trees along the aqueduct and there was a lawsuit that Ken Parker won. Paarker has a right of enforcement and is writing up an agreement (which may be modeled on our Wilson aqueduct CR) and was trying to determine NC's interest in involvement. The consensus was to wait and see how this develops and if it results in a CR.
8. **Library Talk on Naturalistic Garden Design.** Ted related that Ellen Meyers recently asked us if we would co-sponsor a webinar program on June 22 by Deborah Chud, a Chestnut Hill resident, with the Newton Free Library. The program is on Piet Oudolf (Landscape Designer, NYC High Line). The Exec Committee approved the request for this program in April.
9. **DCR Special Commission.** Ted said that the Newton Conservators Exec Committee has signed onto the letter requesting an extension for the DCR Special Commission along with other organizations. This letter, vetted by the Exec Committee due to its being due on Tuesday before our board meeting, was sent around to the board previously.
10. **CR Monitoring Policy:** Chris moved that the previously distributed statement of a policy for the Conservators concerning our monitoring of Conservation Restrictions be approved by the Board. The policy is needed to file our IRS taxes this year. Barbara indicated that the policy should be revisited at a later date in order to designate responsibilities. Barbara moved approval of the policy, Katherine seconded and it was approved unanimously.
11. **DCR Riverside Trail:** The DCR will soon announce the ribbon cutting planned for the opening of the Pony Truss Bridge. There have also been discussions as to how the trail should run under the train tracks.

## 12. Updates

- A. **Conservation Commission:** Ted said the Conservation Commission was considering how many beehives would be allowed in conservation areas.
- B. **Parks and Rec.** Mark Feldhusen indicated that the Parks & Recreation Department was getting summer programs up. Beth commented on an IPM report that said using herbicides and pesticides on three fields was "successful" and looked better without white clover. The Hunnewell off leash dog area has been enlarged to encompass about half the park.
- C. **Environmental Science Program.** David related that he has hired leaders, received requests for scholarships, and has had some problems lining up transport for trips. The NC Scholarship grant to the ESP has been processed
- D. **Grants Committee.** Troop 209 has installed the orienteering course at the Kennard Park and Conservation Area. Details are on the orienteering page at <https://www.newtonma.gov/government/parks-recreation-culture/recreation-programs/orienteering>. The Grand Opening for all five orienteering courses will be on Wednesday May 5th from 5:30 – 7:00 at Auburndale Playground. NC grant funds have been released to the Orienteering group.

The Grants Committee enthusiastically recommended the grant proposal for \$1000 for a pollinator garden at City Hall. Barbara moved and Ken seconded a motion to approve this grant, which passed unanimously.

- E. **Pollinator Working Group.** The pollinator page on the website is searchable for plants that discourage rabbit and deer. The online version has a tool kit that provides for searches for particular types of plants. The garden QR tool will take viewers to the pollinator page and enable them to view data on a specific plant.
- F. **Newsletter.** Ken said that the Spring Newsletter has been distributed and he has extra copies for anyone who would like them. The summer newsletter will be distributed around May-June and will have articles on birding, invasive plants, and pollinator gardens. Because of space limitation the next segment of the Parks and Rec history may be deferred.
- G. **Spring Webinars.** Beth said the list of the remaining seminars has been submitted to the Tab. The last one is on June 22 and one is cosponsored with the Newton Free Library.
- H. **Trail Guide.** Dan showed examples of new maps for the forthcoming trail guide. Some trails on private land will be deleted. The Riverside Greenway may not be included on its own page, but may be provided as a separate insert.
- I. **Web Site.** Veer is travelling and unable to update aspects of the site.
- J. **Invasive pulls.** Katherine said that invasive pulls will be included in Newton Serves on Sunday.
- K. **DEIJ Committee.** Nyssa said that other topics are on temporary hold in order to focus on the mission/values statement for potential bylaws changes for the special meeting of members before the annual meeting. The DEIJ team is making a list of directors' jobs and expectations for new board members. Barbara said that the doodle for scheduling the special meeting indicated that the best date would be Tues May 18 from 7-9 pm
- L. **Nominating Committee.** Pete is still looking for people to serve as officers and board members. Chris nominated Diane Tillotson as an advisor as she is not available for a board position. The nomination was approved unanimously.
- M. **Annual Meeting.** Ted had sent around a list of possible speakers together with links to videos of their talks. Board members responded in an online priority-score vote. The top candidates were discussed. Pete Gilmore volunteered to contact them and determine their availability, talk focus and possible honorariums of around \$1-2K. Annual Meeting Committee members were solicited.
- N. **Friends Group Updates.** Katherine is implementing a 3% service fee for donations made to friends groups to cover the credit card fee.

13. **Motion to Adjourn.** Ted adjourned the meeting at 9:06 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Michael Clarke

**Minutes**  
**Newton Conservators Board of Directors Meeting**  
**Wednesday, May 26, 2021, 7 pm**  
**Online Zoom Meeting**

Participants: Ted Kuklinski, presiding, Peter Barrer, Barbara Bates, Dan Brody, Bonnie Carter, Margaret Doris, Henry Finch, Pete Gilmore, Dan Green, Chris Hepburn, Katherine Howard, Ken Mallory, Nyssa Patten, Larry Smith, Beth Wilkinson, and guests Alice Ingerson and Samantha Corbin

**1. Welcome – Land Acknowledgment and Guest Introductions**

Nyssa voiced the land acknowledgement that the land we now steward is the ancestral homeland of the Massachusett and Pawtucket Peoples. Ted confirmed that AnnaMaria Abernathy has officially resigned from the board. We wish her well for her many years of service as she moves to Lasell Village.

**2. Approval of Minutes**

A motion was made to approve the minutes of the Board Meeting of April 28 that Mike Clarke had disseminated. There were some slight wording revisions to the minutes, small but substantive changes as suggested by Beth. The amended minutes were approved unanimously

**3. Treasurer's Report**

Katherine said we are receiving large donations for Houghton Garden plantings, and smaller donations for Upper Falls Greenway and one for Wellington Park. The IRS 990 was filed by its May 15 due date; the IRS now requires electronic filing so Katherine found an IRS-approved non-profit vendor for \$41 (next year when our revenue is lower it will be free).

Now that the IRS 990 has been filed we will post it in a public place in our website (as stated in the filing) and Barbara and Katherine also propose to move prior year 990s, as well as financial statements, treasurer reports and audit reports, from the board-only web page to the same public place. Mass Audubon and Native Plant Trust make this information available to the public. The group discussed this proposal. Pete Gilmore wondered if the site is protected. Peter Barrer thinks the site is well protected from hackers. The board voted to approve moving these financial reports/information to the public part of the website.

**4. Special Board Item**

Chris noted that Alice Ingerson had been attending the last few board meetings and that he was nominating her to become a Conservators board member due to her long history of working for the City of Newton, where she had recently been Community Preservation Coordinator. The motion was seconded by Pete Gilmore and Peter Barrer, who had worked with her at Newton Community Farm. Ted noted that Alice will receive a Directors' award at the October 27th annual meeting. Alice was unanimously voted in as a board member and welcomed by all the board after she joined the meeting shortly thereafter.

**5. Updates**

**A - Letters of Support:**

Ted reported that we signed on to a letter in support of the special commission to recommend ways to improve management, operations, and asset condition of the natural, cultural, and recreational resources held by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). There was also support that we voted for in previous years, the Public Lands Preservation Act, proposed legislation to preserve open space in the Commonwealth. The bill was put forward for the last few years; it didn't pass last year, but a letter was sent from a number of organizations again. The executive committee decided it was fine to sign it (see details in the packet Ted sent before this board meeting). Concerning the Special Commission for DCR, Ted said that there was a call for a focus group that wanted input from various stakeholders including the Conservators. Ted Chapman was participating. David Backer offered to be our representative if he was not traveling that day.

**B - Aqueduct Protection (Whole Foods Area):**

Ted noted that Ken Parker, who had sued and won the suit against the developer of a property adjacent to a part of the MWRA's Sudbury Aqueduct near Whole Foods did sign an agreement with the developer in which there is some provision for a substantial payment that could possibly go to some organization such as the Friends of Cold Spring Park or Newton Conservators. We are awaiting further word on this situation.

**C - Newton Highlands Playground Naming:**

At the previous Conservator board meeting, Ted was charged with discussing the Newton Highlands Playground Naming with Commissioner Nicole Banks and Arthur Magni, who is head of the Parks, Recreation & Culture (PRC) Commission. The Conservators had noted the inappropriateness of Joseph Lee's name for the park based on information from Mike Clarke. Ted contacted Banks and Magni about this and found they both were amenable to our objections but wanted to establish an official naming policy first. Howard Whitmore, a former mayor of Newton, might also be considered as a possible name for the park.

**D - Avery Woods:**

This was a subject brought up by Dan Brody in last month board meeting where he suggested we go to Arthur Magni of PRC Commissioner Nicole Banks. In the last board meeting Dan had moved that the City Council take the following steps with regard to the city's encroachment on the Avery Woods land: "1. The 2.5 acres (106,889 square feet) of land that the 1968 agreement allowed to be used for the school should be subdivided into a separate parcel, which would stay under the control of the School Department. 2. The remaining 6 acres of land from the original Avery parcel should be transferred to the control of the Parks, Recreation, and Culture Department, and named "Avery Memorial Woods." 3. The city should grant to the Newton Conservators a conservation restriction on Avery Memorial Woods and grant monies to the Conservators for enforcement." Ted reported he had positive conversations with both Magni and Banks about this and that he thinks they are in favor of Dan's proposal. It was suggested that this should be under the control of Parks, Recreation and Culture Department. Providing a CR, however, will require a survey first but this may take a while since we voted to prioritize the

one currently in process for Nahanton Park. Ted will keep talking with Nicole Banks as we seek resolution of this matter.

#### **E - Nahanton Park CR:**

Some time ago, a working group including Chris, Beth and Ouida Young began work on a draft of a CR proposal but were told that the state mandates a survey of any property made within a decade. Nahanton does not have an updated survey, and it was not clear whether the City would do the work in house or find money in the budget to hire an outside surveyor. Chris suggested writing a letter from the Friends of Nahanton Park and the Conservators to Nicole Banks and to the mayor asking to move forward on the survey. Beth suggested we talk to Ouida Young first. Peter Barrer says the city does have a surveyor but we need to free him up from his current workload. We need to revisit this next month.

#### **F - Riverside Greenway Working Group:**

There was a discussion about what the Conservators should tell Ted Chapman about his request that the Conservators host the Riverside Greenway Working Group website. After much discussion, we made a motion suggested by Barbara for Ted K. to tell Ted Chapman that the Conservators will only host our own content and that Ted Chapman should contact Scott Lewis, who can provide him with whatever technical assistance he needs to move his site to a standalone WordPress platform. This is not to say we won't entertain changes to the content the Conservators already have about Riverside since we already have extensive information about their organization; it is just to say we do not have the capacity to host friends or any other organizations websites. Dan Brody agreed with this approach and suggested we want to avoid creating arguments with hosted websites about what is appropriate. Margaret suggested we create a Conservator policy document that explains this. Barbara's motion was seconded by Ken. Henry, Larry, and Ted abstain. Eleven votes in favor, with 3 abstentions. There will be a Pony Truss trail ribbon-cutting event organized by the Riverside Greenway working group on June 17th 10 am, with DCR Commissioner Jim Montgomery, State Rep. Kay Khan, and Mayor Fuller among others.

