

Alliance Update

Newsletter of the Brookline GreenSpace Alliance

Brookline GreenSpace Supports Re-Opening Carlton St. Footbridge—Here's Why

Some 100 years ago, Frederick Law Olmsted, co-designer with Calvert Vaux, of New York's Central Park, transformed a brackish salt-water estuary into a series of six parks we now know as Boston's Emerald Necklace. Brookline shares a common boundary with Boston along two of these parks—Olmsted Park and Riverway Park. Olmsted Park, which includes Leverett Pond, Willow Pond and, in Boston, Ward's Pond, has been substantially renovated, with a bike path, restored overlook at Allerton Street near Leverett Pond—the Allerton Overlook—and new plantings and benches. Substantial additional work is in the planning stages. Although the other park in Brookline's portion of the Emerald Necklace, Riverway Park, is the narrowest of the six Emerald Necklace parks, it provides an urban oasis of serenity below the heavily-traveled Riverway, and a buffer to abutting Longwood residences from the bustle of colleges and the Longwood Medical Area. One of Olmsted's primary objectives for his "pleasure-ground" was to serve as a gathering place for all classes of citizens to enjoy the rejuvenating benefits of "country in the city."

An integral part of Olmsted's

plan was to link the nearby Longwood residential area to the new park by means of a footbridge. He designed the pathway on the park side at the park entrance as an 'overlook,' similar to other major park entrances and to the Allerton Overlook in Olmsted Park. His plan is documented in an 1890 map, which shows the footbridge crossing the Boston and Albany Railroad tracks (now the MBTA's Riverside D Line) and the semi-circular path system leading to the bridge. His intention was to form a viewing area similar to the Allerton Overlook in Olmsted Park. Here one could (and can today) enjoy the vista across the Muddy River to the Boston shore, with the reflections of shrubs, trees and sky mirrored in the water.



Budget cuts in park maintenance led to the closing of the Bridge in 1976. Subsequently, a renewed appreciation for parks in general, and Frederick Law Olmsted in particular, led to the creation

of a Master Plan for restoration of the Olmsted and Riverway Parks. The creation of this Master Plan was part of a broader effort by the Commonwealth involving 13 Olmsted Parks in Massachusetts. The Olmsted/Riverway Master Plan was accomplished through the cooperation of the state, the City of Boston and the Town of Brookline working with historic landscape profes-



sionals. The plan was approved by the Brookline Board of Selectmen in 1990 following the recommendation of the town wide committee which undertook the review and revision of the plan reflecting public comment in Brookline. The consensus plan made restoration funding possible and has resulted in substantial improvements in the park system, most notably in Olmsted Park. The first joint effort involved the refurbishing of the stone footbridges in Riverway and Olmsted Parks connecting Boston and

Brookline. Though the Master Plan recommends and anticipates the restoration of the formal Carlton Street entrance to the park, Riverway Park maintenance and restoration have lagged and the restoration of the footbridge at Carlton Street has not yet been addressed. Olmsted historians view this vital link to the adjacent neighborhood as critical to the realization of Olmsted's vision.

In 1999 the town of Brookline commissioned a feasibility study to analyze the costs and engineering considerations of various options for the future of the bridge. The Feasibility Report completed last year by Amman & Whitney states "It is a timeless and remarkable example of steel bridge engineering during this relatively early period in the development and use of steel span structures." The report also found that the bridge was in fundamentally sound and that substantial grant monies available for such preservation efforts would reduce the cost to less than the cost of demolition. A substantial majority of the Carlton Street Footbridge Citizens' Advisory Committee also observes that restoration will improve access to Riverway Park and offer a significantly shorter walk to the

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Bridge sketch courtesy of Friends of Carlton Street Footbridge

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Newsletter edited by Frances Shedd Fisher

Annual Meeting



Photo by Jean Stringham

Erin Chute, Director of Parks and Open Space, with Brookline GreenSpace Alliance President, Fred Perry, at the Alliance's 13th Annual Meeting in June. Chure was guest speaker at the well attended gathering, held at the Olmsted National Historic Site on Warren Street.

