

PLACE

Projects Issue

Fall 2015

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shape on Fisher Hill**

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Annual Appeal

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Editor Marian Lazar

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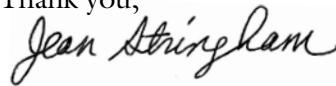
Dear friends of parks and open spaces,

We hope that reading our publication PLACE, viewing our website, and visiting our facebook page have kept you informed about important issues affecting Brookline's open space, and that *you stand with us in our efforts to advocate for our parks.*

Brookline GreenSpace Alliance is the only non-profit organization that supports and represents Brookline's park friends groups. We also work with Town Hall in areas such as the Town's park budget. It is important that there be advocates for Brookline parks, and BGSA's "voice for the parks" is heard—our voice is important and it is heard.

Please send a check now in the enclosed envelope to show that you support our efforts to speak for Brookline's open spaces. If you would like to get involved in any of our many activities please let us know that too. We thank you in advance for your financial support.

Thank you,



Jean Stringham, Development Chair
 Brookline GreenSpace Alliance

Educating Brookline Youth About the Environment: A new BGSA initiative

A grant from BGSA, working together with the Recreation Department, made it possible for Brookline's Environmental Educator, Stephanie Springer, to bring first graders from Brookline schools to Ward's Pond in the Olmsted Park section of the Emerald Necklace. The children had a chance to learn about pond life, close up.

In a letter Janet C. MacNeil, Brookline's K-8 Science Coordinator wrote "The learning experience that you created for our 1st graders was just perfect Stephanie—it dovetailed seamlessly with the 1st Insect curriculum, provided engaging hands-on ponding experience and information (at a level just right for 1st graders), and sparked such interest and curiosity in water insects. These are exactly the kind of experiences that we are looking for to enhance science teaching and learning in Brookline!."

"In addition, we greatly appreciate the generosity of the Brookline Greenspace Alliance--stepping in to fund transportation for 1st graders to Ward's Pond. These field trips would not have been possible without your assistance.

"This is a wonderful example of town/community collaboration to support our students!"

With your support, BGSA would like to make this field trip an annual event.



Stephanie Springer, Education Educator, with first graders at Ward's Pond.

Warrant Article 6 Enables PARC Grant Funding for Larz Anderson Park

Larz Anderson is Brookline’s largest park. As the former estate of Larz and Isabella Anderson it is historically and culturally significant, and is listed on both the National and State Registers of Historic Places. The 61 acre parkland also provides significant environmental and habitat value as well as diverse recreational opportunity including a Community Garden, picnicking, and outdoor skating. The hill where the main house stood provides opportunities for active and passive recreation that are not available elsewhere in Town. The grassy slopes provide a premier spot for sledding, watching sunsets, observing stars, and kite flying.

A master plan exists as a guide for restoration but deferred maintenance over the years presents a current challenge for adequate park care. Currently the park requires renovation to address basic safety concerns and to return it to the condition appropriate for Brookline’s flagship open space. The Town is once again turning to the State for funding to do necessary upkeep.

In November Town Meeting will consider a warrant article placing 55 acres of Larz Anderson Park under the management and control of the Town’s Parks and Open Space Division as recreational park land. This action is necessary to make the land eligible for a Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities (PARC) Grant from the Commonwealth. The money from this grant will supplement the town’s portion of expenditure on the improvements to the parks roadways and pathways approved by Town Meeting in May, 2013. The Larz Anderson Park Project will repair, restore and/or replace critical access and infrastructure elements in the park including key circulation features and structures such as pedestrian paths, stairs, historic bridges, parking, a carriage road, lighting, and drainage.

The Larz Lagoon and the Temple of Love provide romantic water views as well as bird watching and picnic areas. The pathways, stairs and bridges around the Lagoon are currently in poor condition due to their age and heavy use. Additional pathways and stairs in the park that connect to the athletic fields, the auto museum and the carriage road, are also in poor condition with crumbling edges and uneven surfaces. In addition to making these much-needed repairs, this project will add a perimeter path around the park, as recommended in the Larz Anderson Master Plan, to connect destinations and to create a long loop path. The addition of the loop path will improve access, enjoyment, and health and wellness opportunities within the park.