#### **G - Parks, Recreation, and Culture Commission:**

Beth reported that the Parks Rec and Culture Committee received more money with their updated budget, enough to reset to pre-Covid levels for tree work, an increased amount for field maintenance, and an additional \$100,000 for urban forestry to do an urban forest plan. The Parks, Recreation and Culture Commission approved an additional off leash area at Hunnewell dog park and some of the field rental fees increased, including some for outside groups.

#### ***Proposal to Expand Pesticide Use on Public Property:***

At the meeting there was an explanation that there would be more work coming on herbicides and pesticides for treating fields (see the attached letter). It was a memorandum to the City of Newton Councilors from Derek Mannion, Superintendent of Public Grounds Maintenance, with the subject a Proposal to Expand Pesticide Use on Public Property



Beth said she was interested in what the board thinks of the proposal to expand pesticide use on public property. It is not completely an open space issue; in some ways it is more of a Green Newton issue. Margaret Doris is on the Conservators/Green Newton slot on Integrated Pest Management (IPM), a volunteer city citizen advisory committee. She felt there is a real effort at transparency for this commission but welcomed support and more discussion to include more people outside of the athletic field people. A lot of studies are industry sponsored. Pete worried about runoff of herbicides ultimately getting into the Charles River.

There was more discussion on whether this is part of our mission. Is the larger environmental picture in our mission or are we really engaged in issues of open space only? Beth noted that there isn't an enormous amount of open space left in Newton to preserve, and that our mission is going to have to be more of taking care of the open space. Ted called on Margaret and Beth to come back with some possible proposals for discussion in our next meeting.

#### **H - Conservation Commission :**

Dan Green said "bees are in everyone's bonnet these days." Quick update, there are a lot of opposing messages coming out about the impact of honeybees on native bees. ConCom has sought more data including by talking with the chief scientist of honeybee aviaries in Massachusetts. In the meantime ConCom is limiting the number of permitted hives to 2 in each location unless there is an overarching educational value. Also, the bee collectors are going to deploy pollen traps to see where the bees are eating to see if they are competition for native bees.

ConCom is not making a decision right now other than limiting the hives, 14 down to 6 this year, then down to 2 next year. Dan was congratulated for his good work at ConCom.

#### **I - Woods Property:**

Henry has been trying to reach the owner and felt we need to keep up the effort because this is an important property that would be a shame to lose to a developer. Katherine suggested we revisit this with Eric Reenstierna on our Advisory Board.

#### **J - Grants:**

Ted noted that the Conservators had approved a grant to the Boys Scouts for orienteering and that there was a grand opening (even though it was raining). Attendees besides Ted were the mayor, Nicole Banks, Channon Ames, some of the orienteering people, the scout leader, the scouts, and a couple parents. Orienteering seems here to stay. The Conservators also gave a grant to a new demonstrator pollinator garden that is now in place near the entrance to Newton City Hall. There will be an article in the summer newsletter about the garden and the pollinator tool kit and information will also go on our website. Plants so far have cost almost \$800. Over 60 plants were purchased, and they will be watered every day. Some mulch was put in but there were some mulch-free areas left in the center to accommodate ground nesting bees.

#### **K - Webinars and Walks:**

Beth reported on our webinars and said they were well received and worth continuing. However, she thinks she will need some help if both webinars and walks continue. There is board enthusiasm for both, and it was decided we need to make decisions right away in order to reach out to both walk and webinar leaders. Sam volunteered to do the walk management of recruiting

people and setting up times and dates with Beth's help. Beth says right now we are doing both walks and webinars in the spring and fall but that we should consider winter walks as well. Both Barbara and Pete show interest in doing both walks and webinars and in possibly doing winter webinars too, Barbara on Webster Woods and Pete on birds along the Charles. Ted noted that there is great interest in Webster Woods as a possible walk and webinar topic and that a webinar would be a great way to prepare walk participants before they visit. Margaret Doris offers to help publicize this idea to families. Ted sees this as a great way to educate members and recruit new ones.

#### **L - Events:**

Ted noted the upcoming event on Tuesday, June 22 in conjunction with the library, The Piet Oudolf story about the landscape designer who did the High Line given by Deborah Chud, a Newton landscape designer who is very much into pollinators and such. Black birders Week (5/30-6/5) is also coming soon. Just before this meeting there was an interesting public session on the Christina Street rail bridge. The Conservators wrote a letter of support last year for a study reusing or replacing Christina Street Bridge between Newton and Needham. This was recorded and it should be available for viewing and listening. It's important for its connection to the Riverside Greenway.

#### **M - Invasive Efforts:**

Our invasive plant efforts are going okay but have not been well attended. Going forward we will publicize them more and make them public. Autumn Olive (*Elaeagnus umbellata*), which is on Mass Audubon's top 10 list but is not common yet in Newton, was found at Woodcock Meadow, and there are probably others around; we should keep a look out for it to try and nip it in the bud. Katherine will add a post on invasives to the summer newsletter highlighting black swallow-wort. Alice will work with Katherine to use Next Door as a way to draw attention to Black swallow-wort and the invasive work the Conservators do.

#### **N - Bylaws Revision:**

Barbara Bates noted that we had been planning for a board meeting that would address changes to our bylaws with our DEI lens but then found that we needed to resolve some issues before we go ahead with our bylaws update. In 2004 Newton Conservators had attempted to make a needed revision, but it was not completed due to a possible misunderstanding about the required legal voting threshold. In order to complete that revision Barbara thinks Newton Conservators should get a legal opinion from a qualified corporate lawyer. Once we have our lawyer's counsel about how to go forward, we hope to modernize our bylaws package with non-gendered language and other updates. Ted emailed this request to Tillotson but has not heard back. Ted says he will follow up with this request. Katherine suggests our advisor Willis Wang may be able to help and we have also checked with Larry Burdick. Barbara says we need to resolve all the old bylaw issues before modernizing them, and then call a special meeting to consider a new set of bylaws in honor of our 60th anniversary.

#### **O - Conservators Organizational Blueprint:**

Nyssa thanked Barbara for the many hours she spent on the by-law's revision. Based on the work of the DEI committee we have created a draft organizational blueprint using a DEI lens with

hopes that the finished product could be used to preserve institutional knowledge and help clarify roles and responsibilities. Nyssa asked the board to please email her back with comments and suggestions. Based on the responses, possibly this will be brought together for discussion in a regular board meeting.

#### **P - Annual Meeting:**

Ted noted that it is our 60th anniversary on Wednesday October 27 and we need a set of volunteers to help organize our annual meeting. He sees this as a great opportunity for publicity to help people understand what the Conservators do. Peter suggested we need to create an organizing committee with proposals to bring to the board. Talking about our need for a new president once Ted steps down in October, Pete has already contacted 5 people who have declined, has phoned a 6th person, and is waiting for a response. Ted noted that the organizational blueprint being proposed offers a good understanding of the president's responsibilities and if one sticks to the duties of what the president is supposed to do, it should be a manageable job. For anyone interested, attending an executive board meeting is a good way to understand the position.

As for possible annual meeting speakers, Pete had tried contacting Scott Edwards from Harvard's Museum of Comparative Zoology whose research focuses on the evolutionary biology of birds, who was our first choice. Our second most popular selection was author Robin Kimmerer, but her speaker fee is out of our budget. The next choice to be contacted is Rue Mapp, founder of Outdoor Afro. Steve Curwood of the NPR show "Living on Earth" would be next in line and has the advantage of being someone local. We may want to share a speaker with other like-minded groups in the future to be able to afford higher speaker expenses. Ted asked for volunteers to be on the annual meeting committee. Margaret Doris agreed to be chair and was joined by Sam, Henry, Nyssa, and Katherine. There was also a call for board members who would be willing to introduce award winners at the annual meeting.

#### **Q - Newsletter:**

Ken noted that the summer newsletter was in the design phase and waiting for last minute additions from Ted with the President's Message and from Katherine with an update on scheduled invasive pulls for June and July. Beth Wilkinson and Mark Feldhusen have written an article called "Helping Pollinators: A New Pollinator Toolkit and Demonstration Garden". Eric Olson has addressed "Why Do We Care About Invasive Plants" and Richard Primack contributed an article on "Newton Trails During the Pandemic."

**R - Website:** Peter Barrer said the Pollinator Toolkit is up and running on the website although it's not yet mobile phone friendly. Peter thanked Beth and Mark for doing all the hard work. Beth thanked Peter for his oversight and Veer for implementing it. Katherine suggested we give Veer a Director's Award and she and Beth will discuss ways to further recognize the amazing job Veer did while he was on overload as he prepares to attend MIT in the fall.

#### **S - Friends Group Updates:**

Katherine noted that the Cold Spring Park trail renovation is in the works. At Houghton Garden,

around \$16,000 of new plants were installed, funded by donations. The Friends of Wellington Park is gearing up to go before the Parks and Rec commission in the near future with a proposal.

**T - New Business:**

Katherine asked about the technical problems during Beth's webinar. Apparently, this was a problem with the internet provider but it only really affected the question-and-answer period. There are ways to fix this in the post processing for the video recording.

**Adjournment:**

The next board meeting is Wednesday, June 23. Alice Ingerson thanked the board for welcoming her and Ted thanked Sam for her attendance. The meeting was adjourned at 9 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

*Ken Mallory, Board Member*

(in the absence of Secretary Mike Clarke)

# Newton Conservator's Board of Directors Meeting<sup>1</sup>

June 23, 2021, 7-9 PM

Online – Zoom Meeting

**Participants:** Ted Kuklinski (presiding), Barbara Bates, Dan Brody, Samantha Corbin, Margaret Doris, Pete Gilmore, Dan Green, Katherine Howard, Chris Hepburn, Alice Ingerson, Ken Mallory, Nyssa Patten, Larry Smith, and Beth Wilkinson.

1. **Welcome and Land Acknowledgement.** Ted welcomed the participants and guest Samantha Corbin and voiced the acknowledgement that we are on the ancestral land of the Massachuset and Pawtucket tribes.
2. **Approval of Minutes.** Ted expressed thanks to Ken Mallory for volunteering to do the minutes for last month and to Beth and Katherine for review. Corrections later. It was voted to accept the May minutes with corrections and a copy of a letter to be included.
3. **Treasurer's Report.** Katherine indicated that the Audit and Finance Committee would meet soon. Houghton Garden has received an additional \$17k of donations. She has worked with Barbara Bates to make all financial reports (statements, Form PC, IRS 990, Treasurer's and Audit reports) available to the public on the "About Us/Board" website page.
4. **Advisor Addition.** AnnaMaria has resigned from the board but would like to be on the advisory board. It was subsequently unanimously voted that Anna Maria will be added to the Board of Advisors, and that at the Annual Meeting she would be the recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Director's Award.
5. **Aqueduct Trees.** Wood End Road: Chris Roy (abutter) was notified that the MWRA would cut down several trees and a stop work order was issued after trees were fully removed. Chris reached out to Claire Rundelli, Marc Welch, Jennifer Steel and Derek Mannion. However, the city has no jurisdiction as the land was on MWRA property. Ted will write a letter to the MWRA.
6. **Updates**
  - a. **Parks, Recreation, and Culture Commission (PRCC).** Beth reported that the Levingston Cove project was moving forward well. It is in the Capital improvement plan and the CPC to ask for increased funding. Indigenous People's Day is on October 11. Mike Clarke had previously suggested an increase in Golf Course contribution to PRCC programs due to inflation. The current contribution is \$25K. If an inflation correction were employed it might potentially be increased to \$50K. The PRCC has the board's support on this.
  - b. **Conservation Commission.** Dan Green reported that Susan Albright thought \$25K for the Con Comm was low. He asked for the Board's opinion and wrote a letter pushing the increase. Beth said that Ouida Young is still working on the Webster Woods CR.

