



August 13, 2018

To the members of the Community Preservation Committee

The Board of Directors of the Newton Tree Conservancy strongly support moving ahead with the appraisal and legal advice necessary to achieve permanent protection of Webster Woods.

We won't repeat all the important reasons cited in the application, but would like to emphasize that preserving Newton's largest contiguous open space is vital to avoid any more diminution of our urban tree canopy. With increasing summer temperatures, and more frequent high-volume rain events, the heat island and storm water mitigation benefits of our tree canopy are ever more important. Faced with an aging street tree population that is less than half of what it once was, and so many additional trees lost to development, we need to preserve all the trees that we can.

Perhaps just as important, in our increasingly crowded city, stressed with worsening traffic, we need the respite of parks and open space for public health, both physical and mental. There has been much research on the health benefits of being near, and even just seeing trees. A notable recent example was the 'natural experiment' of rapidly declining urban tree canopy in the Midwest due to the Emerald Ash Borer killing millions of ash trees — a study which found higher death rates from lower respiratory and cardiovascular disease (both associated with poor air quality and stress) in EAB-affected areas compared to unaffected areas. And the mental health benefits of what the Japanese call Shinrin-yoku — “taking in the forest atmosphere” — have recently gotten much attention. Webster Woods is an ideal place for experiencing immersion in nature without having to travel a great distance.

We steadfastly support achieving permanent protection of Webster Woods, while stressing that we are mindful of other demands on CPA funds. We therefore support funding the appraisal necessary to ensure that the city is able to determine and pay only a fair price.

It's unfortunate that this land was sold by DCR in the first place, and that it was sold with only a time-limited use restriction, rather than a permanent development restriction. It's also unfortunate that the prior administration did not act on the Mishkan Tefila Woods item in the seven-year action plan of the 2014-2020 Open Space and Recreation Plan, to acquire the woods when Mishkan Tefila was selling, rather than putting the current administration in the position of having to chase down the horse after the barn door was left open. It's an example of how difficult and expensive it is to regain control of public land once it's relinquished. But the city must make the best of the situation as it now exists, and we are grateful that the mayor and the Webster Woods Advisory Panel have taken this on.

Creating and preserving parks and open space such as Webster Woods is a perfect use of Community Preservation funds. Webster Woods -- including the privately owned portion -- represents a classic "public good" in economics. It's open to all, and one person's use of it does not diminish its availability to others. We urge the CPC to help keep it that way for future generations.

Newton Tree Conservancy Board of Directors

From: Gordon Orloff <gordace9@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, October 3, 2015 1:35 PM
To: Alice Ingerson
Subject: Webster Conservation Area, Newton Center

Dear Dr. Ingerson,

As you may know, the parcel of woods owned by Mishkan Tefila that is located in the heart of the Webster Conservation area is on the market. Like many of the nearby residents, we are in the Webster Woods many times a week, all year round. These woods are heavily used and enjoyed by those of us who treasure a peaceful, natural spot in bustling Newton Center.

The parcel is located in the middle of the woods, running down from the current parking area. It is a part of and not visibly distinguishable from the surrounding conservation land, and is crossed by trails. Development of that parcel will change completely, irrevocably and for the worse the nature of the woods.

I know that many important projects compete for Community Preservation funds. However, it is hard to imagine a more deserving project. Therefore, this email is to request that you bring to the Committee's attention this serious potential loss of woodlands and work with the Committee to effectuate a purchase.

Feel free to contact us with any questions. I know there is substantial neighborhood support for preserving these woods.

Thank you for your consideration and assistance.

Gordon Orloff
Annie Cole
123 Langley Road
Newton Center, 02459

From: Alice Ingerson
Sent: Monday, October 05, 2015 5:17 PM
To: 'gordace9@gmail.com'
Subject: 300 Hammond Pond Parkway and Newton's CPA funding process

Dear Mr. Orloff,

Thank you for your email. ...I have alerted the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) informally to the current discussions about [this] property among various community groups and City bodies. ...

Most local public land dedicated to passive recreation and ecological value in Newton is in the custody of the Conservation Commission, which is therefore the usual sponsor of proposals to the CPC related to such lands. That Commission is already participating in the ongoing discussions about 300 Hammond Pond Parkway.

I will keep your email on file for forwarding to the CPC in case they receive a future proposal related to the Hammond Pond Parkway property. ... Please note that although neighborhood support is sometimes sufficient for small or low-cost projects, the CPC generally looks for evidence of City-wide support and City-wide benefits for larger, higher-cost projects.

Sincerely,
Alice Ingerson

Alice E. Ingerson, Ph.D.
Community Preservation Program Manager
City of Newton, Massachusetts
www.newtonma.gov/cpa
aingerson@newtonma.gov, 617.796.1144

From: Gordon Orloff <gordace9@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 16, 2018 5:45 PM
To: Alice Ingerson <aingerson@newtonma.gov>
Subject: **Webster Woods Proposal to Newton CPC**

Dear Ms. Ingerson,

Yes, Yes and Yes! As nearby residents we use these woods year round.

To lose them would be a travesty.

This beautiful land is a special and valuable resource that should be preserved and we support the efforts to do so.

Gordon Orloff and Annie Cole
123 Langley Rd.



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS NEWTON

PO Box 610207 Newton, MA 02461 www.lwvnewton.org
617-383-4598 Email: info@lwvnewton.org

September 13, 2018

Alice Ingerson
Community Preservation Committee Program Manager
Newton City Hall
1000 Commonwealth Avenue
Newton, MA 02459

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RE: CPC Proposal on Webster Woods

Dear Alice:

LWVN has reviewed this proposal and recommends that the Community Preservation Committee approve the funding requested for an appraisal and outside legal counsel regarding Webster Woods.

Our reviewers noted the following:

- this project fits fully into the goals presented in the Newton Comprehensive Plan;
- this site is one of the last undeveloped parcels of land in Newton, and is an important link between two large areas;
- the preservation of the woods, especially the vernal pool, would be greatly affected by Boston College's planned use of the site (i.e. salt storage);
- there must be a conservation restriction on this site.

Questions noted are:

- what Boston College's timeline is and if there are exchange opportunities;
- about future funding for the actual purchase. It appears that this funding will be requested from the CPC, as funding from the state cannot be expected for a property taken through eminent domain. Some private donations are expected, however. At the same time, there are a number of large projects that are expected to ask for CPC funding, and so some balance is needed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susan Flicop".

Susan Flicop
President, LWVN

From: isabelle <ialbeck@comcast.net>
Sent: Thursday, September 13, 2018 10:46 AM
To: Alice Ingerson <aingerson@newtonma.gov>
Subject: \$ for Webster woods

Dear Ms Ingerson,

Please forward to all the members of the committee. Thank you for all you do,

I. Albeck

Dear Committee members,

Please, please vote to give \$100,000 towards preserving Webster Woods. In these days of climate change, it is imperative that we stop any loss of trees and green areas: we need them for our physical health (fighting pollution and absorbing potential floods) as well as our mental health (restorative place to exercise and let nature reduce everyday stresses).

Thank you so much,

Isabelle Albeck, 240 Windsor Rd, Waban, 617-332-9226