Join the Alliance in Advocating for our Greenspace Heritage

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40 Webster Place
 Brookline, MA 02445

All contributions are completely tax deductible. Neighborhood Associations and Friends groups are invited to join the Alliance as Organizational members. Please call 277-4777 for information

Thanks to Jeffrey Wong and Shanghai Printing for help with this issue.

Fight for Your Green Rights

By State Senator Cynthia Stone Creem

As we all know, the efforts of the Brookline GreenSpace Alliance (BGSA) to preserve and enhance the wonderful green spaces that define Brookline complement the endeavors of the environmental community across our Commonwealth in protecting the open spaces that ensure the beauty and health of our State. In light of this fact, it only makes sense for BGSA, and its members, to be aware of and work for the passage of legislation on Beacon Hill that will protect Massachusetts' natural heritage and resources. Poorly planned growth and excessive development, whether in Brookline or the Berkshires, is detrimental to our quality of life, affecting air and water quality, and denuding wildlife habitats and New England's unique ecosystems.

In pursuing these goals, we are rising to the call made in our own State Constitution in declaring the protection of

our environment. Article 97 of the Massachusetts Constitution states, "The people shall have the right to clean air and water, freedom from excessive and unnecessary noise, and the natural, scenic, historic, and esthetic qualities of their environment; and the protection of the people in their right to the conservation, development and utilization of the agricultural, mineral, forest, water, air and other natural resources is hereby declared to be a public purpose."

To fight for your green rights, here are a few open space related bills that I support and you should as well. I urge you to contact State leaders to advocate for these bills:

S.1109 — An Act Protecting the Natural and Historic Resources of the Commonwealth. Once the state makes an investment of taxpayers' money in open space land, that land should be main-

tained for the purpose it was originally acquired. The proposed bill protects existing public open space from development by creating a stricter process for municipal and state land transfers. Protecting existing open space – especially in already densely developed cities – is essential to enhancing the quality of life for present inhabitants, and for ensuring the health and well-being of future generations.

S.1105 — The Massachusetts Livable Communities Act encourages communities and regions to envision their future and to plan accordingly. It also seeks to make the Commonwealth more proactive in terms of aligning state spending decisions with state goals, and encourages consistency in planning efforts at the state, regional and local level. Good regional and local planning is key to open space preservation.

H.3159 – An Act Authoriz-

ing the Establishment of Old-Growth Forest Preserves. This legislation directs the Secretary of the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs to conduct an inventory of State forests to determine the full extent and condition of old-growth stands in the Commonwealth. The Secretary may also establish a system of permanent old-growth forest reserves on state land to protect exemplary forest habitats, maintain biodiversity, and establish ecological benchmarks for assessing the health of forests statewide.

More information on all of these bills can be obtained from Senator Creem's office at (617) 722-1639

Legislative Updates



Photo by Jean Stringham

The Olmsted National Historic Site (Fairsted), 99 Warren Street, decorated for its July 4, 2001 celebration. A special program brought approximately 500 visitors to the site that day.

Brookline Appoints New Conservation Administrator and Tree Warden

Tom Brady, Conservation Administrator and Tree Warden.



This interview of Tom Brady by Frances Shedd-Fisher took place on May 30, 2001. Tom was appointed Conservation Administrator and Tree Warden for the town of Brookline in early January 2001. He and his wife Jeanette live in Woburn, where Tom is Chair of the Woburn Conservation Commission.

F: Tom, tell us a little about your background.

T: After I graduated from the University of Massachusetts I moved into a mix of ventures with some substantial landscape firms. About eight years ago I took a job in Watertown as their first Conservation/Preservation Administrator and Tree Warden.

F: So, you started out in the private sector.

T: Yes, I started out as a foreman at a tree services firm in Woburn and worked my way up to director of operations and from there transitioned into work for a multi-million dollar landscape construction firm. My background definitely has roots in the private sector.