The Executive board will follow up on CR status and funding for Kessler woods. The City will decide about the Boston sliver of property. Dan that the Crystal Lake beach is being sectioned due to lack of cleaning and is waiting for treatment from Solitude. Surveys of city lands needed for conservation restrictions have been delayed as the surveyor, Mr. Higgins has left the city's employ. There is seeding done for the spoilage area in Houghton Garden.,
  - c. **Riverside Greenway Working Group.** The Pony Truss Bridge Ribbon Cutting was on June 17<sup>th</sup>. The DCR had no PR in advance of the event, but had follow-up PR and provided the sound

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<sup>1</sup> These minutes were modified and reformatted by Michael Clarke.

- system/backdrop/photography. The NC page now responds to a corrected QR code on the sign. Speakers were Jim Montgomery, Rep Kay Khan, Mayor Ruthanne Fuller, Ted Chapman, and Herb Nolan. There was a pre-meeting concerning the care and control of Pigeon Hill Thursday, June 24 at 9:30 with the city. The Conservation Commission supports extra funding for the project and Ted Chapman has written a letter in this regard.
- d. **Friends Group Update.** The Houghton Garden group has raised \$93K. Plant placement is to be done with the Conservation Commission handling the tree work.
    - a. Cold Spring is undergoing summer maintenance/field spraying. It was proposed that we write a letter of concern to advocate against the use of pest/herbicides. Alice pointed out that the Newton Tab said the sites are -- Weeks Field, Cabot Park, Forte Park, New Cold Springs, and Warren House -- and the spraying will be Q4 Plus for broadleaf weeds, and Pylex for grassy weeds.” The letter will emphasize: 1. There is no settled science presented on weeds on fields causing accidents of any kind. 2. Concern over drift into our open spaces and watershed. 3. Many plants considered weeds are in fact host plants for important pollinators. Pete will draft the letter.
    - b. Wellington Park. The Friends of Wellington Park is currently requesting pledges instead of fundraising (\$15k so far). A proposal is to be drafted and sent to PRC before meeting in the fall. They appreciate the sponsorship which will be helpful for going before the PRC Commission.
    - c. The Nahanton Park CR is being held up as the City Surveyor position is vacant. Ouida Young is continuing to look into this.
  - e. **DCR Topics.** A Special Commission Focus group has been formed to evaluate directions for DCR. A Master Plan for Parkways has been released. NC signed onto letter to DCR with other organizations, which the Executive Committee approved.
  - f. **Pesticides.** Beth and Margaret attended a recent meeting. There was a recent Tab article - Primack/Cohen co-author. Pete Gilmore will be drafting a letter,
  - g. **Grants.** The Grants Program spent \$3.3K on the ESP, Pollinator Garden, and Orienteering, and so went \$340 over budget.
  - h. **Woods Property.** Advisor Eric Reenstierna will follow up with owner Zach Woods.
  - i. **Fall Webinars and Walks.** Walks will be earlier in the fall and Webinars continue later. The board discussed lineup and potential portable sound systems to be borrowed from Mass Audubon (Barbara).
  - j. **Invasive Pulls**
    - i. There as varying turnout, and we are looking to publicize on social media.
    - ii. There are spots open at Dexter Woods still.
  - k. **Events.** Deb Chud, who offered to give a talk about Piet Oudolf design, thanked us and invited board members to her garden on July 9<sup>th</sup>. It was moved to cosponsor Fall Hiking Tips from AMC on Oct 5<sup>th</sup> with the Newton Tree Conservancy, the Library, and Green Newton. The motion passed.
    - i. Board meetings will likely remain on zoom through the end of the year. Dates are:
      - 1. Jul - 7/28 – Ted away, Chris will preside
      - 2. Aug – No Meeting
      - 3. Sep - 9/22
      - 4. Oct – No Board Meeting, Annual Meeting – 10/27
      - 5. Nov - 11/17 (due to Thanksgiving)

6. Dec - 12/15 (due to Christmas)

- l. Conservators Organizational Blueprint (DEIJ).** A special meeting was discussed to consider expectations, activities limited by supervisor, and word choice/based on current or future. An Email with updated blueprint and poll for meeting date will be sent. The possibility of a special meeting in July, in addition to regular board meeting, was discussed.
- m. DEIJ Team.** The Mass Land Trust Coalition is having a learning collaborative to discuss Racial Justice, Equity and Inclusion for Land Trusts, which will be led by Dr. Neenah Estrella-Luna, a dynamic researcher, educator and advocate for racial equity and environmental justice. Details will be forthcoming, but if interested, contact [robb@massland.org](mailto:robb@massland.org). Diane Tillotson to be recontacted regarding updating our bylaws.
- n. Annual Meeting.** Margaret Doris indicated that attendance will be in person this October and that there would be a Zoom organizational meeting. Pete related the following about the possible speakers: Scott Peterson was unreachable, Rue Mapp is not doing live talks, Robin Kimmerer is too expensive, Steve Curwood has not yet responded. The Annual Meeting Committee includes Margaret, Nyssa, Henry, Katherine and Sam.
- o.** Pete pointed out that Ted's term as President, with the duties outlined in the Blueprint, ends as of the Annual Meeting in October and that there no current candidates for the position.
- p. Newsletter.** Thanks were given to Ken, Bonnie and editors for getting the issue out, as well as to the authors- Beth, Mark F, Eric Olsen, Richard Primack, and Katherine. The next issue for the fall will be ready at the end of August. There will be a special 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition with PR via the Globe.
- q. Website**
  - i. Veer is having permissions removed from site
  - ii. Katherine will post financials on the site
  - iii. Updates re-board, email lists etc...

**7. New Business.** Laura Foot wants pictures of the River. Dan and Ken may be able to provide some. A Boy Scout Pollinator Garden has been proposed for Dolan Pond.

The meeting was adjourned at 9 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Samantha Corbin

**Newton Conservator's Board of Directors Special Meeting**  
**July 12, 2021, 7-9 PM**  
**Online – Zoom Meeting**

**Participants:** Ted Kuklinski, presiding, David Backer, Peter Barrer, Barbara Bates, Bonnie Carter, Mike Clarke, Samantha Corbin, Margaret Doris, Henry Finch, Pete Gilmore, Alice Ingerson, Chris Hepburn, Katherine Howard, Ken Mallory, Nyssa Patten, Larry Smith, Beth Wilkinson.

1. **Welcome and land Acknowledgement.** Nyssa welcomed the participants and voiced the acknowledgement that we are on the land of the Massachuset and Pawtucket Wampanoag tribes.
2. **Review agenda** Nyssa stated the following three agenda items and Barbara budgeted 30 minutes to each.
  - a. Adjust and finalize the expectations and qualifications for Governance Positions (Officers, Directors, and Advisors).
  - b. Decide which descriptors we should use in the blueprint, i.e. discuss which words we use currently and whether they reflect current situations and aspirations.
  - c. Decide whether the names for categories of activities (Governance Positions, Stewardship, Fundamentals/Admin, Communications, Education/Outreach) - are appropriate, describe the correct activities, and whether they are limited to directors or can a volunteer be supervised.
3. **Governance Positions.** Refer to the [to be] attached blueprint for a summary of the various positions. Katherine thought that the description for the President seemed to endow him/her with only administrative duties rather than the leadership, guidance, and big-picture aspects. The president along with board preserves institutional knowledge of the way we work in a way that is transparent. Ted indicated that the president coordinates input from various sources and presents it to the board. The consensus of the meeting was that comments will be accepted for later revision by the DEIJT; but many changes were made during the meeting.

Two new roles had been recently added to the VP's activities including orienting new directors to the organization and managing committee activities and vacancies, which generated comments.

Barbara noted that the treasurer has a long list of activities. Katherine indicted that some of the treasurer's activities could be distributed to other board members. Drafting the annual budget was added to the Treasurer's duties.

Items about archiving and preparing formal correspondence had been added to the Secretary's duties and discussed. It was not clear how the archival function had been or should be performed.



The item about setting standards for honoraria had been added to the Exec Committee (EC) duties as well as the EC's role in reviewing minutes before going to the Board. There was a discussion of the qualifications for board membership.

The number necessary for a quorum of the Board was discussed. Also, the Board approves the annual budget proposed by the Treasurer.

**Roles of Advisors.** Beth suggested that advisors should lend the organization credibility due to their prestige and stature in the community. Chris suggested that they be able to assist in liaison/networking with other community organizations.

**Organization.** Mike suggested that the activities might be organized under three categories: Governance/Administration, Stewardship/Land Management and Education/Outreach. Katherine suggested that land acquisition be moved under Stewardship/Land Management. It was suggested that the website be moved under communications. Grants might also be placed under communications/outreach. Chris pointed out that the Finance Committee makes recommendations to the board about managing our investment portfolio.

**Committees and Administrators.** There was a detailed discussion about the various committee and administrator functions and their position in the organization chart and who should send out invitations to special membership meetings. Peter noted that there was a lot of detail about the annual meeting, which was included as part of our institutional knowledge. Chris suggested that the legal advisor should review contracts, fiscal agent agreements and grant agreements.

4. **The Next Step** is to decide how to accomplish all the tasks outlined in the blueprint, i.e., should the board and advisors absorb more work, or should a staff person be hired, as do Green Newton and the Waltham Land Trust?
5. **Adjournment.** The meeting was adjourned at 9:07 pm.

[Revised Blueprint attached.]

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Clarke

# **Newton Conservators Organizational Blueprint (DRAFT 2021-07-12)**

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The DEIJ Team has created this DRAFT Organizational Blueprint using a DEIJ lens and in hopes that the finished product could be used in several ways, such as to:

1. Preserve institutional knowledge of the way we work in a way that is transparent.
2. Help us clarify roles and responsibilities.
3. Help Directors and Volunteers understand the extent and interrelationships of our workload.
4. Identify areas of overload and activities we may need to postpone or drop when help is scarce.
5. Help future recruits (whether volunteer, potential Director, Officer, or Advisor) understand our expectations for their involvement with us.
6. Help new people navigate the organization after joining us.
7. Determine whether we need to include any of these details in our efforts to change our bylaws.

