

# PLACE

Spring 2021



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.

Amphibious excavator dredging sediment in the Muddy River

See page 6

## Board Members

### Officers

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

### Directors

Harry Bohrs  
Ernest Cook  
Hugh Mattison  
Sean Lynn-Jones  
Jules Milner-Brage  
Clint Richmond  
Deborah Rivers  
Robert Schram  
John Shreffler  
Marilyn Ray Smith  
Elissa Yanover

### Advisors

Michael Berger  
Michael Dukakis  
Frances Shedd Fisher  
Chobee Hoy  
Fred Perly

### Park Organizations

Brookline Neighborhood Alliance  
Chestnut Hill Garden Club  
Climate Action Brookline  
Fisher Hill Association  
Friends of the Beacon Street Bridle Path  
Friends of Billy Ward Playground  
Friends of Brookline Reservoir  
Friends of Carlton Street Footbridge  
Friends of Coolidge Corner Library Garden  
Friends of Cypress Street Playground  
Friends of Dane Park  
Friends of Fairsted  
Friends of the Farmers' Market  
Friends of the Green Dog Program  
Friends of Griggs Park  
Friends of Hall's Pond  
Friends of Hoar Sanctuary  
Friends of Larz 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 Putterham Woods  
Friends of Sargent Pond  
Friends of Soule  
Friends of Waldstein Park  
Garden Club of Brookline  
Griggs Park Neighborhood Association  
Lawton Park Community Garden  
Larz Anderson Auto Museum  
Linden Parks Association

### Editor Marian Lazar

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



## Alexandra Vecchio, Brookline's new Director of Parks and Open Space

Alexandra has a Masters of Environmental Management from Yale School of the Environment, where she specialized in the intersection of land use planning, water resource management, and climate change adaptation. Alexandra has previously supported the development and implementation of sustainability plans for both universities and cities and has extensive community engagement, outreach, and project management experience. Prior to beginning her graduate program at Yale, Alexandra worked in Washington D.C. as a Legislative Assistant for Congressman Mike Quigley handling a variety of federal policy issues, including energy and the environment, as well as constituent service requests related to her policy portfolio. Most recently, Alexandra served as Mass Audubon's Climate Change Program Director, responsible for implementing the organization's statewide Climate Action Strategy and the intersection with public use and programming, stewardship, and land protection.

Alexandra is passionate about the essential role of public parks and open space in supporting a healthy, equitable, and vibrant community for both people and the environment. She will ensure continued excellence in parks and open space maintenance, responsible asset management, and integration of climate change and sustainability initiatives across the Department. She is looking forward to partnering with park and open space users and advocates to ensure that Brookline continues to lead the way in providing a safe, equitable, inclusive, and well-maintained network of parks and open spaces.

The Parks & Open Space Director Selection Committee (listed below) did a great job reviewing, interviewing and assessing the candidates.

Nancy Heller, Select Board Member

Clara Batchelor, Park and Recreation Commissioner

Werner Lohe, Conservation Commissioner

Arlene Mattison, President, Brookline GreenSpace Alliance

Michael Glover, TMM, Former School Committee Member

Joe Geller, Landscape Architect, Former Select Board Member

Nicole Banks, City of Newton, Parks, Recreation & Culture Commissioner

## President's Message

**G**ood news for the environment, for wildlife, and for people who live in the region. This is the description of one purchase of land made possible by the Community Preservation Act.

The Town of Brookline provides basic services and does it well. However, many needs do go unmet and our capacities are of course limited by our resources. If there were a source of funding that provided the opportunity for improving our quality of life and preserving the character of the town, would we not eagerly take that opportunity?

By the addition of a small surcharge (1%) on local property taxes, money that is raised will be matched by the statewide Community Preservation Trust Fund, and dedicated toward building and rehabilitating parks, playgrounds, and recreational fields, protecting open space, supporting local affordable housing development, and preserving historic buildings and resources.

Passage of the CPA in Brookline will generate almost \$3 million a year.