F: What persuaded you to move from the private sector into government work, and what differences have you found in the culture and con-

straints of public versus private?

T: In the private sector I began to feel somewhat isolated and constrained. You move from job site to job site. There's a lot of continuity in your daily work, but there are limits on how far you can go and limits in terms of your sense of satisfaction, at least for me. It doesn't compare to the fulfillment and satisfaction of working with the public to protect the environment. Also, arboricultural services and landscape construction are extremely cyclical businesses. When it's there you work 14 hours a day, six days a week, and when it's gone, it's gone.

F: What about private versus public in terms of resources and professionalism?

T: At first it felt like I was being reined in because I had to follow public bid laws, and there are several layers of review involved. The benefit of the private sector is that if you want to get something done in a hurry, it's a little easier to make that happen, though sometimes the resources aren't there to get the job buttoned up. In the public sector you can have a range. You can have a community that has the resources but may not have the will; you can have a community that has the will but simply cannot muster the resources. And some communities, like Brookline, have both.

F: So maybe that's a good segue into your observations about Brookline so far.

T: The residents in both Watertown and Brookline are strong in what they feel should be done. The biggest difference between the two is the resources that are available to you here in Brookline. If there is a good scientific,

logical basis for you to do something here and you put that argument forth, more often than not you will be supported in that position and it will move forward. And if it does not, there's generally a pretty strong reason why it does not, and it is laid out. The other significant difference I see here in Brookline goes back to resources but from a different view—I've been very impressed with the amount of professionalism I see within the organization as a whole. People are working hard at their jobs and doing the best job that they can. And that starts at the top and goes down through everyone. For example, I just came from a meeting at the Health Department on the West Nile virus—the whole staff over there, it's the same level of professionalism. The level of support that you get in Brookline is high. Along with that, the level of review here is significantly higher than I have experienced anywhere else. From what I've heard speaking with other counterparts, this has been one of the most effective forms of local government we have in this area. I think that's reflected in the services.

F: So you see primarily a difference in mission between public and private sectors.

T: Yes, and there's a difference in how you accomplish what you do. Another difference here is that instead of nine bosses on the City Council as in Woburn and Watertown, in Brookline you have 240, or whatever the number is for Town Meeting. And that's a challenge.

F: It is a very activist community and standards are high.

T: Yes. When people ask me about Brookline, I say one word. I say 'process,' lots of process. And as long as you can understand the process and can live with that process, you're probably going to make out o.k.

F: So what about Brookline's open spaces? Relative to the size of the community, and to the user population, what's your sense of our sanctuaries and other open spaces?

T: The sanctuaries and the passive parks you have here in town are real gems. I've spent quite a bit of time in Hall's Pond and the D. Blakely Hoar Sanctuary and I've begun to explore Lost Pond. What impresses me about your passive parks is that the user groups have been in place for a long time; people have really taken a sense of ownership with them, which is vital for the long-term interests of these areas. And that is translated into increased resources and increased attention being paid to them by the Director of Parks, Erin Chute. The level of support that's there, both from the friends' side and the budgetary side says to me that Brookline understands the importance of these spaces and is doing everything it can to preserve them. Having said that, there are clearly some opportunities farther down the road where there are some good sized open space parcels that need to be looked at if they are going to be preserved for future generations.

F: Do you want to be specific?

T: That is a topic of discussion at the moment. It's good to begin this proactive process and move it forward. I have been extremely impressed with the areas Brookline has preserved. You can just go

Brady interview continued from page 4

into some of these areas and get lost. In D. Blakely Hoar you'd never know you're a few minutes from downtown Boston. It's simply gorgeous.

F: How are the hemlocks ?

T: They're doing o.k. We're about to start our injection treatments, probably next week. (Treatments to increase likelihood the hemlocks will survive the destructive effects of the parasite "wooly adelgid.") We have a fair amount of removals down there, but we're doing selective removals, trying to get the ones out that are being vectors for disease. We'll have to wait and see.