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- [Membership Administrator](#)
- [Legal Counselor](#)
- [GSuite Administrator](#) (Cloud storage for administrative work)
- [Land Acquisition Committee](#)
- [Grants Committee](#)
- [Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice \(DEIJ\) Team](#)

## **Land Stewardship**

- [Conservation Restrictions](#)
- [Land Management Team](#)
- [Invasive Removal Team](#)
- [Liaisons to government and citizens groups](#)
- [Volunteer and Intern Manager](#)

## **Education and Engagement**

- [Website Team](#)
- [Mailing Administrator](#)
- [E-Bulletin Administrator](#)
- [123Signup Administrator](#) (Membership Database and communication platform)
- [Social Media Administrators](#)
- [Newsletter Production Team](#)
- [Walks Team](#)
- [Lectures Team](#)
- [Webinars Team](#)
- [Community Events Team](#)
- [Trail Guide and Almanac Team](#)

## **Governance and Fundamentals**

- Officers
  - President
    - Lead, offer guidance, and share knowledge
    - With the Board of Directors, monitor Newton Conservator activities to assure that Newton Conservators is accomplishing its mission
    - Represent Newton Conservators in interactions with press, members of the government, and local organizations on official positions of Newton Conservators as authorized by Board
    - Sign and send official letters on Newton Conservators positions as authorized by the Board of Directors
    - Sign contracts and documents as authorized by the Board of Directors
    - Preside over Executive Committee meetings
    - Prepare draft agendas for Board meetings
    - Preside over Board meetings
      - Serve as Chief Executive Officer of Newton Conservators, Inc
      - Serve as ex officio member of all committees voting only in the event of a tie
    - Preside over Annual Meeting
    - Prepare President's annual report
  - Vice President
    - Handle presidential duties in absence of President
    - Assume presidential duties if position of President is vacant
    - Orient new Directors to the organization and their duties
    - Manage and track committee assignments & vacancies
    - Participate in Executive Committee meetings
  - Treasurer
    - Monitor and flag financial issues as needed
    - Maintain administrative custody of all funds, investments, bank accounts, escrow accounts, safe deposit box as approved by the Board of Directors
    - Monitor and assure insurance policies are adequate and up to date
    - Maintain and regularly check Post Office box in Newton Centre
    - Collect all dues and restricted and unrestricted donations
    - Maintain financial transactions in Quicken
    - Prepare financial statements on quarterly basis
    - Sign checks etc for disbursement of funds under direction of the Board of Directors

- Reimburse Directors for expenses
  - Prepare relevant tax materials for Board review
  - File tax returns (990, 990 EZ, or 990N) and any needed 1099s/W2s
  - File other regulatory requirements: Form PC, Form 3ABC, Sec of State Annual Report, etc.
  - Prepare materials for Audit and Finance Committees
  - Participate as a member in Finance Committee and Audit Committee
  - Participate in Executive Committee meetings
  - Maintain Zoom subscription for webinars and meetings
  - Prepare budget for approval by Board
- Secretary
    - Sign necessary documents requiring Secretary attestation as authorized by the Board of Directors
    - Send out agenda and Board packet to Board of Directors
    - Record minutes of meetings
    - Send draft minutes to Board
    - Revise minutes and send approved minutes to web manager for posting
    - Send out, collect, and maintain Conflict of Interest forms and report status to Executive Committee
    - Prepare and maintain formal communications as voted by the Board
    - Maintain a list of dates of service of Directors and Officers
    - Maintain a contact information list for Officers, Directors, and Advisors
    - Participate in Executive Committee meetings
    - Maintain and manage Newton Conservator physical and electronic archives
- Past President
    - Serve as advisor to President and Board of Directors by providing institutional memory
    - Participate in Executive Committee meetings to provide institutional memory as needed/requested
- Executive Committee (consisting of all Officers)
    - Meet before Board meetings
    - Set agenda items
    - Confer as necessary on time-sensitive matters
    - Recommend to Board

- Decide on minor items of a non-contractual, non-political, or non-financial nature that do not obligate the Directors in any substantial way
  - Review Conflict of Interest process and reporting
  - Set standards for honoraria
  - Notify awardees
  - Assist President in the drafting and review of minutes, letters, and other correspondence.
- Board of Directors as a whole
  - All the Officers plus up to 21 other Directors (26 total)
  - Seven Directors constitutes a quorum for a Board of Directors meeting
  - Transact the business of the Corporation
  - Determine membership dues
  - Typically meet once a month and occasionally as needed
  - Approve any proposed changes to bylaws before submission to membership vote
  - Appoint new Board members to fill vacancies until annual meeting
  - Establish committees deemed necessary
  - Approve annual budget
- Individual Directors (including Officers)
  - Attend Board meetings and Annual Meetings and participate actively. Occasional absences may be excused
  - Review Board packet and agenda prior to meeting
  - Participate actively in at least two committees or teams of their choice
  - Participate actively in at least one CR monitoring group
  - Send agenda requests to President in advance of meetings
  - Commit to using a DEIJ (diversity, equity/accessibility, inclusion, justice) lens when designing and assessing policies, events and approving internships, grants, and contracts
  - With the President, monitor Newton Conservator activities to assure that Newton Conservators is accomplishing its mission
  - Qualifications:
    - Time and desire to commit at least several hours a month to Newton Conservators activities
    - Desirable qualities include: desire to increase, preserve, and improve Newton's open spaces; love of nature; background / expertise in natural or environmental sciences; desire to share expertise with others and learn from others
    - Desirable skills include: knowledge of native plants and animals; community outreach, fundraising, networking, teaching, interpersonal skills; technical skills in nonprofit management,

financial management, bookkeeping, administration, website management, corporate law, nonprofit law, communications

- Advisors
  - Provide when asked:
    - advice in their area of expertise
    - suggestions of appropriate nominees for Directors and speakers
    - provide talks or webinars, lead walks as needed
    - provide suggestions for lecturers and walk leaders
  - Attend Board meetings as desired or when requested
  - Qualifications:
    - Time and desire to help Newton Conservators with specific issues on an ad hoc basis
    - Desirable qualities include: Established credibility in their field, love of nature, desire to increase and improve Newton's open spaces, background / expertise in natural or environmental sciences, desire to share expertise with others, connections to important current or potential partnership organizations.
    - Desirable skills include: knowledge of native plants and animals; technical skills in nonprofit management, financial management, bookkeeping, administration, website management, corporate law, nonprofit law, communications, community outreach, fundraising, networking, teaching, interpersonal skills.
- Finance Committee
  - Meet 2-4 times per year
  - Review and manage investment portfolio with Board approval
  - Review budget and financial statements
  - Report to the Board of Directors on investment performance and financial matters
  - Coordinate with Audit Committee the audit process including hiring of CPA if needed
- Audit Committee
  - Review financial statements yearly
  - Audit disbursements and bank and investment accounts
  - Review compliance with regulatory and tax filing requirements
  - Coordinate with Finance Committee the audit process including hiring of CPA if needed
  - Prepare and present written annual report to Board of Directors and to entire membership at annual meeting
- Nominating Committee

- Recruit Officers and Directors for election by members utilizing appropriate position criteria
  - Solicit nominations from the Board members of people who might be suitable for various positions
    - Contact potential nominees and screen to determine whether they meet qualifications
    - Solicit interest in positions, explain responsibilities
    - If qualified and interested, invite to attend Board meeting
  - Recruit Advisors as needed for election by Board of Directors
  - Prepare slate of Director and Officer nominees for vote at annual membership meeting
  - Conduct election of Officers and Board Directors at a membership meeting
  - Solicit and prepare a list of Annual Meeting award nominees for Board approval
  - Solicit names and identify candidates for an Annual Meeting speaker and present to Board for final approval
- Annual Meeting Committee
    - Recommend date for Board approval for annual meeting
    - Arrange venue including
      - Hall rental
      - Volunteers
      - Centerpieces
      - Sound system
      - Set up and place materials on tables
      - Prepare and print name tags for members and guests
    - Hire a caterer and arrange a meal selection
    - Contact chosen speaker as to topic, date, time, honorarium
    - Solicit volunteers from the Board of Directors to write and give award presentation speeches
    - Prepare awards, certificates, gifts...
    - Manage the notification of awardees by Officers
    - Solicit sponsors by letter explaining sponsorship levels
    - Send thank-you notes to sponsors
    - Determine content and design of invitations including
      - Speaker topic, biography, and picture
      - Sponsorship acknowledgements
      - Election slate
      - Hand off invitations to Mailing Administrator for printing and mailing
    - Set up website info with link to online registration for those who prefer to avoid the paper process



- Manage the registrant list (paper and electronic), and add any invited guests and awardees.
- Provide final meal count several days before the event
- Determine content, design, and printing of the programs
- Greet attendees at door, distribute name tags, and collect any needed monies
- Membership Administrator
  - Enter new membership signups (both paper and electronic) in database
  - Manage annual renewal process (renewal package, letter from President, etc)
  - Maintain accurate membership information in database
  - Analyze membership information as requested or as needed
  - Develop and implement membership outreach strategies
  - Acknowledge 501(c)(3) and larger donations with appropriate responses
  - Arrange special membership meetings (e.g. community building, volunteer recruitment, review and approval of changes to Bylaws) as directed by the Board
    - Arrange venue (Zoom or in person)
    - Notify membership about meeting and content
    - Help prepare invitations and prepare mailing list with Signup 123 Administrator
- Legal Counselor
  - Review Documents as needed including:
    - Conservation restrictions
    - Contracts with vendors
    - Payment agreements with City of Newton and other organizations or contractors
    - Review acquisitions and sales of land
    - Changes proposed to Bylaws and Articles of Organization
    - Grant and fiscal agent agreements
- GSuite Administrator (Cloud storage for administrative work)
  - Assign user permission levels
  - Maintain Board email and contact spreadsheets
  - Manage “newtonconservators.org” email assignments
  - Administer Google shared drives and folders
  - Assist Directors who create and maintain Google Drive documents
  - Orient new Directors to shared Google Drive
- Land Acquisition Committee
  - Monitor opportunities for new open space

- Communicate with current owners
- Collaborate with other organizations – Newton Housing Authority, Trustees, City of Newton, etc as approved by Board of Directors
- Report to Board of Directors as needed
- Grants Committee
  - Publicize deadlines for grant proposals
  - Conduct outreach to school science programs and BIPOC organizations to promote interest in grant applications
  - Review proposals, circulate, and present recommendations at Board meeting
  - Contact grantees and solicit participation in Annual Meeting via poster presentation
- Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice (DEIJ) Team
  - Formulate mission, values, etc reflecting DEIJ
  - With Executive Committee, develop description of roles for Board, Officers
  - Outreach to BIPOC Community
  - Maintain Board's focus on doing everything through a DEIJ lens

## **Land Stewardship**

- Conservation Restrictions (CR)
  - Monitors
    - Complete annual field monitoring and reporting for all properties as required by law
      - Visit (ideally with property owner), take notes, take pictures at waypoints (approximately 1.5 hours per property)
      - Prepare and submit report (approximately 2 hours per property) to Administrator with
        - notes
        - maps
        - pictures
        - signatures
  - Administrator
    - Ensure that the Board follows its adopted CR Monitoring policy
    - Archive CR reports in both paper file and on the shared Google Drive
    - Send reports to appropriate property owners
    - Coordinate with property owner to address possible CR violations
    - Arrange periodic independent professional assessment
- Land Management Team
  - Administrator

- Recruit and train volunteers
  - Maintain and improve Pollinator Toolkit page content on the website
  - Monitor need for and request trail maintenance by land owner
  - Maintain or update the plant and animal inventory
- Volunteers
  - Visit all (or as many as possible) open space sites to monitor activities, species, issues, invasives, biodiversity
  - Conduct inventories
  - Maintain Conservators owned properties - Dexter Rd planting/watering, invasives removal; Ordway Park, Awtrey Dell
- Invasives Removal Team
  - Administrator
    - Determine locations and leaders for NewtonSERVES events
    - Register leaders for NewtonSERVES with Newton Pride
    - Provide maps of areas to Environmental Planning and details for disposal
    - Determine leaders, locations, and times of other invasive pulls
    - Prepare a list of events and arrange for publication and distribution
    - Contact the city or DCR and arrange pick up of bags
    - Recruit volunteers
    - Maintain and improve website section for invasive plants
    - Maintain supply of tools and equipment
  - Volunteers
    - Remove invasive species
- Liaisons to government and citizens groups
  - Parks, Recreation, and Culture Liaison
    - Keep up to date on Parks, Recreation, and Culture agendas, meeting, and issues and attend meetings as needed
    - Monitor PRC activities and events
    - Liaison with PRC contact
  - Conservation Commission Liaison
    - Keep up to date on Conservation Commission agendas, meetings, and issues and attend Conservation Commission meetings as needed
    - Keep up to date on Stewards Group
  - Friends and Working Groups Liaisons
    - Maintain an updated list of Friends groups, leaders, contact information in our cloud storage (GSuite)

