



Year in Review 2011

BROOKLINE GREENSPACE ALLIANCE

Board Members

Officers

Arlene Mattison, President
Anita Johnson, Vice President
Marian Lazar, V.P.-Publications
Rob Daves, Secretary
Ron Brown, Treasurer

Directors

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Frank Caro
Abby Coffin
Ernest Cook
Gina Crandell
Mary Dewart
Hugh Mattison
Merelice
Ryan Pace
Linda Pehlke
Fred Perry
Deborah Rivers
Lucy Robb
Jean Stringham
Bruce Wolff

Advisors

Michael Berger
Michael Dukakis
Frances Shedd Fisher
Betsy Shure Gross
Chobee Hoy

Member Organizations

Brookline Farmers' Market
Brookline Soccer Club
Brookline Village Coalition
Brookline Youth Baseball
Bountiful Brookline
Campaign to Preserve St. Aidan's
Chestnut Hill Garden Club
Chestnut Hill Village Alliance
Climate Change Action Brookline
Fisher Hill Association
Friends of Billy Ward Playground
Friends of Boylston Playground Assoc.
Friends of Brookline Reservoir
Friends of Carlton Street Footbridge
Friends of Corey Hill Park
Friends of Cypress Field
Friends of Dane Park
Friends of Emerson Garden
Friends of Fairsted
Friends of Griggs Park
Friends of Hall's Pond
Friends of Ham Downes Field
Friends of Hoar Sanctuary
Friends of Lazz Anderson Park
Friends of Lawrence Park
Friends of Leverett Pond
Friends of Linden Park
Friends of Littlefield Park
Friends of Lost Pond
Friends of Minot Rose Garden
Friends of Monmouth Park
Friends of the Muddy River
Friends of the Old Burying Ground
Friends of the Paths and Park
on Aspinwall Hill
Friends of Sargent Pond
Friends of Waldstein Park
Garden Club of Brookline
High Street Hill Association
Lazz Anderson Auto Museum
Lincoln School PTO Landscape Committee
Linden Parks Association
Salisbury Road-Corey Farms
Neighborhood Association



Brookline GreenSpace Alliance continues to build on its two decade-long history. 2011 brought expanded advocacy efforts and continuing involvement in the planning for the Fisher Hill Reservoir Park. Mid-year, reacting to a difficult economic environment, the Alliance became once again an all volunteer organization, without paid staff. With the active input of our board and other volunteers we continue to strive to improve the quality of life in our community through green space.

The 2011 Alliance Annual Meeting featured an informative talk on strategies to reduce storm water runoff by Kate Bowditch, former Board member and chief hydrologist for Charles River Watershed Association and chair of Brookline Conservation Commission. Slides from her talk were made available on the BGSA website. Linda Pehlke of the Friends of Minot Rose Garden spoke on the advantages of volunteerism. Bonnie Katz, longtime Brookline Town Meeting member, and Ryan Pace, chair of the BGSA land protection subcommittee and partner at Anderson and Kreiger, were recognized. BGSA is grateful to Wheelock College for hosting this meeting.

Advocacy

Fisher Hill Reservoir Project

After a long negotiation, the Board of Selectmen and BGSA signed the Conservation Restrictiogreen contract for the state owned reservoir on Fisher Hill on December 21st, 2010. Final closing on the site took place in February 2011.

A Design Advisory Team (DAT) for the park project has been established and met several times in fall, 2011 and continues to meet. The Team chose an innovative firm, Klopper Martin Design Group, to design the park. The designers proposed three possible configurations for the new park. Of these, the plan that preserves a large part of existing topography was chosen by the team. BGSA has been actively involved in the ongoing planning process from its seat on the DAT.

Parks Budget

BGSA continues to monitor the Town Parks budget to ensure level funding for the Division of Parks and Open Space. In these trying times of constricting budgets, it is particularly important to remain vigilant while at the same



Fisher Hill Reservoir gate house

time supporting innovative approaches. A major advocacy effort involved lobbying for reinstatement of a full-time Town Arborist, a position vital to the quality of our urban forest. These efforts are ongoing.