A community vegetable garden, playing fields, walking paths are all on the list of recommended improvements to our recreational and environmental needs. In other communities that have already passed the CPA, projects like these and others including pocket parks, community farms, restored burial grounds, recreational facilities, and projects to increase biodiversity have been built or improved with CPA funds. Many of these projects have been community inspired and led, or completed in cooperation with the municipality.

Beautifying Brookline, preserving our heritage, providing for those in need, and supporting our green infrastructure to increase our health and sustainability are goals that the CPA can help reach. Let's vote at the next Town election to take advantage of the state funds that are available to help do these things.

## Let's vote yes for the CPA!

---

### Open Space Projects Starting This Spring

#### Construction Set to Begin at Larz Anderson Park Lagoon to begin in March

Work will focus on three deteriorating concrete structures: The "Temple of Love," or tempietto, at the far end of the lagoon, the center bridge or causeway that crosses the lagoon and the arched footbridge near the end of the lagoon toward Goddard Avenue.

The Town's primary objective is to retain as much of the historic character and detail of the structures as possible within modern construction methods and to ensure public safety. This project will address structures that the preservation consultant determined to be "at the end of their service life and in need of replacement."

The project is scheduled to reach substantial completion in December 2021. Those interested may follow the construction progress by visiting the Town's website (<https://www.brooklinema.gov/1036/Parks-Construction-Renovation-Projects>)

#### Carlton Street Footbridge Rehabilitation

The footbridge will be removed in May and transported off site for rebuilding. Currently plans are underway for work site staging and determining necessary tree removal.

*On the May 4 ballot, in addition to electing officials, voters will be asked whether they wish to approve the Community Preservation Act (CPA). Fall 2020 Town Meeting approved placing the act on the May ballot.*

## What is the CPA and how does it work?

Under the warrant article approved by Town Meeting a 1% surcharge is added to the annual real estate tax bill. Unlike an override, the CPA surcharge on tax bills is structured in such a way that low/moderate-income households are entitled to apply for exemption from the surcharge. Property owned and occupied by any person who would qualify for low income housing or low or moderate income senior housing in the Town is exempt from the surcharge.

The funds from the surcharge are restricted to the following uses:

- acquisition, creation and preservation of open space
- acquisition, preservation, rehabilitation and restoration of historic resources
- acquisition, creation, preservation, rehabilitation and restoration of land for recreational use
- acquisition, creation, preservation and support of community housing
- rehabilitation and restoration of such open space and community housing that is acquired or created as provided under the Act.

In addition to the funds raised through the application of the surcharge, the Town will receive funds from the Massachusetts Community Preservation Trust Fund. The funds received from the State are derived from document recording fees collected at the county registry of deeds in which the community accepting the CPA is located. When, as happened last year, Massachusetts ends with a surplus, the Commonwealth may allocate some of this surplus to the CPA Trust Fund. For the 2020 distribution, the Commonwealth added \$20 million to the amount raised from the surcharge and the match is expected to be at a rate of 31%.

### Community Preservation Act In brief

- 1% surcharge on real estate bills
- Low income property owners exempt
- State matching funds expected to be 30%
- Eligible projects:
  - Open Space
  - Affordable Housing
  - Historic Restoration
- All expenditures must be approved by Town Meeting

### CPA Funded Projects Around Massachusetts

This page: At right, Gravestone repair in Cambridge  
Below, two historic preservation projects in Somerville.

Facing page: Top, Newton Community Farm. Formerly the Agino Family Farm; the last working farm in Newton.