- Keep up to date on Friends events, meetings, and issues by getting on mailing lists, watching social media sites, or joining Friends groups
- Report to the Board of Directions on Friends group issues and activities that relate to our mission
- Occasionally, with Board approval, provide fiscal sponsorship for key Friends groups
- Monitor other meetings for relevance to Newton Conservators including:
  - City Council meeting and committees
  - Community Preservation Committee meetings
  - League of Women Voters
  - DCR
- Volunteer and Intern Manager
  - Update volunteering opportunities on website
  - Screen volunteer applications and route to appropriate overseer
  - Screen applications for internships and make recommendations to Board regarding pay status and management required

## **Education and Engagement**

- Website Team
  - Administer and maintain
    - Domain
    - Hosting
    - Updates and corrections
    - Content screening
      - Posts
      - Link requests
  - Administer user privileges for content posting
    - Feature articles
    - Conservation news
    - Upcoming events
    - Media
    - Newsletters
    - Minutes, financial, and tax documents
  - Maintain “How To” and standards documents
  - Train and assist new website contributors
  - Orient new Directors to website
  - Make sure that postings on website are up to date
- Mailing Administrator

- Prepare and distribute mailings for:
  - Annual Meeting invitations
  - Newsletter
  - Membership renewal package
- E-Bulletin Administrator
  - Administer platform “Vertical Response” (10K emails / mo)
  - Compose and send an as-needed (usually monthly) E-Bulletin covering:
    - Introduction
    - Notifications of Newton Conservators events
    - Notifications of mission-related events hosted by Friends groups and other organizations such as Green Newton, Newton Community Farm, Bike Newton, neighboring land trusts, etc
    - A link to the current newsletter
    - Reminder to renew membership
    - Opportunities to volunteer with Newton Conservators
  - Manage Subscribers and coordinate with Signup 123 list
  - Post PDF version to website
- 123Signup Administrator (Membership Database and communication platform)
  - Send brief emails to membership including about special meetings
- Social Media Administrators
  - Maintain, moderate, and post items on Twitter, Instagram, Tik-Tok, Next Door, Facebook, or other appropriate social media
  - Maintain YouTube channel
    - Edit and upload webinar videos
    - Link to related videos from other sources
    - Maintain website links to video content
- Newsletter Production Team
  - Editor
    - Choose topics
    - Contact authors
    - Edit articles
    - Submit for layout
    - Compile all necessary photos and graphics for each issue making sure Newton Conservators have permission and that they do not violate copyright
    - Send issue to author and reviews for review
    - Post newsletter to web
  - Content Providers
    - Write articles and provide images

- Reviewers
  - Edit for content and grammar
- Layout designer
- Distribution
  - Make label lists for electronic and US Post distribution
  - Determine best way to address newsletter delivered by USPS
  - Deliver to Newtonville Post Office (Main Office)
  - Deliver extra copies to Library, City Hall, President, and Membership and Community Events Administrators
  - Compose cover letter and distribute electronically via bcc to members who prefer email-only version
- Walks Team
  - Administrator
    - Contact Board Directors, Advisors, and past leaders to solicit new walks and repeat favorites
    - Work with leaders to create descriptive material and a schedule
    - Assure that walks descriptions and schedule are posted to website and included in appropriate Newsletter / e-Bulletin
    - Provide leaders with Newton Conservators fliers, business cards, and sign up sheet (to pass on to Membership Committee and e-Bulletin)
    - Provide feedback from participants to Board and walk leader as required
  - Walk Leader
    - Provide Administrator with a description of walk (date & time, location, content)
    - Lead walk
    - Provide participants with Newton Conservators fliers, business cards, and sign up sheet (to pass on to Membership Committee and e-Bulletin)
    - Provide feedback from participants to Administrator as required
- Lectures Team
  - Administrator
    - Contact Board Directors, Advisors, and past speakers to solicit new topics for talks and repeat favorites
    - Solicit a list of possible speakers from the Board of Directors
    - Select a venue, possibly co-sponsoring with the library or another organization such as Green Newton
    - Coordinate with venue, co sponsor, and speaker to find a date and time
    - Agree on an honorarium according to standards

- Appoint Board member as a greeter
  - Arrange for recording of program if permitted by speaker
  - Staff information table at event with information and sign up sheet
- Lecturer
  - Provide Administrator with a description of lecture (date & time, location, content)
  - Give lecture
- Webinars Team
  - Administrator
    - Contact Board Directors, Advisors, and past speakers to solicit new topics for talks and repeat favorites
    - Contact speakers
    - Compose writeup for each webinar with image and arrange for posting to web and printing in appropriate Newsletter and e-bulletin
    - Setup registration on Zoom webinar
    - Post Webinar to website with registration link
    - Conduct Zoom tech check with speaker
    - Arrange the tech host and the public host
    - Arrange auxiliary information sheet
    - Get permission for recording video
    - Send reminder emails to registrants
    - Send participants follow-up email with auxiliary and other resources relating to the talk
  - Technical Host
    - Troubleshoot tech problems
    - Spotlight speakers
    - Manage chat
  - Public Host
    - Welcome people
    - Preview upcoming webinars
    - Introduce speaker
    - Manage Q&A
  - Lecturer
    - Provide Administrator with a description of lecture (date & time, content)
    - Participate in tech check prior to webinar and post webinar debriefing
    - Present lecture
- Community Events Team
  - Administrator

- Solicit volunteers from the Board of Directors and from Advisors to staff a table at Newton community events such as
    - Newton Community Farm Seedling Sale and Fall Festival
    - Harvest Festival
    - Village Days
  - Provide materials for all of the above events including
    - Table, banners, chairs, and tent if necessary
    - Past newsletters
    - Fliers and sign up sheets
    - Membership materials
    - Almanac and Trail Guide to show and sell
- Table Hosts
  - Set up the table and materials
  - Interact with the public
  - Recruit new members and get emails
  - Pass out informational materials
- Trail Guide and Almanac Team
  - Distribution Manager
    - Arrange for new printing and reprinting as needed
    - Arrange for volunteer to mail books when ordered
    - Arrange for volunteer to supply books on consignment to local bookstores
  - Design and Production Team
    - Prepare updates as needed to Newton Conservators published books
    - Explore production options
    - Coordinate with Website Administrator to update property pages and trail maps



## **Newton Conservator's Board of Directors Meeting**

**July 28, 2021, 7-9 PM**

**Online – Zoom Meeting**

**Participants:** Chris Hepburn, presiding, Peter Barrer, Barbara Bates, Dan Brody, Bonnie Carter, Samantha Corbin, Henry Finch, Dan Green, Pete Gilmore, Alice Ingerson, Bill Hagar, Katherine Howard, Ken Mallory, Nyssa Patten, Larry Smith, and Beth Wilkinson.

1. **Welcome and land Acknowledgement.** Chris welcomed the participants and Nyssa voiced the acknowledgement that we are on the ancestral land of the Massachuset and Pawtucket Wampanoag tribes.
2. **Treasurer's Report.** Katherine reported on the financial statements as of June 30, which were previously circulated. The CR monitoring fund is now included as one of our investment funds. The Audit Committee met on July 14 and Larry Burdick will present its report at a subsequent meeting. Jason Rosenberg, who is the agent for the Golf Escrow account, will be retiring and a new agent is being sought. Chris presented the Finance Committee Report. Our investments in the Four-In-One fund, which contains much of our nonrestricted funds, have been doing well. The committee recommended no change in our investments at the current time
3. **Nomination of a Director.** Ted has nominated Samantha Corbin as a director. Katherine and several others noted that she has already done yeoman's work as a volunteer and has backgrounds in environmental science and in organizing and leading walks. Barbara moved to adopt Samantha as a board member, which was supported unanimously by the board.
4. **The Conflict of Interest (COI) Report** has been reviewed by Exec Committee as required by the IRS; however, some directors' COI statements have not been received.
5. **Dover Amendment.** There has been a recent move to allow non-profits to bypass wetlands restrictions under the Dover Amendment. While the legislative hearing on this was held July 27, anyone wishing to send emails to their state representatives is invited to do so.
6. **Support Letter for CRWA Partnership Grant Proposal.** The CRWA asked the Newton Conservators to submit a letter of stakeholder support of the CRWA's grant request to support a representative to advise DCR on watershed issues. A representative from the Conservators would attend quarterly meetings as this process progresses. Samantha has volunteered as our representative. Due to an impending deadline, the letter of support was reviewed by the Exec Committee and approved and sent.
7. **A City Trails Initiative** was announced by Mayor Fuller last week and funds are becoming available to maintain and improve trails around the city.
8. **Updates.**
  - A. **Update Form.** Pete presented a form for directors, advisors and key volunteers to update their contact information.
  - B. **Parks, Recreation, and Culture Commission (PRC).** Beth reported that the maintenance work on both Levingston Cove and Gath pool are going forward.

- C. **Riverside Greenway Working Group (RGWG).** Katherine said that Ted Chapman of the RGWG met with Nicole Banks (PRC Commissioner) and Jennifer Steele (Senior Environmental Planner) about the possibility of a foot trail on Pigeon Hill before the I-95 improvements are started in that area.
- D. **Avery Woods.** There was a short CPC discussion on removing trees between Albermarle and Day Middle School for playing fields. Fortunately, this discussion did not go forward.
- E. **Trail Guide.** Dan B. had sent out a sample of the Trail Guide with Cold Spring Park as the illustrative section. Chris solicited members for a subcommittee that would review the draft of the Cold Springs Park pages that have been made on the Trail Guide and offer feedback for the structure and content of the guide in comparison to the current edition. Chris, Alice, Henry, Ken, Pete and Barbara volunteered for the committee. Dan also asked for volunteers to assist Tod Macalister, a volunteer on the project, with the publishing software (Quark). Ken indicated he might be able to help in this. As we have about six-months of copies of the current edition and it will be about a year before the new edition is available, we may have to reprint the existing edition.
- F. **Website.** Barbara intends to update the website information about the West Nile virus. She also needs long and narrow pictures of sites in Massachusetts for the website banner. Every Conservation area now has a QR on a sign that links to the city landing site that the NC website supports, which may link to other NC sites. Dan B. has proposed helping the PRC to do something similar for their properties.
- G. **Conservation Commission.** Dan G. reported that Councilor Emily Norton is interested in regulations that would address new construction near conservation areas and consequent basement flooding.
- H. **Conservation Restriction (CR) Monitoring.** Chris reported that a signup sheet for CR monitoring is on the website as is a new form for reporting on CR site visits.
- I. **Herbicides.** Katherine reported that Cold Spring Park was sprayed, after which it rained. A small test sample of the runoff from the soccer field did not reveal any of the sprayed chemicals. Soccer and rugby teams played on the field before it was safe to do so. A letter concerning this was sent to PRC and Nicole Banks has responded.
- J. **Grants.** The Pollinator Group has proposed Story Walks for pollinator gardens, which involves signs with laminated pages from children's books. Green Newton and Newton Community Pride plan to donate to this. One of the signs might list the donors. The group has proposed that the funds be channeled through the Conservators. Katherine has suggested that this be a pollinator program of the Conservators. It was moved, seconded and approved unanimously that the Conservators initiate this as a Pollinator Program and provide \$200 toward the Story Walks project for signs. Beth volunteered to be the advisor.