F: Tell me more about your role as "tree warden." What exactly does a tree warden do? Is that a new role in Brookline and, if so, why did we institute it? We've had a Tree Planting Committee forever.

T: The tree warden, under Mass. General Law, is responsible for all trees in a public right of way, everything that is defined as a public shade tree.

F: When you say 'public shade tree' does it go beyond street trees?

T: No, public shade trees are trees located in a public right of way, streets and sidewalks and pathways.

F: So you are not responsible for trees in parklands.

T: No. Park trees are a separate entity. The tree warden is responsible for the care, maintenance, upkeep, removal, replacement, planting, long-term management and short-term management of the urban forest.

F: What is your relationship to the Tree Planting Committee?

T: I work with the Tree Planting Committee. For many years the Tree Planting

Committee filled the role of tree warden, and I continue to work with them. I came on board in this new dual role because the Tree Planting Committee was asking for a presence at Town Hall, a professional to support their efforts. I work with George Barlow, the town arborist, and with the Tree Planting Committee. My role is to augment the pieces that are in place.

F: Where do park trees get protected and supervised?

T: George Barlow, working under the Director of Parks, is responsible for that realm. I've known George for years. He does a great job.

F: I guess the reason for a tree removal is usually safety or disease—what is the process when a tree is taken down?

T: Mass General Law calls for a specific public hearing process that needs to be followed whenever a public shade tree is removed—unless it's an imminent hazard. If it's a hazard I have the right to say, forget the hearing, it needs to come out now. For the park trees we now have a posting system. The removal has to be discussed at a public meeting.

F: Like a Park and Recreation Commission meeting?

T: Exactly. It would be on the agenda if somebody requests it.

F: What issues and challenges have you identified in these first few months in Brookline?

T: One of the biggest challenges I face is to protect the wetland resource areas scattered throughout Brookline. We need to protect those valuable resources because if you let the small issues build up they have a cumulative effect. They affect water qual-

ity; they affect ground water returns; they affect Sargent Pond (a privately owned resource); they affect Hall's Pond. It really builds in a hurry. So we need to make sure we have the tools in place to catch the small issues and handle them effectively through the notice and permitting process that's in place. The second challenge for the Commission is the whole open space issue.

F: What exactly do you mean?

T: Well, as we talked about before, open space is at risk. What are we looking at long-term? What are the long-term impacts of development? The whole comprehensive planning process. The Planning Director, Robert Duffy, has been terrific in terms of having discussions on that.

F: That really is a very complex issue in a built-up community like this where citizens have high expectations, and sometimes conflicting expectations. As you said, there are some incredibly valuable resources that could be at risk in the future.

T: Exactly. And the challenge is, quite frankly, balancing the other needs of the community with the needs for open space. The other challenge is the long-term management of the urban forest, this great forested community so close to Boston. It's one of the unique characteristics of the community. But we continue to put these trees under more and more stress. Asphalt, run-off, impermeable surfaces, reduced growing space, air pollution, acid rain—all represent stress. My challenge is to assure that what I do today will have a benefit fifty or sixty years down the road.

F: Is species selection part of that process?

T: Yes. Our goal is species diversity and proper arboricultural practices. We aim for the right tree in the right place at the right time, planted properly. So follow the credo and make sure the care is there for that tree for the next 30 or so years. A tree is really in its infancy for that long. It can take that long to get established, a challenge in an urban environment.

F: Other thoughts about Brookline and its landscape?

T: Not so long ago Brookline was the premier community for tree care, the premier for urban forestry. It was where everybody looked, not just in New England, but in the nation. And through election cycles and 2½—which everybody went through, they reduced quite a bit. And one of the challenges I'd like to address over the next many years is to start to build that back up again. My director, Erin Chute, has seen that, and it is reflected in the budget process we just went through. And it was reflected in a town meeting article that just went through (bylaw creating a Moderator's Committee to study tree conservation sponsored by Climate Change Action Brookline, an Alliance member).

F: There is public sentiment in that direction.