Middle, playground in Somerville. Site of a former elementary school which has been rebuilt as a community center, mixed income housing and community gardens,

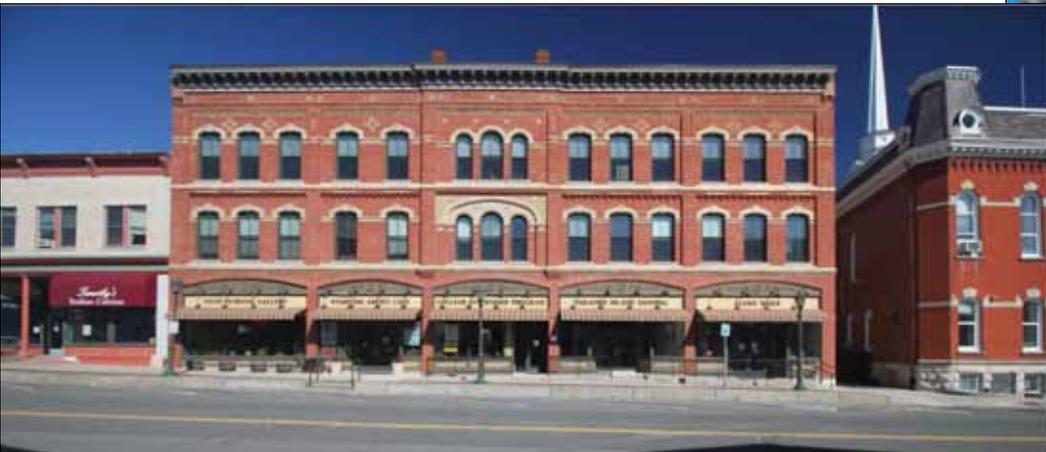
Bottom, Two projects that used CPA funds for historic preservation and affordable housing.



Once the CPA is approved, a town must establish a Community Preservation Committee (CPC) composed of five members from designated town boards (conservation commission, historical commission, parks and recreation commission, housing authority, and planning board) and up to four additional members selected through procedures to be established by the town.

The CPC recommends annually to Town Meeting approval of various eligible projects or properties for which the CPF funds are to be expended. The CPA requires the CPC to consult with the various boards and commissions in order to determine what recommendations to make during the year. The statute requires that Town Meeting appropriate, or set aside for later spending, not less than 10% of the annual CPA revenues in the Community Preservation Fund (CPF) for each of the three categories: Open space/recreation land, historic preservation, and affordable housing. The remaining 70%, less up to 5% appropriated for administrative costs, may be distributed beyond the required 10% among these three CPA categories, in accordance with the recommendations of the CPC and the approval of Town Meeting. CPA funds may be used as the local match for other grants that would fund CPA eligible projects.

The CPC makes recommendations to Town Meeting for expenditure of funds for the purposes designated in the CPA. If Town Meeting rejects the CPC recommendation for distribution of funds for a particular project, the unspent funds go back into the CPF. One of the principal guidelines set out in the CPA for the spending of funds is that the funds cannot be used to replace existing operating funds but only to augment them. The Department of Revenue has interpreted this guideline as prohibiting the use of CPA funds to supplant operating funds that already have been appropriated.



Historic preservation and affordable housing projects  
Above: Cambridge  
At left: Lee

## Muddy River Project Phase 2

The Muddy River Flood Damage Reduction Phase 2 Construction Project sections in Brookline are located between Leverett Pond and Park Drive. Sections of the river in the Fens will also be dredged. The project involves dredging 1 to 8' of sediment to improve water flow in the Back Bay Fens and Riverway sections of the Muddy River. It also includes excavation of the sandbar and island at Leverett Pond. Work also includes the removal of phragmites from the wetland and river bank areas which affect water flow. After removal of the sediments and phragmites, preservation and restoration of the historic park shoreline in construction areas will consist of planting emergent wetland plants and restoring riparian vegetation and in upland areas by planting trees and shrubs.

Since the award of the construction contract and issuance of the Notice to Proceed almost a year ago, the contractor has been actively dredging the sediment from the river and properly disposing of the material at disposal facilities. Utilization of two crews working in different work areas has maximized productivity of the dredging workers. Dredging of the Muddy River is divided into 12 work areas, 6 work areas upstream of the Riverway and 6 areas downstream of Avenue Louis Pasteur.

The amphibious dredger removes sediment to a dump truck for eventual disposal. Temporary truck road at right.



