

Waltham Land Trust

is a non-profit corporation dedicated to preserving our community's natural resources for the future through education, open space acquisition and protection.



JOURNAL FALL 2005

DRISCOLL, MCCARTHY TO BE HONORED AT WLT ANNUAL MEETING

Karen Patterson

The Waltham Land Trust will hold its sixth Annual Meeting at 7 PM on October 26th at the Girl Scouts' Great Hall, 265 Beaver St in Waltham. In addition to electing new Directors, the Land Trust will honor two people who have played a tremendous role in protecting the environment in and around Waltham. Daniel Driscoll, Senior Planner for the Department of Conservation and Recreation will receive an award for his heroic, 17 year effort to make the Upper Charles River Greenway a reality. Waltham Mayor Jeanette McCarthy will receive an award for her leadership in preserving open space in Waltham. Dan Driscoll will be the main speaker of the evening and will present a slide show on various aspects of his work. Mayor McCarthy will also be asked to make a few brief remarks.

Dan Driscoll

In 1988, the Metropolitan District Commission began the Upper Charles River Greenway project under the leadership of Dan Driscoll. The first important task was to determine the exact boundaries of the MDC park lands. Once the boundaries were determined, Dan began the slow and arduous task of reclaiming MDC land that had been encroached upon over the years by residents and businesses, paved over illegally and turned into waste sites. As the land was reclaimed and cleaned up, Dan was able to turn his attention to laying out paths and the accompanying vegetation, the design for a foot bridge, solicitation of additional parcels, signage, and more. Today, with the Greenway nearly complete, residents of Waltham and surrounding communities have access to a continuous path from western Newton to Watertown Square. For Waltham residents, this means miles of additional recreational

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COMMUNITY PRESERVATION ACT FORUM CLARIFIES BENEFITS



AMY ROTHSTEIN

Speakers at the CPA Forum: from left to right, Frank Maloney (Waltham Historical Society), Dan Melnechuk (WLT & Growing Waltham's Roots), Dan Mathews (Selectman from the Town of Needham), Alex Marthews (Executive Director of WATCH), Scott Siderman (WLT)

Jenn Dean

On Thursday, September 15, at the First Parish Church, Growing Waltham's Roots held a community forum to inform the public about the Community Preservation Act that will appear on this Fall's ballot. The Waltham Land Trust wholeheartedly endorses the Community Preservation Act. If passed, the act will raise approximately \$3.5 million for Waltham to spend on affordable housing, open space, and historic preservation. Daniel Melnechuk, chair of Growing Waltham's Roots, explained that a state matching fund would match, dollar for dollar, a 2% surcharge on real estate taxes. The 2% surcharge amounts to approximately \$40 per year, or just 11 cents a day, for the average Waltham household. The matching funds come from a pool of money created by filing charges for each real estate financing and transfer across the state. Currently 100 other communities are collecting the 100% match.

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Annual Meeting *continued from page 1*

trails, and even a means to bike to work in the Boston metropolitan area. Overall, the Greenway improves public access to the River, links the Upper Reservation and the surrounding communities with the Boston and Cambridge path system, enhances wildlife habitat and reduces non-point source pollution.

Dan Driscoll grew up in Newton and spent a great deal of time on the Charles during his youth. He received undergraduate and graduate degrees from the University of Vermont in outdoor recreation, environmental studies and natural resources planning. He is an avid skier, cyclist and hiker and was inspired to work on the Charles River project due to his love for nature and desire to give something back to the River he grew up with. In addition to the tremendous amount of time and energy he has put into the Charles River Greenway, he has also played a key role in the Mystic River Parklands, Alewife Brook Reservation, and the partition of the Metropolitan State Hospital.

Mayor Jeanette A. McCarthy

When the Waltham Land Trust was formed in 1999, one of the first priorities of the new organization was to inventory the remaining undeveloped land in Waltham and prioritize parcels for open space protection. Once compiled, the Land Trust presented the priorities list to the City. One of the top five priorities was the 26 acres of undeveloped land behind the Our Lady's Church on Trapelo Road. Thanks to Mayor McCarthy and members of the City Council, the City of Waltham now owns that property and will preserve it largely as open space, providing a crucial link in the Western Greenway, and continued flood control benefits due to the extensive wetlands on the site.

Mayor McCarthy understands the importance of preserving open space for the tangible and intangible benefits it provides for wildlife and humans, but also for economic reasons. Preserving open space, while requiring an upfront cash investment, pays for itself and more in the long run because that land incurs very little maintenance or service costs from the City. On the other hand, commercial or residential developments require water and sewer, police and fire, education services and more. These costs nearly always outweigh the amount of income brought in by taxes.

Mayor McCarthy is a life-long resident of Waltham, MA. She attended Waltham public schools and is a graduate of Waltham High

School, Boston College, Suffolk University Law School, and Northeastern University. Prior to being elected Mayor, Ms. McCarthy served two years as a Councilor-at-Large, and served six years on the Waltham School Committee. She was also employed for 7 years as a city solicitor and became Mayor of Waltham in 2004. Mayor McCarthy had a successful private law practice, and also volunteered her time for many organizations including the American Cancer Society, Greater Waltham Association for Retarded Citizens, and Waltham Partnership for Youth. In addition to the acquisition of the property behind Our Lady's Church she also negotiated the acquisition of the 7.38-acre site of the former Gaebler School for the City. She continues to work towards the preservation of a number of other open space parcels in the city.