T: There is. And what I hope to accomplish in my role doesn't all go back to money. It also goes back to professionalism and how we do things on a daily basis. That's my challenge and my opportunity.

F: Thank you, Tom. Welcome to Brookline. We look forward to working with you.

Carlton St. Foodbridge - continued from page 1

Medical Area, schools and colleges. Park advocates and parks management professionals also know that increased use of a park increases its security, as clearly demonstrated in the restoration successes in Olmsted Park, among others. Riverway Park is linear in design, and the currently closed footbridge creates a sense of isolation from the neighboring community. Brookline Police Captain Peter Scott, a member of the Citizens' Advisory Committee and Brookline's Police Community Relations Officer advises, "Reopening the bridge will make Riverway Park and the neighborhood safer."

Other improvements recommended by the Feasibility Report are replacement of fencing along Colchester Street, landscaping, and appropriate street lighting to eliminate the unkempt, derelict appearance of the area between the Longwood T stop and Monmouth Court.

In summary, in support of reopening the footbridge, we quote a preeminent Olmsted scholar [Charles E. Beveridge, Series Editor, The Frederick Law Olmsted Papers, American University Washington, DC], "Clearly, the Carlton Street Entrance in its present condition is a crucial 'missing link' in the Emerald Necklace, a feature that Olmsted carefully designed to provide both convenient access and landscape amenity for many potential users of his park."

In November, Town Meeting will decide the fate of this historic treasure— let it deteriorate, or restore it as a link both to the Emerald Necklace and to our Olmsted heritage. The Board of the Brookline GreenSpace Alliance support our member, Friends of the Carlton Street Footbridge, in its advocacy efforts to restore and reopen the bridge. We believe Brookline has a responsibility to preserve our heritage by exercising proper stewardship of our portion of this Olmsted masterpiece, the Emerald Necklace, and its democratic vision of commu-

nity access to nature in the city.

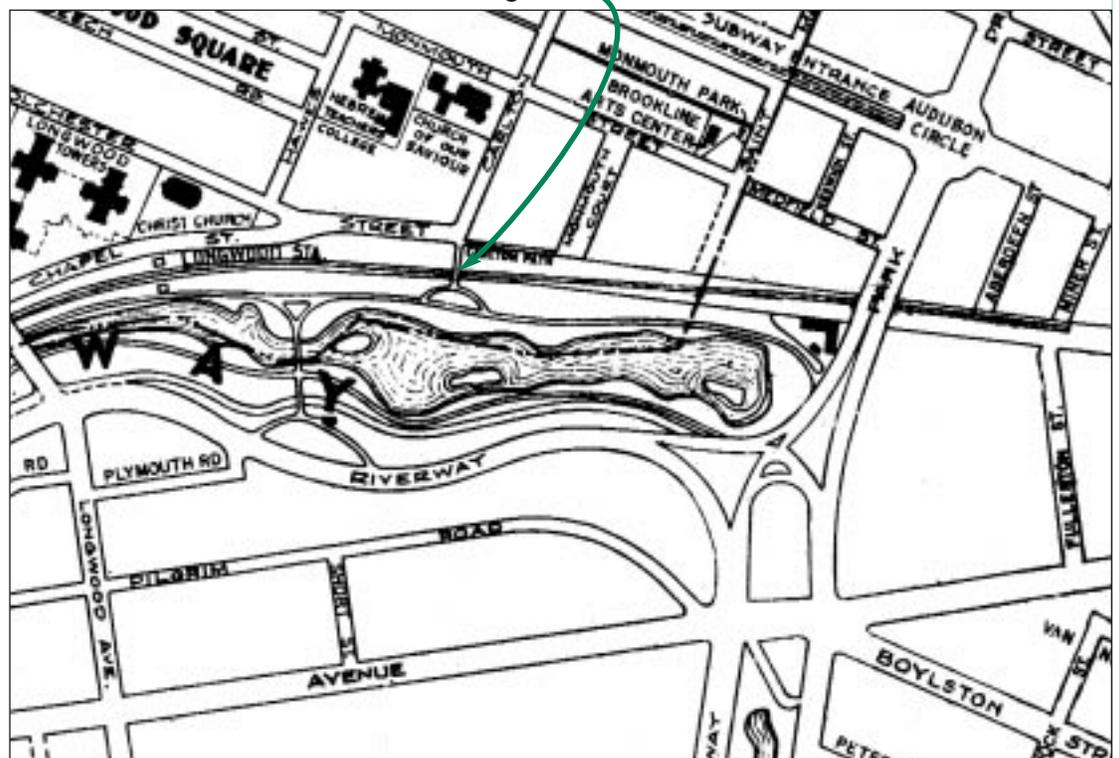
Grant money is almost certainly available for restoration, but first Brookline must take a stand.