In an effort to providing necessary park services, BGSA supported an analysis that recommended keeping recreation fees in the Park and Open Space budget instead of adding them to the Town's general fund.

Allandale Farm

BGSA remains concerned about the future of Allandale Farm. BGSA's Land Acquisition Subcommittee has worked to be informed and proactive about what can be done to ensure the future conservation of the farm. Although BGSA believes strongly that all open space is important under the "no net loss" ethic, the historic and symbolic status of Allandale Farm, the oldest working urban farm in the Boston area, makes preserving this farmland particularly critical.

Brookline Conservation Land Trust

BGSA plans to collaborate with the Brookline Conservation Land Trust (BCLT) as this revitalized organization carries out its mission – one of common interest to both organizations. The Spring 2011 issue of PLACE discussed land protection and featured an article about the Brookline Conservation Land Trust.

Carlton Street Footbridge

BGSA continued to advocate for the Carlton Street Footbridge restoration as part of the restoration of Brookline's portion of Olmsted's Emerald Necklace. BGSA continued to be represented on the Muddy River Flood Control, Water Quality, Habitat Enhancement and Historic Preservation Project Maintenance and Management Oversight Committee. This independent oversight body for the Muddy River Project was established by the Secretary of the Environmental Affairs (now Energy and Environmental Affairs).

The October 1996 floods focused attention on the need for the Muddy River Project and twelve years ago the planning and permitting for the Project was begun. Brookline, Boston and the State have been working with The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in anticipation of work beginning on Phase I of the Project.

The first phase of the project includes: (1) daylighting of the Muddy River in front of the Landmark Center and between Brookline Avenue and Avenue Louis Pasteur so that the river is once again visible in that

Carlton Street Footbridge



area, (2) removal of the jughandle road and other roadway changes, and (3) new enhanced wetland plantings along the river's edge.

Town Warrant Articles

Brookline GreenSpace Alliance continues to submit comment letters for Town Warrant articles that positively or negatively impact open space in Brookline, including articles dealing with zoning by-laws, land acquisition and sustainability.

Environmental Education & Community Programs

Celebrate OUR Earth

BGSA held its fifth annual Earth Day event, Celebrate OUR Earth. The event involved Park Friends Groups hosting events to celebrate Earth Day by highlighting the importance of local green spaces and the people who steward them. Included in the activities in the various parks hosted by the respective Park Friends Groups, the Friends of Hall's Pond held one of

their series of community work days, the Friends of Leverett Pond held a sanctuary cleanup, and the Friends of the Minot Rose Garden hosted a pruning seminar. Friends of Waldstein Park welcomed families and workers to a park cleanup.

BGSA featured a table with informational materials in front of Brookline BooksSmith in Coolidge Corner, and at Whole Foods Market on Washington Street.



Participants in the 10 Hills of Brookline Tour, led by Chet Geschickter

BGSA Environmental Learning Project

Brookline GreenSpace Alliance continued to administer the free-to-the-public Brookline Environmental Learning Project, founded by Friends of Hall's Pond and expanded by BGSA.

Following a strategic planning process and a general reduction in grant funding for environmental education activities, BGSA decided to reduce its focus on the school portion of its programming. BGSA had attempted to collaborate with the Science Curriculum Coordinator and school officials to integrate the program into the school curriculum in order to provide the benefits of outdoor place-based environmental learning, and to help secure funding for the program.



Annual Watershed Walk in the Emerald Necklace

BGSA's Environmental Learning Project includes educational walks for the general public in parks and sanctuaries. In 2011, BGSA offered walks including the 10 Hills of Brookline Bike Tour; several Tree ID Walks, and a Watershed Walk. BGSA plans on continuing these monthly field trips in 2012. The Brookline Environmental Learning Project is the only regularly held free environmental education program in Brookline.

BGSA Zoning Forum

As a result of efforts at the Open Space 2010 Plan process, it became apparent that protections for open space in the zoning by-law were confusing and in many cases weak. In 2010 BGSA hosted a zoning forum featuring experts including the Town Planning Director, Chair of the Planning Board, a density expert and a land use planner. BGSA actively followed up this forum in 2011. We held several meetings with Jeff Levine, Director of Planning to discuss open space zoning issues. The Planning Department worked to see if bringing a warrant to Town Meeting in May would address this problem, but concluded that working together toward a future TM would be more practical.