- K. **DEIJ Organizational Blueprint.** Nyssa said that the final version of the blueprint will soon be sent out and be placed on the website. Barbara noted that the Mass Land Trust will have an online seminar on diversity. A link to register (\$20 fee) and participate has been sent out to any director interested.
- L. **Fall Webinars & Walks.** Chris said that the Webinars are considered programs under our bylaws so that speakers can be paid, whereas walks are not programs and leaders have never been paid. The Zoom fee will increase for one month to accommodate the webinars for which a large turnout is expected. The fall walks have been scheduled, but are not yet on the website.
- M. **Invasive Pulls.** Katherine said that the scheduled pulls are complete, and others are not yet scheduled.
- N. **Events.** The Harvest Festival is scheduled for Sunday, October 17 from 10 am to 4:30 pm and 10 volunteers are needed to set up and run the booth, which cost us \$30. Six people volunteered. It was decided to skip the Newtonville Village Day on September 26.
- O. **Annual Meeting.** Barbara presented the list of possible speakers, but no one has been secured including the BIPOC speakers. A motion was made that a speaker from the Solomon Foundation should be requested to speak, which passed. A caterer and hall have been booked for October 27, but it is possible that Δ-covid cases may peak around then. It was moved by Henry and seconded by Barbara that the meeting be moved to a Zoom venue, which passed 10 in favor with 2 abstentions. There was a discussion of how to handle and administer the awards.
- P. **Nominating Committee.** There is no nominee for President, but Bill Hagar is considering running as a co-president, should there be a co-candidate.
- Q. **Newsletter.** Ken said that the current Newsletter has been distributed and that he had several articles on deck for the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Newsletter.
- R. **Cold Spring Park.** The trail renovation between Plymouth Rd and Dunklee Rd. along the Cochituate Aqueduct is still pending.
- S. **Chattervox PA System.** Barbara moved that we purchase the Chattervox PA System for our walks, which costs \$206. This passed by consensus.
- T. **Garden Tour.** Deborah Chud has offered to give a tour of her Piet Oudolf-inspired garden in Chestnut Hill. Those interested should contact Barbara.

**Adjournment.** Chris adjourned the meeting at 9:09 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Michael Clarke, Secretary

**Newton Conservator's Board of Directors Meeting**  
**September 22, 2021, 7-9 PM**  
**Online – Zoom Meeting**

**Participants:** Chris Hepburn, presiding, Peter Barrer, Barbara Bates, Dan Brody, Bonnie Carter, Samantha Corbin, Margaret Doris, Henry Finch, Dan Green, Pete Gilmore, Alice Ingerson, Bill Hagar, Katherine Howard, Ken Mallory, Nyssa Patten, Larry Smith, Beth Wilkinson and guests Schuyler Larrabee and Robert Fizek.

1. **Welcome and Land Acknowledgement.** Chris welcomed the participants and Nyssa voiced the acknowledgement that we are on the ancestral land of the Massachuset and Pawtucket tribes.
2. **Approval of Minutes** Mike moved that the minutes of 7/12 and 7/28/21 be approved. The approval for both sets of minutes was unanimous.
3. **Treasurer's Report.** Katherine reported that we received a \$10K Houghton Garden donation. A financial reporting issue arose when we learned that the city's Assessor has assessed large values for the three properties that we own, without notifying the Conservators. Although we believe this does not necessarily mean we must change the property values we report to the city, state, or IRS, Katherine will seek advice on this matter.  
We have been informed by 123 Signup's parent company that this service will end; we could migrate to the parent's system which is geared towards health clubs, could convert to a new system. Katherine is now looking into our options. It was proposed to convene a systems committee to help sort through all the options, and which could approve any necessary expenses needed to move quickly before our next board meeting. Approval was unanimous.
4. **Awards Ceremony.** The awards ceremony is scheduled for Monday September 27 at 3 pm on the lawn near the City Hall Pollinator Garden. Twenty-four awards will be given.
5. **Cochituate Aqueduct Trail Blockage.** The owner of the property at 397 Woodward Street has erected a 6 foot high fence around a small section of the aqueduct trail with security cameras facing in each direction and a sign. New NC member, Bruce Henderson, has done considerable research on this property, including the deed history going back to the 1840's, when the City of Boston took the property for the Cochituate Aqueduct. We have consulted with our Advisor Diane Tillotson, who is considering the material. We have also had some discussion with Andrew Lee in the City's Law Department on this case. The city's current stance is that the property in question is private with the city having an underground easement. Why some aqueduct properties are city owned and others private has not clearly been explained. A 1955 state legislation conveyed from the MDC to the City of Newton the Cochituate Aqueduct for whatever purpose the City wanted. Abutters could possibly grant a license to use a strip around the blocked portion, but some modification to the land contours would be necessary. A prescriptive easement might be possible. Some residents are looking to the Conservators to take a lead on the issue.
6. **Membership Renewals.** Several people volunteered to help send out renewal notifications in November. Ted will write the solicitation letter. Chris suggested we run off labels while 123 Signup is still working.

## 7. Updates

- a. **Annual Meeting:** The Annual Meeting will be held on Wednesday, October 27 via Zoom at 7 pm. There will be the election. Speakers will come from within our ranks where perhaps 10 board members or advisors will reflect on particular aspects of our 60 year history. Ted suggested that we start thinking of some aspect of the Conservators past that might have a story about some aspect of our important activities. Members might select a few relevant pictures or make up slides to illustrate our history through a PowerPoint slide show. Margaret suggested that young people who have participated in projects funded by our grants program might also contribute remarks.
- b. **Annual Meeting – 2022:** The idea of an outdoor barbeque or party was discussed but this sort of event could perhaps take place next spring in addition to the scheduled indoor in-person Annual Meeting on Wednesday, May 4, 2022. We should start lining up a speaker for this event.
- c. **Nominating Committee.** Pete asked if Henry, Bill and Barbara could help with checking whether current advisors wanted to continue as advisors. Pete suggested that Bill and Chris might serve as co-presidents. Chris and Bill said that they would need to confer.
- d. **Bylaws Revision.** Ted said that we need to consult with a lawyer before proceeding with the bylaws revision and hopefully schedule it for the 2022 meeting.
- e. **Parks, Recreation, and Culture Commission.** Beth reported that the renovation of Levingston Cove would come before the Conservation Commission's next meeting. Schulyer Larabee and Robert Fizek expressed comments about the fishing platform included in the renovation as drawing S-101. Shown were 5 structural drawings they provided which Schuyler and Robert commented on.

An eight-foot caterpillar sculpture has been proposed for Waban Park across from the Angier School. A pavilion has been proposed for the Newton Centre playground.
- f. **Conservation Commission** Ted noted that Claire Rundelli, environmental planner in the Planning Department, has taken a new position in Natick. It was agreed to send a letter of thanks to Claire. Dan G. indicated that the Commission would be voting on the Levingston Cove Plan at the September 23 public hearing. Dan felt that the structure discussed would not affect Crystal Lake itself.
- g. **Riverside Greenway Working Group.** Larry S. said there was a 25% design presentation for the Commonwealth Ave. portion of the project in which traffic light options were discussed. Little League representatives were disappointed with the parking.
- h. **Pollinator Group.** The Pollinator Group is meeting September 23. The Pollinator Group has installed 5 "Story Walks" in the City partly funded by the Conservators. They are at City Hall, Cold Spring Park (2), Heartbreak Hill (Waban Hill Reservoir) Park, and Wellington Park.

- i. **Trail Guide.** Chris said the subcommittee had met regarding the the first draft of the trail guide for Cold Spring Park that was presented as well as the general format of the new guide. After taking the subcommittee recommendations and comments into consideration, various proposals with costs will be presented to the Board by Todd and Dan along with a new draft.
- j. **Website.** Barbara said a glitch was encountered that synched calendar, events and registrations.
- k. **CR Monitoring.** Chris related that several CR reports were in and reminded monitors to use the 2021 form, invite the owners on the site visit, and can bring the signature page for monitors to sign at the visit. Chris said that owners have generally been responsive in rectifying problems brought to their attention.
- l. **Organizational Tasks Survey.** Sam reviewed committee populations and solicited opinions as to how work was distributed. Nyssa reported that members of the DEIJ are taking training from the Mass Land Trust Colalition. Barbara said the DEIJ made substantial changes to the Blueprint following suggestions from the board.
- m. **Fall Webinars.** The Fall Webinar Series has been posted in the Events section of our website and will also be printed in the Fall Newsletter. Beth commented on the remaining four fall webinars.
- n. **Walks.** Sam noted that a number of Fall walks were scheduled. The Chatter Vox address system will be ordered soon.
- o. **Invasive Pulls / Land Management.** Katherine related that quite a few more invasive pulls had been scheduled, particularly for black swallow-wort and bittersweet.
- p. **Events.** Ted said that we had signed up for the Harvest Fair on Oct 17 and Sam, Pete, Bill, Henry, Katherine and Alice will populate the booth. Katherine noted that our materials are getting worn.
- q. **Newsletter.** Ken has emailed and posted the Newsletter, which went out a bit late. Articles are in hand for the next Newsletter.
- r. **Friends Group Updates.** Houghton garden donations are up. Wellington Park has been promised a large corporate donation.
- s. **Publicity.** Due to work commitments, Ellen Seaward is no longer able to work on our Instagram, Twitter, and Tik-Tok accounts. Ted indicated that we need someone to handle these and should post this on our website.

**8. Adjournment.** Ted Adjourned the meeting at 9:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael J. Clarke

**Newton Conservator's 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Annual Meeting**  
**October 27, 2021, 7-8:30 PM**  
**Online – Zoom Meeting**

**Participants:** Ted Kuklinski, presiding, Chris Hepburn, David Backer, Peter Barrer, Barbara Bates, Dan Brody, Bonnie Carter, Samantha Corbin, Margaret Doris, Henry Finch, Dan Green, Pete Gilmore, Alice Ingerson, Bill Hagar, Katherine Howard, Ken Mallory, George Mansfield, Nyssa Patten, Larry Smith, Beth Wilkinson, other members and guests.