Call your Town Meeting Member (see <http://www.townofbrooklinemass.com/Tmm/Tmmprecinct.asp> for their names, addresses and phone numbers) to have your vote for restoration count.

For more details, see <http://members.aol.com/emeraldnecklace/index.htm>, or send an email to members@emeraldnecklace.com, or call (617) 232-6083.

We believe Brookline has a responsibility to preserve our heritage by exercising proper stewardship of our portion of this Olmsted masterpiece, the Emerald Necklace, and its democratic vision of community access to nature in the city.

Location of Carlton Street Footbridge



Excerpts from the Parks Division Report for July & August 2001

Olmsted Park

The Nature Sanctuary/Historic Park Interns went through Olmsted Park in July from Willow Pond down to Route 9 and weeded and mulched all of the shrub beds. In August, the Park Rangers did follow up weeding in all of the shrub beds. Olmsted Park is a high maintenance area and this level of attention is required to supplement the regular maintenance crew activities.

Goose Control

The Brookline Park Rangers installed over 1000 feet of 2.5 foot fence in order to help control the geese population in the park at Leverett Pond. In addition, they put up associated signage to educate the public of the damage geese cause to park land and the environment.

Clark Park

Fence and stonewall repairs were made to the severely deteriorated back perimeter of Clark Park during August. The project involved removing thick invasive plant material from the former fence, removing the entire structure, completing masonry work on the stonewall, and installing a new fence.

Muddy River Restoration

The Muddy River Restoration project has been given a positive indication that it will be funded, in part, by the Army Corp of Engineers. The limit of funding is not yet known. The two municipalities are meeting with the USACE and one of their key engineers to evaluate and discuss flood control models.

Warren Field

The Town baseball athletic program is seeking authorization for the construction of aboveground dugouts at Warren Field. The baseball league is putting together a proposal for dugout construction and landscaping. The league would raise funds for the complete installation.

Allerton Overlook

A planting contract has gone out for Allerton Overlook in Olmsted Park that will follow the installation of irrigation. It is anticipated that the work will start on the irrigation system in early September followed by the turf restoration and planting in September and October. The Garden Club of Brookline has offered to adopt the oval at the crest and plant according to the Master Plan.

Longwood Mall

One of the large magnificent beech trees at Longwood Mall was determined to be a hazard tree in need of removal. Three certified arborists analyzed the tree and recommended prompt removal. The Town is currently in the process of putting together a replanting and maintenance plan for the Mall.

Eliot Center

Ann Blair put together a sketch for the Eliot Center for landscape and pathway improvements. The improvements will follow the Building Departments repairs to the facility (and preempt the Recreation Departments temporary move to that space).

Skating Rink

The restoration of the skating rink has begun at Larz Anderson Park. The new refrigeration system and associated improvements are scheduled to be completed in November.

Devotion School

The Division completed a new plant installation with benches and trash receptacles in the front of Devotion School. The improvements also included a timber retaining wall, plant material, new trees, benches and bike racks at the front of the school. A significant drainage problem was addressed with this enhancement.

Memorial Planting

The memorial planting at Baker School was completely revamped. The design was recreated and all new material installed. The new installation is a significant improvement.

