



1094 CHESTNUT STREET
NEWTON, MA 02464

November 9, 2016

TO: Newton Community Preservation Committee

Needham Community Preservation Committee

I am pleased to support the application of the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority for Community Preservation Act funding to restore the railings on top of Echo Bridge linking Newton and Needham. I offer this support as a native of Needham, a resident of Newton Upper Falls for more than sixty years, the longest serving Newton City Councilor/Alderman, and the Founding President of the Friends of Hemlock Gorge. Echo Bridge was built in the Nineteenth Century to carry the Sudbury Aqueduct across the Charles River from Newton to Needham, but its value to both communities far exceeds this utilitarian purpose. It is the second largest stone arch in the United State, and it provides spectacular views of Hemlock Gorge Reservation that was one of the key elements of the 1893 Metropolitan Park Plan created by renowned landscape architect Charles Elliot. Its beauty is enjoyed by residents of the Newton Upper Falls Historic District (of which it is a key element) and the adjacent section of Needham. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as part of the Historic District and of the Greater Boston Water Supply System. Unfortunately, the cast iron railings atop the Bridge are severely rusted. Water has destroyed or damaged many parts of the railings marring the beauty of the site. The project proposed by MWRA will restore the railings to their original role as a beautiful element of the Bridge. The Friends of Hemlock Gorge are proud to work in partnership with the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation to remove trash and invasive plants from the Reservation and to preserve and enhance the river banks. The Friends are equally proud to work with the MWRA to mobilize support for the funding and implementation of the Railings Reconstruction.

Sincerely,

Brian Yates

Newton City Councilor at Large
President, Friends of Hemlock Gorge



To Whom it May Concern,

We are the Upper Falls neighborhood group who organizes the annual Feast of the Falls on top of the Echo Bridge aqueduct. The event is a neighborhood celebration focused around Echo Bridge. It is a free catered feast for 400 neighborhood guests at one single table that runs down the aqueduct on the Needham side of Echo Bridge.

This annual event celebrates Hemlock Gorge, Echo Bridge & the Upper Falls neighborhood. The bridge serves as our very dramatic entrance to the Feast.

We are writing to express our full support for the effort to preserve the history of Echo Bridge by fully restoring the original railings and removing the temporary chain link safety fence.

Echo Bridge is a true local monument. It is at the heart of our neighborhood and its physical history should be preserved and honored.

Seana Gaherin
Christopher Osborne
Jerry Reilly (617) 999-5300

Feast of the Falls Organizing Committee



Setti D. Warren
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Barney S. Heath
Director

November 16, 2015

To the Chairman of the CPC and
President of the Newton City Council

The 19th century Echo Bridge aqueduct spans the Newton and Needham sides of the Hemlock Gorge and is located in the Newton Upper Falls Historic District. Echo Bridge is individually listed in the National Register and is significant for its architecture, engineering and role in the City of Boston's development of a major water system to meet the growing need for water after the Civil War. The bridge was constructed to carry a section of conduit of the Sudbury Aqueduct across the Charles River to the Chestnut Hill Pumping Station and is one of the earliest long masonry bridges in the United States.

The cast iron railings on the bridge have significantly deteriorated over time and are in desperate need of restoration from both safety and architectural standpoints. Pedestrians and commuters walk over the bridge daily and the railings are an iconic "crowning" feature of this highly visible structure. Conservation efforts, led by Newton Representative Ruth Balser began more than 10 years ago with the appropriation of \$250,000 by the state for the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) to finance repairs to the structure. At that time a study to repair the railings was undertaken by a highly qualified historic preservation architectural firm. The original post-by-post survey and new engineering work provided by the MWRA construction division have provided a solid foundation for the current project. The cast iron components will be replicated with new ductile cast iron castings that will not only preserve the beauty and architectural details of the railings but also provide a lasting material solution. Unobtrusive screening will be incorporated into the reconstructed railings to address current building code and safety requirements.

At the most recent Newton Upper Falls Historic District Commission (NUF HDC) meeting on November 11, 2016, the commission unanimously voted to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for the reconstruction project based on the application submitted by the MWRA that was developed in cooperation with the city of Newton, the town of Needham, the Friends of Hemlock Gorge and the Upper Falls community to undertake the historic railing project. The commission strongly endorses the unique public/ private partnership that has envisioned and prepares to implement the reconstruction of this precious historic asset.

Therefore, the NUF HDC urges the Newton Community Preservation Committee and the Newton City Council to approve the CPA funding request for the railing reconstruction project.

Sincerely,

Donald Lang
Chair, Newton Upper Falls Historic District Commission

Xc: Barney S. Heath