In addition to repair/reconstruction of the carriage road, drainage infrastructure and erosion will be addressed. Lighting will be added or replaced at existing entrances for improved visibility, safety and to better welcome visitors. Improved safety lighting is necessary to support evening recreational uses at the park, such as the outdoor skating rink and public events hosted by the Auto Museum. Finally, the comfort station will be upgraded with some structural, accessibility, ventilation and facade improvements. Completion of these critical infrastructure and environmental improvements will enhance the recreational benefits of the park, provide for greater inclusion, improve health and wellness opportunities, address significant access and safety needs, and better serve all park visitors.

The PARC grant will provide a major portion of the required funds for renovation. BGSA urges Town Meeting to make this possible.

Below is a chart showing the top three responses to a survey of citizen priorities for open space.

| Brookline Citizens' Priorities for New Facilities | | |
|--|---|--------------------------------|
| Relative Importance Ranked on Scale of 1 (not important) to 4 (very important) | | |
| Facility | % Respondents Rating "4" (Very Important) | Mean Score for all Respondents |
| Open Space Acquisition, Preservation | 48.1% | 3.27 |
| Parks - General | 33.3 | 3.05 |
| More Trails/Bike Paths | 31.4 | 3.06 |

Source: Brookline Parks, Open Space and Recreation Strategic Master Plan, June 2006 (Table 2.6)

Fisher Hill Reservoir Park Nears Completion



Brookline’s newest park, Fisher Hill Reservoir Park is expected to open by the summer of 2016. Many of the park’s features are starting to take shape.

The central sketch shows the approximate location of major areas.

- A. Photo of a Tupelo tree taken at another location. The GreenSpace Grove will consist of 25 Tupelos planted along the promenade.
- B. Restored gate house. Clockwise from left: water rill will flow down the promenade, gate house at the rear; restored gate house with bleachers; gate house with steps leading up from Fisher Avenue.



- C. Wet meadow with boardwalk under construction
- D. Seating area/ play structure.
- E. Site specific climbing structure under construction (see cover photo).
- F. Viewing platform and stairs from edge path to field level.
- G. Part of the path system and new woodland plantings.

Photos by Frances Shedd Fisher, Hugh Mattison and Marian Lazar



Fisher Hill Reservoir Park is the first acquisition of new park land by the Town of Brookline in fifty years. It is the result of cooperation between the State and the Town to turn an unused reservoir into a new and exciting park. The Brookline GreenSpace Alliance holds the conservation restriction on the land insuring it will always be parkland.



Serving Seniors in Brookline Parks

Frank Caro

Brookline parks offer impressive features for older residents. At the same time, Brookline should seek to serve its older residents more effectively through its parks.

The BGSA invitation to write about Brookline parks from a senior perspective is welcome since discussions about the needs of parks often emphasize facilities for children and young adults. With the aging of the baby boom cohort, the number of older residents in Brookline is increasing. Further, contemporary recognition of the importance of sustained physical activity and a supportive community environment for healthy aging provide more reason to pay attention to parks as resources for older people.

Brookline parks are responsive to diverse senior interests. Some seniors look to parks to provide opportunity for active sports, notably golf and tennis. Some seniors enjoy golf at Putterham and tennis on courts such as those provided at the Waldstein Playground and Amory Park. For seniors who enjoy safe biking, the scenic dedicated bike path at Olmsted Park is a great resource.

Some older people are attracted to parks as destinations for walks. They enjoy parks when they offer even walking surfaces, comfortable benches in quiet and shady locations (preferably offering a good view.) Like parents with young children, older people prefer

parks that offer rest rooms. For many older people, Hall's Pond Sanctuary is a particular treasure. The board walk offers two excellent viewing platforms of the pond. Visitors can often spot a great blue heron. The Sanctuary also offers a quiet formal garden with comfortable benches. Adjacent Amory Park provides picnic tables, a walking loop and a rest room. Located just off Beacon Street, Hall's Pond is an easy walking destination for those who live in densely developed North Brookline.