Park Rangers Environmental Education

The Brookline Park Rangers have been completing both their rounds and interpretive programs. The Rangers have held tours at the D. Blakely Hoar Sanctuary and Larz Anderson Park in addition to numerous children's programs at the Recreation Center and Playgrounds. Their programs have been well received by the participants.

Hall's Pond

The Hall's Pond Restoration Project has been moving along well. The uplands planting is complete, a new cedar lined pathway through the uplands is complete, and the nature sanctuary interns

continue to remove invasive vegetation. The majority of fence work has been completed and the boardwalks have been installed (still awaiting handrails at the overlook points).

Two abutters to the Hall's Pond Sanctuary have granted the Town a Conservation Easement to extend the perimeter of the sanctuary boundaries. The Conservation Easement has been planted with native vegetation and enables improved circulation around the pond.

The Friends of Hall's Pond and the Department of Public Works are coordinating a Grand Opening Celebration of Hall's Pond Sanctuary for the Spring of 2002. Prior to the Grand Opening the Town intends to have scheduled tours and special events for the public.

Sanctuary Brochures

The Division hired an illustrator to review graphics for Lost Pond, D. Blakely Hoar, and Hall's Pond. We are seeking his assistance for improvements to the current sanctuary map brochures.

Fred Perry, BGSA President, selling flower bulbs at the Festival in the Park, September 9, 2001. Photo by Jean Stringham



Trail Guide for Chestnut Hill Open Spaces Planned

The Chestnut Hill Garden Club has researched nine open spaces in Chestnut Hill, and is nearly finished with a Trail Guide describing these public areas. The spaces include the D. Blakely Hoar Sanctuary, Lost Pond, Dane Park, the Walnut Hills Cemetery, Sawmill Brook Conservation Area, Houghton Garden, Webster Conservation Area, Kennard Park and Hammond Pond and Woods. The Guide will have maps, descriptions of flora and fauna, geologic features and trail information. For information, write to the Club's Conservation Chairman, Elisabeth Mundel at 329 Perkins Street, Boston 02130.

Upcoming Events

The Brookline GreenSpace Alliance will be offering a series of sanctuary tours, starting with Lost Pond on February 3. More information to follow in the winter newsletter.

Alliance Update

Brookline GreenSpace Alliance
40 Webster Place
Brookline, MA 02445



Moderator's Committee Considers Tree By-Law for Brookline

The fall 2000 Town Meeting voted to establish a Moderator's Committee to study the desirability of a tree preservation ordinance for Brookline. If, after consulting with the public, the committee determines that such an ordinance would be worthwhile here, a bylaw will be drafted for consideration by Town Meeting. Moderator Sandy Gadsby appointed Fred Perry, Brookline GreenSpace President and sponsor of the article to create the study committee; Corliss Engle, a member of the Tree Planting Committee; Adam Kahn, a member of the Conservation Commission; Erin Chute, Director of Parks and Open Space; and Joe Geller, Selectman, to the committee. Tom Brady, the recently appointed Conservation Administrator and Tree Warden, is serving as staff aide to the committee.

According to Tom Brady the concept requires balancing conservation goals with property rights, an intricate process. Brady observed, however, "It has been done in other parts of the country. In fact, New England is the last part of the country to consider this. Lexington is probably the leading local model. They had a

good public process in Lexington. Newton started off with a comprehensive approach, but by the time they finished nobody seemed happy with it. I believe our Moderator's Committee will devote the effort it deserves to get it done right."

The committee held a public hearing in April. According to Fred Perry, issues discussed at the hearing included what trees, if any, to protect; how such an ordinance would be administered and enforced; what sanctions should be imposed on violators of such an ordinance and what exemptions should be made. Perry noted, "It would be premature to say what the outcome will be. However, at this time the committee is leaning toward protecting or replacing all healthy trees of a yet to be determined size that would be taken down as part of a development or redevelopment project that would normally be subject to the existing Planning Board process. This would eliminate the need for any new bureaucracy."

Perry indicated that the committee hopes to have something for the spring 2002 Town Meeting to consider.

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