Temporary construction fence was installed at the Fenway Victory Gardens in mid-January to allow for the construction of the processing bins of the Central Processing Facility. These bins supplement the already constructed bins on the right bank near the Duck House. This was required due to the increase in the amount of daily dredged material. As material is dredged from the river it is loaded onto trucks and placed in the bins to allow the water to drain. A temporary road on the river bank gives truck access to the storage bins. This will be removed and the area replanted at the end of the project. Once dewatered and stabilized the processed sediment is loaded and transported to the final disposal facility.

Restoration and replanting of the construction areas will begin in April. Maintenance of the new plants will begin as soon as the banks are restored. Plantings are guaranteed for two-years. A citizens' group, MMOC, was created to oversee future maintenance.

Phase 2 work areas in Brookline(outlined in red)



# Gateway East Improved by Advocacy

*Hugh Mattison, TMM Precinct Five*

The road of today must do more than carry cars. It must serve other constituents – pedestrians, bikers, transit riders – as well as promote more energy-efficient travel and safety while adding to quality-of-life.

In Spring 2018, “100% Plans” for Gateway East road construction in Brookline Village were submitted for approval to MassDOT, which was funding much of the project. These plans showed 20 separate 5’x 10’ tree pits to be placed between 1 and 10 Brookline Place, from Brookline Avenue to Hearthstone Plaza. Each tree pit was to be 50 square feet, quite ample for the oaks and maples to be planted. A closer look at the specs, however, showed that “rubber tree pit mulch” (or “Flexi-Pave” as the commercial product is known), was to be used. A controversy about using artificial turf was raging around the Cypress Field renovation at the time, so I wondered, why would we want to use an artificial product on our most heavily travelled thoroughfare in Brookline. Where was the implementation of a greener, pedestrian-friendly experience as part of this new construction?

As part of its financial Gateway East obligation, Brookline was required to raise \$250,000 to match the State grant. I submitted an amendment to a Town Meeting warrant article to add text “to include construction of continuous curbed, irrigated planting beds” from Brookline Ave. to Boylston Street. The raising of Town money would be tied to a condition which would make a more natural area. My arguments included:

- Follow 2005 Comprehensive Plan with a primary goal to “create an attractive new gateway...and reshape the overall character”
- Mitigate the loss of trees and open space at 1 Brookline Place removed in 2016
- Soften this edge and primary gateway to Brookline, reduce heat-generating pavement, and provide other environmental benefits.

Both the Advisory Committee and Select Board accepted my change, without which Brookline would not have been able to move forward with Gateway East.

With much support from residents of High Street Hill and Precincts 4-6, the amendment was adopted, and passed Town Meeting unanimously.

At this point, the junction of Washington Street and Boylston Street/Route 9 in Brookline’s Gateway East project is practically complete.

In order to soften and make it more user-friendly and green, planting beds and lawn areas which include 77 trees will stretch from High Street to Brookline Avenue.

As the trees mature, i-Tree software ([www.itreetools.org](http://www.itreetools.org)) will be able to calculate the value of increased tree canopy, pollution mitigation, and storm-water runoff reduction. Planting beds which include shrubs and grasses that are drought-resistant, and require lower maintenance, will enhance the pedestrian experience; and cycle tracks will provide a safer route through this complex intersection.

A new parklet adjacent to the inbound bus stop is included in the design making the area which used to include a concrete overpass over the road much more attractive; and new traffic lights will make crossing the road safer. All in all, Gateway East will serve its many constituents and improve this busy part of town.





P.O. Box 470514  
Brookline MA 02447

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Boston MA  
Permit #53810

---

PLACE is published twice a year, spring and fall, by the Brookline GreenSpace Alliance.  
t. 617.277.4777      www.brooklinegreenspace.org      info@brooklinegreenspace.org

---

## **The Community Preservation Act is on the May 4 Ballot**

More information inside on page 4.

The Cambridge project below was funded with CPA money earmarked for open space and recreation



*Fresh Pond Community Garden*