Green Umbrella/Support for Park Friends Groups

Brookline GreenSpace Alliance continued to work to support the efforts of Park Friends groups. In addition to providing fiscal agent services, and mailing and database services to groups including Climate Change Action Brookline and the Friends of the Minot Rose Garden, BGSA made the effort to help all the groups reinvigorate their volunteer pool via the Celebrate OUR Earth outreach event.

Two Park Friends Group coffees were held during the year to provide a forum for sharing for park advocates and volunteers. BGSA also provided a forum for a report on planning by a class of Northeastern engineering students analyzing improved bicycle routes in Brookline, and a discussion on invasive plants.

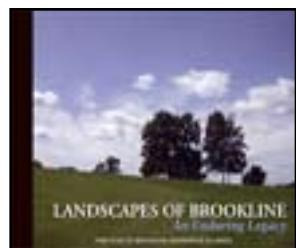
As part of the strategic planning process, BGSA decided to modify its Green Umbrella activities. BGSA will continue supporting the grassroots efforts of local Park Friends volunteer groups, focusing on smaller groups in need. On September 14, BGSA concluded its long-term relationship as fiscal agent to CCAB.

The Alliance co-sponsored a Bird Walk presented by the Fairsted National Historic Site and a lecture given by the Friends of Fairsted. BGSA also joined the Overseers Committee of the Emerald Necklace Conservancy to work toward the common goal of a restored parkland designed by Frederick Law Olmsted.

Outreach & Communications

Publications

Brookline GreenSpace Alliance continued to offer its publication, **PLACE**, in full color. The spring 2011 issue dealt with strategies for land protection. The fall issue discussed water: how we get it and where it goes after it's used. Archived issues of **PLACE** can be found on the publications page of the BGSA website.



Landscapes of Brookline, the BGSA published book of photographs and history of Brookline's open spaces, remains in print. Copies are available at the Brookline Booksmit or directly through BGSA.

Website and Listserv

The website was redesigned in early in 2011. The Green Calendar provides a service to all posters and those interested in topical events.

BGSA continues to maintain and update its email listserv as a distribution method of timely information and notices to the constituency. The listserv currently has close to 400 members.

BGSA has also become active on Facebook. The page features pictures and descriptions of recent Alliance events. Find us as Brookline GreenSpace Alliance on Facebook.

Other Outreach

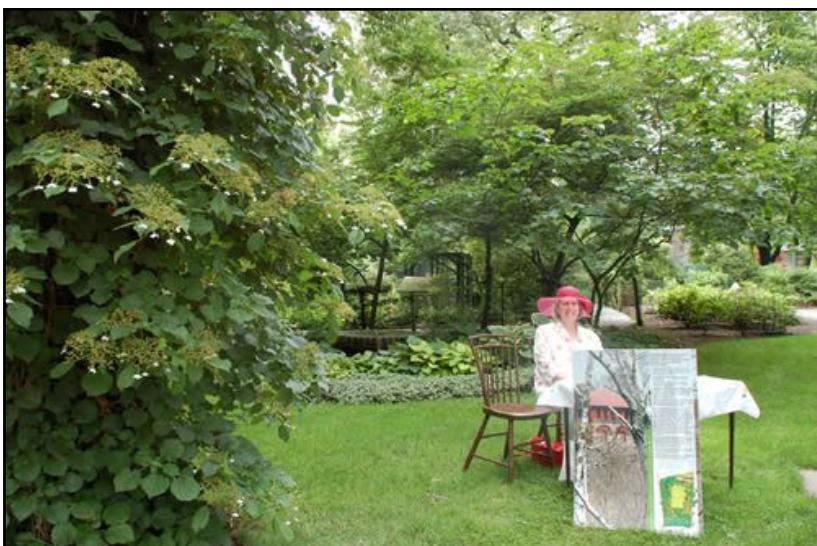
By sending an introductory letter and brochure, BGSA continued to reach out to new homeowners to introduce to them the importance of open space to our quality of life and to make the case for local environmental involvement.