1. **Welcome and Land Acknowledgement.** Ted Kuklinski welcomed the participants and voiced the acknowledgement that we are on the ancestral land of the Massachuset and Pawtucket tribes. Ted also noted the sponsors of the program in past years. This was followed by a video from Newton Girl Scout Troop 3451 constructing a virtual centerpiece for our online meeting.
2. **Treasurer's & Audit Committee Reports.** Ted Kuklinski briefly presented the Treasurer's and Audit Committee Reports, and noted that they, and the financial statements, were sent in advance to meeting registrants, and are also available on our website ("About Us/Board of Directors").
3. **President's Report.** Ted Kuklinski reported on aspects or the organization including the change in leadership, the grants program, the program on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice (DEIJ) and on our recent awards given out earlier in the month. He also provided updates of our Land Management, Conservation Restrictions, Invasive Removal and Land Stewardship endeavors. Our public outreach continues through our recently modernized website, our walk and webinar series, the newsletter and e-bulletins, and social media. We also have vibrant liaisons with Friends Groups, the Riverside Greenway project, the Pollinator Working Group, and the Mass. Land Trust Coalition.
4. **Election of Officers & Directors.** Pete Gilmore presented the slate of officers. Co-Presidents: Chris Hepburn and Bill Hagar; Vice President: Alice Ingerson; Treasurer: Katherine Howard; Secretary: Mike Clarke; Past President: Ted Kuklinski. The slate of Directors is: David Backer, Peter Barrer, Barbara Bates, Dan Brody, Bonnie Carter, Samantha Corbin, Margaret Doris, Henry Finch, Maurice Gilmore, Daniel Green, Ken Mallory, George Mansfield, Nyssa Patten, Larry Smith and Beth Wilkinson. All were unanimously approved by Newton Conservators members present with one abstention.
5. **Mayor's Address.** Mayor Ruth Ann Fuller remarked on the contributions the Newton Conservators have made over the last six decades, particularly with regard to the acquisition of Webster Woods.
6. **Lifetime Achievement Award.** The members of the Board of Directors of Newton Conservators bestowed its first Lifetime Achievement Award upon AnnaMaria Abernathy for her decades of invaluable work in preserving and maintaining open space in Newton. AnnaMaria was a member of the board from the late 1960s through 2021. AnnaMaria was President of the organization from 1984 to 1986. During that time,

a series of land-use forums was held, and the Conservators weighed in on important land use decisions – including the development of what is now Nahanton Park, the Lacy Estate (now the Ledgebrook condos), and the Capasso development adjoining Cold Spring Playground. She received the Environmentalist of the Year Award in 1993, AnnaMaria was secretary of Newton Conservators from 2003 through 2020.

7. **Review of the 60 year History of the Newton Conservators (NC).** Various long-time members of the Conservators recounted episodes in the organization's history with which they were most familiar.

AnnaMaria Abernathy reviewed the time when booming development and institutional expansion caused a group of people concerned for the city's remaining parks and wildlife habitats to form the Newton Conservators in 1961 to preserve open space. She then commented on the early successes of the Conservators including Norumbega park and part of the Webster Woods as well as the establishment of the Environmental Science Program (ESP). David Backer related the later history of the ESP. AnnaMaria continued, remarking on the establishment of Ordway Park and the Conservators role in the creation of the conservation areas at Kennard, Houghton Garden, Dolan Pond, and Sawmill Brook.

Mike Clarke continued with the history of the NC in the 1980s and 1990s when Flowed Meadow and Nahanton Park were established. Judy Hepburn described the evolution of our popular Trail Guide publication. Mike continued by introducing the NC's role in passing the Community Preservation Act (CPA) that enabled the city to purchase land adjacent to the Dolan Pond Conservation Area and partner with Habitat for Humanity and the Newton Housing Authority to create several units of affordable housing. Doug Dickson related the role of the NC in renovating Weeks field and described in detail the lasting effect of the CPA in obtaining land on Crystal Lake, Kessler Woods and the Angino Farm. Mike noted that in 2012 under the leadership of Jane Sender we took on our first and so far only conservation restriction on a private property, the Wilson family's beautiful wooded lot with a public access path through the property that was made even more healthy and enjoyable by the native plantings established by the Wilson's son. Jane Sender then told of her experience as president, during which time we also finalized the conservation restriction on the Newton Commonwealth Golf Course, thanks to a collaboration with councilor Lisle Baker. Mike noted that during Beth Schroeder's tenure we published our beautiful and useful Almanac.

Beth Wilkinson pointed out our role in handling Conservation Restrictions (CRs) for the city including Bracebridge Rd, part of the Crystal Lake shoreline, 20 Rogers St next to the Crystal Lake bath house, Elgin St, the Newton Commonwealth Golf Course, the Farm, 30 Wabasso St (next to Purgatory Cove), Webster Park (adjacent to Dolan Pond), and the Waban Hill Reservoir at Heartbreak Hill Park. Chris Hepburn has made sure our CR monitoring procedures are in place and followed. Beth noted the importance of the NC website, established in 1995, as an invaluable resource for Newton that has been enormously improved since, as well as the NC newsletter, which has been increasingly important for sharing our work with members and the community. In 2015 we began a



collaboration with the Riverside Greenway Working Group, which has been supported by the Solomon Foundation and DCR grants. The work is ongoing, with many more exciting connections to be reestablished as part of the redevelopment of the Riverside area. Rehabilitation of the Pony Truss Bridge and the Pony Truss Trail have been done just this past year.

Beth noted that our invasive plants program, led by Katherine Howard, both educates the public about invasives and removes or manage invasives in our city's open spaces. A grant from Newton Conservators was used to establish a pollinator demonstration garden at City Hall. Our most major accomplishment in the past few years was our work with the city to preserve the portion of Webster Woods that was owned by Boston College and was at risk of being developed.

8. **Concluding Remarks.** Chris Hepburn discussed how the NC's 60 years of accomplishment has made a difference in Newton and the ways in which we will continue to preserve and protect its open space through our many outreach programs including the newsletter, website, social media, walks, talks, webinars and our grants program to fund environmentally oriented projects. We will continue to hold and monitor CRs for the city including those for CPA land acquisitions, which require CRs, as well as strive for CRs on all Newton parks and conservation land. We also hope to increase CRs on private land. In the next year we expect to produce a new trails and maps booklet for park and conservation land. Bill Hagar thanked our membership for its past support and asked for their contributions to continue and to consider volunteering for our various action groups. In this way we hope to continue our mission for another 60 years and beyond.
9. **Adjournment.** Co-president Bill Hagar adjourned the official meeting at 8:30 pm but many participants continued the discussion on Zoom until about 9 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael J. Clarke

## Newton Conservator's Board of Directors Meeting

November 17, 2021, 7-9 PM

Online – Zoom Meeting

**Participants:** Chris Hepburn, presiding, Peter Barrer, Barbara Bates, Dan Brody, Bonnie Carter, Samantha Corbin, Henry Finch, Dan Green, Pete Gilmore, Alice Ingerson, Bill Hagar, Katherine Howard, Ted Kuklinski, Ken Mallory, Nyssa Patten, Larry Smith, Beth Wilkinson.

1. **Welcome and Land Acknowledgement.** Chris welcomed the participants and Nyssa voiced the acknowledgement that we are on the ancestral land of the Massachuset and Pawtucket tribes.
2. **Approval of Minutes.** Mike moved that the minutes of June 23, September 22 and October 27 be approved. These were approved unanimously.
3. **Treasurer's Report.** Katherine had sent around the September 30 financial statements. She indicated that we collected a past due trail guide/almanac payment from Newtonville Books now that they have reopened. In the past quarter we received donations of \$1000 came in for Houghton Garden and \$25 for the Woodcock Meadow. Dues are running behind relative to last year. Our investment value came down 0.3% at September 30 so we lost \$1K of the large YTD unrealized gain. The NAV is now up about 6% from September 30. We still need a new agent for the golf escrow. We are running low on the trail guides and according to Dan Brody we're a year or more away from having the new edition. Katherine recommended we reorder 700 of the current trail guide at a cost of \$3,716. This was voted and passed unanimously.
4. **New computer management system.** Katherine reported that a systems subcommittee of the board had selected Little Green Light (LGL) as our new system, and with Scott Lewis's hard work, it went live on November 1. We have paid Scott's invoice of \$1500 per the board's approval at our prior meeting. The systems subcommittee also decided we will use LGL for emailing and sending out the e-bulletin, so that we will not need to maintain a Mailchimp or Vertical Response type system. A recording of the recent Nov 16 subcommittee meeting with Scott Lewis is on the shared drive.
5. **Aqueduct Blockage.** Ted is the NC's official representative to the city's working group concerned with the chain-link fence obstruction to passage on the Cochituate Aqueduct trail erected at 397 Woodward. If the working group does not arrive at a solution, legal advice may be required in order to proceed. The city believes this segment of the aqueduct trail is private property, and that the city's easement rights to maintain the underground sewer line and aqueduct does not extend to the public's right to transverse the property.
6. **Avery Woods.** Dan B. noted that the board had previously adopted a motion asking the City to clarify the status of Avery Woods being divided into two parcels, transfer the "Avery Memorial Woods" portion, which contains a vernal pool, to the PRC; provide

survey maps and a conservation restriction.<sup>1</sup> In 1969, the Avery family agreed to allow 2.5 acres for school purposes, which are now under control of the school committee. The city is not willing to move on the CR now but is willing to consider doing a survey of the wooded area and may be willing to separate the school and wooded parcels in the assessor's database. The school committee may have to agree to relisting the wooded area as belonging to the PRC.

7. **Hammond Pond Parkway.** Dan B. moved, that the co-presidents write to the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) to thank them for the improvements made in the preliminary plans for the Hammond Pond Parkway along the Webster Woods and DCR land, and to request that DCR make the following additional improvements: 1. add a second parking area and crosswalk north of the MBTA tracks; 2. add crosswalks and sidewalks to improve access to the DCR trailhead from The Towers at Chestnut Hill and from the DCR parking area next to the mall parking garage. Barbara seconded this motion and suggested sending copies of the letter to partner organizations. The motion passed unanimously.
8. **Farm for Boyd Park.** Eric Reenstierna wrote the board concerning the possibility of a community farm in the north of Newton. Eric had suggested the Lincoln-Elliott school or the adjacent Boyd Park, which is at least 50% in Watertown, as potential sites. Mike felt that the property at 122 Islington might be suitable for a community farm. Chris suggested that garden plots might be provided on the Islington Oval, and Beth suggested 70 Crescent St. for this use along with affordable housing. On the whole, there was a lack of enthusiasm for another community farm.

## 9. Updates

- a. **Meetings.** Chris said that we should try to streamline our meetings by indicating in advance whether there is something significant to report in an update
- b. **Annual Meeting.** Comments on the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Annual Meeting have been quite favorable.
- c. **May Annual Meeting.** As it is unsure whether the next annual meeting will be online or in-person, this should be made clear to any potential speaker.
- d. **Membership Renewal.** The membership renewal letter has been sent to the printer. Volunteers are needed to get the mailing out shortly after Thanksgiving. Volunteers include Barbara, Ken, AnnaMaria, Ted and Henry. Bonnie said she could be available and provide the space on Monday, November 29 at 10 AM.
- e. **Parks, Recreation, and Culture Commission (PRC).** Beth said Mayor Fuller allocated \$250K for tree pruning. The PRC held a series of meetings on improving athletic fields. The CPC approved funds for the Halloran Complex, Brown, Forte Park, and Bobby Braceland fields.

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<sup>1</sup> NC Minutes, 2021-4-28, §6. Avery Woods.

- f. **Conservation Commission (Con Com).** Beth said the Levingston Cove project was unanimously approved by the City Council. The Friends of Crystal Lake filed a formal appeal on the Levingston Cove project to the State regarding the Con Com's approval. Dan G. will consult with Jennifer Steele on this.
- g. **CR Monitoring.** Chris said that the deadline for CR reports is rapidly approaching at the end of November. Reports should be proofread, pictures included (at least two to a page with appropriate captions) and submitted as Word documents. The PRC has received a \$75K grant from the state for improvements at Rogers St.
- h. **Fall Webinars.** Beth discussed potential topics for Fall Webinar series.
- i. **Fall Walks.** Sam said that the fall walks series were quite successful as has been the new ChatterVox personal amplification system. Publicity via Newton Next Door has been useful.
- j. **Events.** Chris reviewed the Harvest Fair event, which appeared to go well and trail guides were sold. Sam suggested a QR code for becoming a member would be helpful. Sam and Beth suggested that fold up magnifying glasses might be desirable swag handouts.
- k. **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice (DEIJ).** The DEIJ team attended DEIJ training through the Mass Land Trust and received feedback regarding the team's self-assessment that will be useful for planning purposes.
- l. **Newsletter.** Ken said that the Winter Newsletter was about to go to the design stage. The lead article is about walks with children. Ted and Mike relate the happenings at the Annual Meeting. Pete submitted a book review about *A World on the Wing* by Scott Weidensaul. Mike's third installment of the history of PRC is included.
- m. **Old Business.** Katherine reported that our three owned properties (Dexter, Awtrey, and Ordway) had been cleaned up by the invasives volunteers at sessions in October. Follow up over the winter is needed for Awtrey; there will be some tree and invasives work proposed for there.