Other Brookline parks also offer features that draw older people. Winthrop Square Park, also in North Brookline, offers the Minot Rose Garden.

Brookline Reservoir Park is an appealing destination for walkers for its mile-long path around the reservoir. The park has many benches and offers views of Fisher Hill. Olmsted Park offers a dedicated path for pedestrians along Leverett Pond. Benches are abundant in this superbly maintained section of the Emerald Necklace. Seniors also value comfortable seating areas in mini-parks along significant transportation routes. The seating in the triangles on Babcock Street at both Dwight Street and Freeman Street are good examples. Seniors are also looking forward to the opening of



The smooth walking path at the Brookline Reservoir. Photo by Jean Stringham



A comfortable bench in Amory Woods. Photo by Jean Stringham

Have a question or comment about Town policies on parks?

Get in touch with your Town Meeting Member.

Contact information for Town Meeting Members is at www.brooklinema.gov/1061/town-meeting-members-list

(Continued on next page)



Area outlined in red shows location of the practice area.

Practice Center for the Municipal Golf Course

Lisa Paradis, Director of Recreation

On September 17 the Selectmen approved a contract with NMP Golf Construction to build a driving range/practice facility at the Robert T. Lynch Municipal Golf Course. The facility will be embedded within the course, neither visible nor accessible from surrounding roadways. The area will be surrounded by netting which will be partially visible inside the golf course during winter months. A synthetic grass tee area will serve twenty-two bays with six target greens. The existing terrain will be maintained to create a natural landscape.

Income from this facility is crucial to the economic viability of the course. No tax dollars are used to support course maintenance or improvements. All operational and capital costs are self-funded from player fees. Annual income from this source does not allow for major infrastructure projects. Revenue from the practice facility is conservatively estimated to range from \$175,000 to \$275,000 per year. In the immediate future, it will allow for implementation of a tree management plan, a habitat enhancement plan, updates to the club house and improvements to holes 1 and 2. The additional yearly revenue is expected to fund a long list of deferred maintenance projects at the course without impacting fees or taxes. Construction of the project has already begun and is expected to be complete by June of 2016.

Serving Seniors in Brookline Parks (continued)

the Fisher Hill Reservoir Park. From its fully accessible promenade, the park will offer a spectacular views.

While the Brookline Community Aging network and the Brookline Age-Friendly City initiative appreciate what the parks offer, they are seeking improvements. The following are examples:

- Benches in parks that currently lack seating. Both Mason Square Park and the Longwood Mall would be more welcoming if they offered at least one bench.
- Support for low-impact sports like bocce. Our Newton neighbors have four clay bocce courts in Cabot Park. Newton's Recreation Department sponsors organized bocce for seniors. Boston and Cambridge host "major league" bocce.
- An off-road bicycle loop for people of all ages who enjoy recreational biking.
- Rest rooms in more parks

Brookline is fortunate to have leadership in the Parks and Open Space Division committed to serving residents of all ages. Brookline has reason to be proud of what it offers to older people. As it seeks to improve its parks, Brookline should also be paying attention to the interests of its older residents.

Frank Caro is the Co-Chair of the Brookline Community Aging Network. He is also a Co-Chair of Brookline's Age-Friendly City Committee. He is a board member of the Friends of Hall's Pond and a former BGSa board member.



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Brookline GreenSpace Alliance is a non-profit membership organization dedicated to the enhancement of open space in Brookline by supporting citizens in caring for their green spaces.

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t. 617.277.4777 www.brooklinegreenspace.org

Muddy River Project - Re-emerging River

Go to www.brooklinegreenspace.org for more information on the Muddy River Project.



View of Upper Fens Pond before construction. Note jughandle road to be eliminated.



Upper Fens Pond in April 2013 after clearing for Phase 1 construction.



Fens Bridge on the downstream side at Ave. Louis Pasteur has been cleared of invasive plants. Flow of river has been diverted around the Upper Fens Pond.



View of Upper Fens Pond from jughandle road at Brookline Ave., soon to be eliminated. Sediment has been removed, channel defined, and shrub and tree planting is in process. Over 8,000 shrubs and 200 trees will be planted in the Phase 1 area.