



Ruthanne Fuller
Mayor

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Sept. 18, 2019

Dear Honorable City Council, Sen. Creem, Rep. Balsler, Rep. Khan and Rep. Lawn

I am now taking action to permanently save Webster Woods.

I have engaged in multiple conversations with Boston College over the past year and a half about reaching an agreement allowing Newton to purchase these woods. They see this land as critical to their future but we know it is critical to ours. After devoting significant time to these conversations, the time has come to move forward.

The property owned by Boston College at 300 Hammond Pond along the parkway is over 25 acres in total; I am focused on saving all of the woods, all 17+ acres outlined in blue in the map below. Boston College purchased the property from Congregation Mishkan Tefila in 2016. It includes the former temple, parking lots and woods.



Preserving the largest contiguous forest for Newton in perpetuity is essential. We must protect this diverse eco-system and the habitat it provides for birds, mammals, amphibians and insects. We must

ensure our residents have access to the woods, rocky ledges and the vernal pool on these 17+ acres and can connect to the 88+ acres of forest to either side cared for by the City of Newton and Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation.

I have been ably assisted in this action by the members of the Webster Woods Advisory Panel, led by Beth Wilkinson of the Newton Conservators, and with a lot of help from City Councilor Lisle Baker, Webster Woods neighbor and environmentalist Ken Kimmell, who is Co-Chair of the Friends of Webster Woods, and Community Preservation Committee Vice Chair Dan Brody. Thanks also go to Solicitor Ouida Young and Chief Environmental Planner Jennifer Steel.

“Mayor Ruthanne Fuller’s decision to acquire Webster Woods will save a natural treasure. I am most grateful for the sustained work of the Executive Committee and the full Webster Woods Advisory Panel in laying the groundwork for the preservation of the woods,” Beth Wilkinson said.


While I remain open to achieving a mutually acceptable agreement with B.C., I have decided to initiate a process of acquiring the property’s 17+ acres of pristine woods through the City’s power of eminent domain. In the coming weeks and months, I will work with the Community Preservation Committee, the Conservation Commission, and the City Council to provide the necessary authority and funding to acquire the woods.

I have looked carefully at the cost to acquire Webster Woods and will be approaching the Community Preservation Committee for the funding as part of their open space funding reserve. Community Preservation Act funds come from our taxes and can be used only for land preservation, outdoor recreation facilities, historic preservation or affordable housing.

I want to thank all of you who have taken the time to share with me your deep concern that these woods be preserved for future generations. I ask for your continued support in the coming months as we look to secure the necessary funding.

We expect to formally move forward with a request to the Community Preservation Committee in the coming weeks. We will provide a lot more information and have plenty of opportunities for questions and comments. Details on the cost will also be forthcoming.

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ruthanne Fuller". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ruthanne Fuller

Mayor of Newton