Board & Organizational Development

BGSA underwent an intensive program evaluation process 2010. Facing budget cuts due to shrinking grant sources, the BGSA Board determined which aspects of BGSA programming were important to maintain, and which could be reduced without jeopardizing our mission. After two lengthy workshops, advocacy was listed as the top priority for the organization.

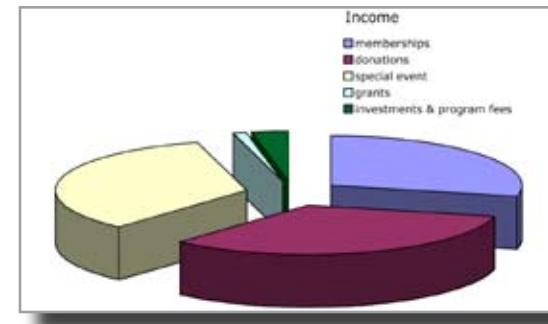
With this information, BGSA continued its efforts to improve our organization and structure throughout 2011 by keeping subcommittees active and Board Meetings open discussions of the organization's positions and activities. BGSA maintained relationships with other relevant Brookline groups with an interest in land protection. BGSA staff and Board of Director members attended and testified at Park and Recreation Commission and Conservation Commission meetings and Selectmen's hearings.

Our annual fundraising event, Growing GreenSpace served as an important source of income for the organization at the same time it built community among open space advocates.



Growing GreenSpace 2011

Financial Report



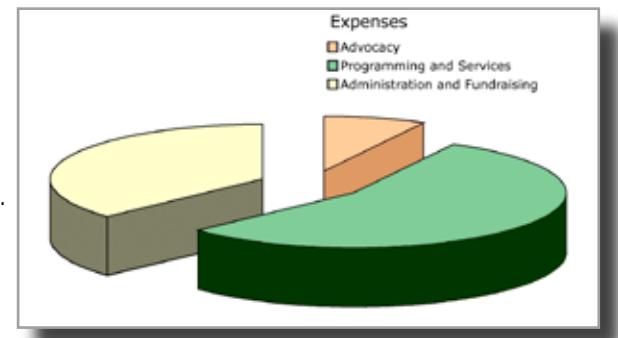
In fiscal year 2011, Brookline GreenSpace Alliance received \$45,928 and spent \$37,760. With the temporary removal of the Executive Director position, our financial position has improved for the time being as we aim to rebuild a reserve fund. 28.6% of the income came from annual memberships, 33.2% of the income came from individual contributions, 34.1% came from special event income, less than 1% came from corporate and foundation grants and the remainder came from investment income and program service fees.

The Alliance received \$24,500 from the Town of Brookline to be held in escrow for legal needs as they may arise for the Fisher Hill Conservation Restriction.

7.9% of expenses were for advocacy, 55.1% were for programming services (communications, education and Green Umbrella support), and 38.9% were for supporting services (administration and fundraising). These percentages do not reflect the many hours of unpaid professional volunteer time donated by Board Members that contribute to Brookline GreenSpace Alliance operations and programming.

We thank all of our constituents throughout Brookline who annually support our work through donations and volunteerism and the businesses which support our mission for their generous donations of raffle items and other help.

BGSA is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.



Brookline GreenSpace Alliance Highlights of the First 25 Years

1987 - Brookline GreenSpace Alliance founded.

BGSA founding motivated by citizen concern about damaging use of Larz Anderson for parking for U.S. Open, a private event. The vision is for a Town-wide organization to work with individual parks friends groups to advocate for preservation and protection of the Town's public lands.

1988 - BGSA appointed to Moderator's Committee to study parks and open space management.

Subsequently, priorities for parks improvements begin to be set according to need, matching funds are sought and significant improvements, including at Larz Anderson Park, are undertaken. Advocating for parks funding is an ongoing BGSA priority.

1990 - TM approves Design Review committees for park capital improvements which include neighbors, park commissioners and necessary consultants. BGSA actively participates in bringing the article to TM for consideration.

1993 - Putterham Woods is threatened

when Golf Club interests are pitted against preservation of historic Putterham Woods as the Town considers a driving range. BGSA rallies constituents and the plan is dropped due to broad public objection.