Barbara said she received a phone call from an abutter to Awtrey at 31 Sargent Park regarding a hazard tree that he is worried about falling on his house. It wasn't clear whose tree this is and Barbara communicated to him that we would have to follow up to review. [In subsequently checking with him, she found he had already had the tree removed, so this is no longer an issue.]

It was also noted that at Bracebridge Rd two large pine trees came down on the adjoining city properties (Aqueduct and Wilson Conservation Area); the city has apparently rerouted the public path around the trees and through the conservation area. Beth will contact Jennifer Steel for an update.
- n. **Meeting dates next year.** The next board meeting is on Wednesday, December 15, 2021. In the spring, board meeting dates will revert to the fourth Wednesday of the month. Meetings will remain on Zoom.

- 10. Coming Events.** Board members should let Chris know about relevant upcoming events that might be noted for the Board at the bottom of the agenda prior to the meetings.
- 11.** Chris adjourned the meeting at 8:37 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Clarke

## Newton Conservator's Board of Directors Meeting

December 15, 2021, 7-9 PM

Online – Zoom Meeting

**Participants:** Chris Hepburn, presiding, Peter Barrer, Barbara Bates, Dan Brody, Mike Clarke, Samantha Corbin, Henry Finch, Dan Green, Pete Gilmore, Alice Ingerson, Bill Hagar, Katherine Howard, Ted Kuklinski, Ken Mallory, Nyssa Patten, Larry Smith, Beth Wilkinson.

1. **Welcome and Land Acknowledgement.** Chris welcomed the participants and Nyssa voiced the acknowledgement that we are on the ancestral land of the Massachuset and Pawtucket tribes.
2. **Approval of Minutes.** Mike moved that the minutes of November 17 be approved. These were approved unanimously.
3. **Treasurer's Report.** Katherine indicated that the Newton Conservators Secretary of State Annual Report was filed on November 1, and that the MA AG's Certificate for Solicitation was received. A large Houghton Garden gift (\$1K) was received. The Conservators also received other large donations recently. Katherine is still looking for a new golf escrow agent and for help with our city property assessments. She will confer with some of our legal advisors to get help with this.
4. **Transition to Little Green Light (LGL).** Katherine said that renewals and donations are coming in satisfactorily. LGL is coming along well. 123 Signup was terminated on December 15.
5. **Invasives.** Katherine related that Andreae Downs had sent information about proposed legislation to establish a one-person coordinating office for invasive plants and species acts under the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources. Because of the short deadline to submit comments, the Executive Committee approved the letter of support that we submitted.
6. **Annual Meeting Speaker.** Bill is contacting the Institute for Native American (NA) Studies at U. Mass for an indigenous speaker who could talk about Native Americans' relationship to the land. Barbara suggested a Native American woman from Alaska who lectures about "we're still here." Alice said the DEI team would go over its notes from meetings and see who might be available from New England. Names will be considered at the January board meeting. Beth knows of knowledgeable people to talk about plant usage by indigenous people for a webinar.
7. **DEIJ.** Barbara spoke on the proposed mission statement and ascertained that the board was content with the proposed mission statement as it had been previously reviewed (see appendix with approved wording). There was a discussion about the possible perceptions of the meaning of "accessible" in the Vision statement. The words "wherever possible" were inserted prior to "accessible" in the Vision statement. The section "Role in the Community" was accepted verbatim. The reference to the "Garden City" in the Values statement was challenged as it is often being used in the text of blocking diversity. There was a discussion as to whether the draft Mission, Vision, etc. statement could be placed on the website before incorporation in the bylaws. It was determined that we should wait for membership approval of Bylaws that state the new mission before placing it on the website as our approved mission. The statement on

interrelationships that foster healthy ecosystems in Nature was revised. Barbara suggested that a committee look at the present bylaws and suggest what should be changed to be presented at the educational level before any vote at an annual meeting. Volunteers for the Bylaws Committee were Pete Gilmore Bill Hagar, Katherine Howard and Beth Wilkinson.

Nyssa proposed the new DEIJ statement for the “Who We Are” webpage that would precede the Mission, Vision, Role and Values sections just discussed. Chris was concerned as to how the organization would look if after some time these goals were not attained. It was suggested adding “working to” at the beginning of the last two bullets under “Newton Conservators is committed to fostering a sense of belonging for all people in Newton’s open spaces by:” and other wordsmithing ensued. The final approved wording is in the Appendix.

Alice entertained questions about the readiness assessment.

## 8. Updates

- a. **Membership Renewal Team.** Chris thanked the Membership Renewal Team for getting the membership renewal letter out.
- b. **Conservation Commission.** Dan G. said that the Hammond Pond Parkway will be structured down to one lane on both sides with three crosswalks, two with crosswalk buttons. The former deer park area will also be opened with access from Hammond Pond Parkway and an available parking area and bike parking area. The trail through the former deer park area will be named after Ira Wallach, former chair of the conservation commission. Jennifer Steel has a new assistant, Ellen Menounos.
- c. **Parks, Recreation & Culture (PRC).** Beth said that the Nahanton Park CR group met and considered various items including expanding the nature center, canoe storage, and the dock. The historic house at 499 Winchester St. was torn down and the property is being rebuilt with two units of housing as allowed by current zoning. There is some controversy about how Gath pool will be rebuilt as some want a bubble over it to make it suitable for year-round use. Mark Welch is working on a new city street tree plan and would like to work with the NC and Green Newton on it.  
David said that the PRC will be incorporating the Environmental Science Program, taking it over from the Planning Department.
- d. **Aqueduct Blockage.** Alice said the city’s working group on the aqueduct blockage has not met yet, but two of the Ward 5 councilors have been talking to the aqueduct abutters, including the owners of 397 Woodward, who have not agreed to mediation on allowing access.
- e. **New Trails.** Chris, Dan and Bill have been asked by the city to be on the New Trails committee formed by Jennifer Steel as part of the Open Space Plan.
- f. **Riverside Greenway.** On Wednesday, December 15, DCR presented the action plan for trail improvements in the Riverside area that they have been working on with Mark Development. They expect negotiations may last another 6 months. Attendees were DCR staff, and representatives from the Riverside Greenway Working Group (RGWG), Solomon Foundation, Newton Planning Department and Newton Conservators.

There are four parts of the project which DCR presented in the following order since the three million in mitigation funding may not cover everything.

1. Design the two bridges over route I-95/128. Funding for construction is undetermined.
2. Design and construction of a pathway from Charles Street near the DCR AA building to the Pony Truss bridge going over the water under the arched train bridge. The option of using the old tunnel under the train tracks was not chosen due to high costs for accessible grading and fencing.
3. Design and build access from Riverside Park to MWRA path going under Recreation Road.
4. Design and construction of an access ramp from Recreation Road behind Riverside station up to the two bridges and Riverside station.

At this time DCR is not working on the Pigeon Hill pathway due to concerns about reconstruction of the Route I-90 bridges and accessibility, but the RGWG still plans to push DCR for a simple path given that the reconstruction project is likely to be in the distant future.

Ted indicated that DCR DARPA funding had been cut from an expected \$100M to \$15M.

- g. Potential Board Candidates.** Chris said that there are a number of openings on the board, so that members should suggest new potential candidates particularly those that would diversify the board. A question arose about the minimum age for board members. Several members agreed that serious High School youths could add fresh energy and ideas but the age question was not resolved.
- h. CR Monitoring.** Chris said that 5 of the 8 CR monitoring reviews are in and online. Ordway Park looks particularly good, thanks to Katherine and Dan and Aaron Green. Crystal Lake, Rogers Street and Webster Park are not submitted to him yet.
- i. Newsletter.** Ken said the winter newsletter has been mailed and is on the web.
- 9. Old Business.** None
- 10. New Business.** Barbara suggested a fun webinar on bird trivia that might be joined with a membership meeting to energize the membership. Alice suggested publicizing it through the PTO newsletters. Beth suggested Newton open spaces as a second trivia topic. Barbara, Beth, Sam and Ted volunteered to organize the online session sometime in February.

Beth noted a query about what are the benefits of our different membership levels.
- 11. Coming Events.**

  - a. Next Board Meeting.** Wednesday January 26, 2022 via Zoom
- 12. Adjournment.** Chris adjourned the meeting at 8:52 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Clarke



## Appendix

Proposed Public Statement for Newton Conservators' website on the "Who We Are" page:  
**wording approved Dec 15, 2021**

"Newton Conservators is committed to fostering a sense of belonging for all people in Newton's open spaces by:

- planning and evaluating all of our activities through a diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (DEIJ) lens
- continually educating ourselves and our constituents about DEIJ issues
- building authentic relationships with regional organizations serving historically marginalized people
- working to include previously underrepresented people on our Board and among our members, program participants, and open space visitors
- diversifying all with whom we partner and do business"

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Proposed amendment to the organizational blueprint in the DEIJ Team section **wording approved Dec 15, 2021**:

- Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice (DEIJ) Team
  - facilitate the Board's incorporation of DEIJ into its standard operating procedures
  - assist the Board in finding DEIJ resources and partnerships that leverage the organization's activities
  - evaluate and provide DEIJ feedback regarding the organization's activities
  - maintain and promote public DEIJ resources on website

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Please see next page for previously discussed version of the Mission Vision Role Values.

wording approved Dec 15, 2021

## MISSION

The Newton Conservators promotes acquisition, protection, and stewardship of natural and recreational open spaces in Newton for the benefit and enjoyment of all through education and civic engagement.

## VISION

We envision a Newton where:

- open spaces exist and support biodiverse ecosystems of plants, insects, birds, and other wildlife
- everyone values, feels safe and welcome in, and can enjoy the health and educational benefits of our open spaces, both natural and recreational.
- diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice help to create natural and human communities that are healthy and resilient.
- wherever possible, open spaces are easily accessible from every village and connected to open spaces in adjacent communities.
- residents and businesses understand the importance of open spaces and practice good stewardship of the natural spaces around them.

## ROLE IN OUR COMMUNITY

We serve as leader, sponsor, and collaborative partner with the city, individuals, and other organizations. In all of these roles we seek to use an anti-racist multicultural lens to:

- **protect** and grow the open spaces in Newton
- **educate** the community about the value of open space and respect for the natural world
- promote safe and **welcoming** access to these spaces for all people

- stimulate individual and organizational **action** through advocacy, stewardship, and education

## VALUES

The Newton Conservators' values are our key guiding principles.

### **Love of nature and the health of the natural world**

We understand the important interrelationships that foster healthy ecosystems and the health benefits that accrue from being outdoors in nature.

### **Justice**

We seek partners with differing experiences and views to build just and equitable practices in our open spaces.

### **Collaboration**

We believe that long-lasting impact requires partnerships with diverse stakeholders including government officials, educators, scientists, and other organizations and individuals in Newton and nearby communities.

### **Credibility**

We commit to integrity, reliability, accountability, inclusiveness, transparency, and science to build trust with all people.