1993 - BGSA acts as fiscal agent for citizen fundraising initiative to create skating rink at Larz Anderson Park.

1994 - BGSA collaborates with U. Mass Forestry Department, the Town and the Tree Planting Committee as they design and implement

the first ever inventory of municipal street trees preformed by volunteers. BGSA is asked to assist by organizing volunteers for the effort. BGSA then partners with the sponsors and the Arnold Arboretum as 105 volunteers are trained. The result is a successful inventory that is the basis of the Town's continuously updated inventory of street trees. The value of this effort as a model for collaboration, volunteerism and sound environmental economics cannot be over estimated.

1994 - BGSA collaborates with Conservation Commission on sponsoring Open Space Tour focused on properties in danger of development.

1995 - Task Force on Open Space is established when BGSA raises questions with Town leadership about management accountabilities and about the efficacy of park maintenance in preserving tax-payer investments in park improvements. This major study of parks management in Brookline is a collaborative effort of Brookline GreenSpace Alliance with the Town's administrative leadership, Town staff, and all pertinent agencies and commissions resulting in implementation of a massive overhaul in the management of the Town's public lands, including the creation of a new division of Parks and Open Space, still operating effectively today.

1996 - Lost Pond, production of a video detailing efforts by advocates to preserve the nature sanctuary, is sponsored by BGSA.

2000 - BGSA organizes and sponsors top-tier Forum on Climate Change. Climate Change Action Brookline is formed and the Town actively pursues implementation of a Climate Action Plan.

2003 - BGSA takes lead in assuring the Town's

Comprehensive 10-Year Plan re-affirms the value of open space in Brookline, particularly the inclusion of the "no net loss of open space" provision in the Plan.

2004 - BGSA assumes responsibility for the Environmental Learning Project, initially conceived and implemented by Friends of Hall's Pond as the Hall's Pond Learning Project. Under BGSA management the program and venue are expanded. The program continued to be the only free Town-wide environmental education program in Brookline.

2004 - Earth Night Brookline is launched with showing of Pale Male at the Coolidge Corner Theatre. The program includes speakers, an environmental video by a Brookline student and a slide exhibition of Brookline landscape photography. This event evolves into The Muddy River Film Series, co-sponsored by BGSA and the Coolidge Corner Theatre Foundation, and is the only continuing environmental film series in the Greater Boston area.

2004 - BGSA grants Friends of the Minot Rose Garden a Neighborhood Initiative Grant to help with the new effort to completely replant the badly deteriorating garden and continues to act as fiscal agent for the group.

2004 - BGSA serves as co-chair with the Conservation Commission's to produce the 2005 Open Space Plan.

2006 - BGSA establishes a Land Acquisition committee to look at alternatives and methodologies for expanding

Brookline's base of protected open space.

2006 - BGSA takes a strong stand on aspects of the Parks, Open Space and Recreation Strategic Master Plan believed to be in conflict with the open space interests of citizens as expressed in a scientific survey and in conflict with the Town's Comprehensive Plan and Open Space Plan. Appropriate changes in the Master Plan are agreed to.

2007 - BGSA launches Celebrate OUR Earth on April 22, Earth Day. This is the first Town-wide Earth Day celebration in Brookline and encompasses coordinated volunteer efforts by Friends groups.

2007 - A user-friendly map of open spaces in Brookline is created.

2008 - BGSA works with the Conservation Commission to protect the lands held by the Brookline Land Trust.

2009 - BGSA serves as co-chair with the Conservation Commission's to produce the 2005 Open Space Plan.

2010 - BGSA holds a Forum on How Zoning Can Protect Open Space.

2010 - The Alliance accepts the Conservation Restriction for 10 acre Fisher Hill Reservoir Park.

2011 - A seat on the Fisher Hill Park Design Review Committee is reserved for BGSA participation.

2011 - BGSA puts major lobbying effort into saving the Town Arborist position to support the health of Brookline's urban forest. This effort results in the creation of a new position of Supervisor of Forestry Operations.



GRASSROOTS SUPPORT FOR A GREEN COMMUNITY

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