WLT Board Members Inge Uhler and Lesya Struz display a map of the Charles River Greenway at a WLT "Pack a Picnic" event held at the Forest Grove Reservation on the banks of the Charles River.



DAVID KEHS

In addition to Melnechuk, others speaking on behalf of the Act were Scott Siderman of the Waltham Land Trust, Frank Maloney of the Waltham Historical Society, Alex Marthews, the Executive Director of WATCH, and Dan Mathews, a selectman from Needham. Mathews, also a member of the CPA study committee in the town of Needham, describes what happens after the CPA is passed in a community, and how a Community Preservation Committee generates the recommendations that either get a thumbs up or down by the community's legislature (in Waltham's case that will be the City Council).

Most notably, Mathews stated that when Needham's Community Preservation Act Study Committee interviewed people within communities that had already passed the CPA, *every community they interviewed was glad they had passed the Act*. One of the main reasons cited was that city budgets often don't have room for conservation of buildings and land. One interviewee said "we get to do things that are good for the community that we wouldn't normally get to do."

Alex Marthews, Executive Director of WATCH, spoke about people who grew up and currently work in Waltham, yet can't afford to buy a home on "any kind of normal salary." He also noted "older people on fixed incomes who see rents going up year after year...can't find a place to live near the lives they have made." Marthews clarified the kind of affordable housing that Waltham needs: not public housing, as when the Housing Authority puts up "a big block of government owned units, badly designed, badly managed, and out of keeping with our community." The housing that WATCH builds, and the housing that the CPA would fund, would be "small-scale units built with public and private money, actively managed and integrated into the community." Marthews cited the housing already existing on Charles Street and River Street: small-scale attractive units that are affordable and blend into the community.

Sideman, speaking on behalf of the Waltham Land Trust, cited the need to balance development with open space. Precious little open space is left in Waltham to preserve. He mentioned 378 "at risk" acres, 505 "potentially threatened" acres, and 777 currently "protected" acres as being potential recipients of CPA funds. If Waltham had already passed the CPA, Sideman noted that Waltham could have taken the Berry Farm parcel near Polaroid by eminent domain at a fraction of today's cost. Looking forward, Sideman cited the creation of the Western Greenway, the Great Pond Conservation Area, and the Wayside Rail Trail as projects that would directly benefit from the CPA.

An Informational Forum regarding the Community Preservation Act

Thursday October 27th 2005

7:00pm

First Parish Church Waltham

50 School Street

(one block off Main at School & Church)

All Waltham citizens are invited to learn about the Community Preservation Act which will appear on this November's ballot. If you are not registered to vote, voter registration forms will be available.

Maloney, of the Waltham Historical Society, expressed sadness and indignation that so many of Waltham's beautiful historic buildings are gone, stripped from our history forever, simply because the city did not have the money to preserve them. He also noted that the Waltham Historical Society collection (not to be confused with Al Arena's Waltham Museum) is housed in a dusty back room and closed to the public. One has to make an appointment to see any of the collection. He expressed the hope that should the CPA pass, the Waltham Historical Society would be able to renovate an old house and make it into a proper history museum.

After the panelists finished, they took questions and answers from the audience. One gentleman, a genuine supporter of the CPA, nonetheless was concerned that his landlord might raise his rent a disproportionate amount. Melnechuk noted that the average rental increase would be \$1.65 to \$3.65 per rental unit per month, while Dan Mathews added that if this particular landlord increased the rent per unit by \$25 a month to cover such a small increase, the renters should take it up with the landlord. This same gentleman, while concerned about his rent, noted that we should've passed the CPA 25 years ago. (The CPA has only been available since 2000). Another audience member noted during the Q & A that the CPA might mitigate regular taxes from going up, because it alleviates pressure on the city budget, and the bond debt for projects would be lower. The majority of audience members spoke in favor of the CPA.

The CPA measure will pass if a simple majority votes Yes to adopt it. The Waltham Land Trust would like to remind all of its members to make sure that they get out and vote on November 8 in favor of the CPA, and to please remind friends, neighbors and colleagues to do the same! For more information, go to growingwalthamsroots.org, or call Daniel Melnechuk at 781-883-7597.

WESTERN GREENWAY GAINS GROUND ON THREE FRONTS

Karen Patterson

In recent months there have been several pieces of good news about the Western Greenway, an area of over 1,000 acres of interconnected undeveloped land and cultural resources in Waltham, Lexington, and Belmont. The first piece of good news was that Lot 1, on the grounds of the old Middlesex Hospital, received a reprieve from the Division of Capital Asset Management's efforts to "surplus it" or sell it off to the highest bidder (see accompanying story). Second, the City of Waltham acquired the 26 acre parcel of land behind Our Lady Comforter of the Afflicted Roman Catholic Church from the Archdiocese of Boston. That parcel is a connection in the Greenway. And third, a coalition called the Friends of the Western Greenway has formed and begun working in earnest to make the vision of the Western Greenway a reality.

As with most open space acquisitions, the purchase of the Our Lady's land took several years from the time of identification of the land as an open space priority, to the actual execution of the purchase and sales agreement. The City of Waltham's Committee to Study Land Acquisition for the Preservation of Open Space was formed in August 2000 and began investigating properties in the city that deserved protection. From the very beginning, the committee expressed interest in acquiring the 26 acres of undeveloped land behind Our Lady's Church on Trapelo Road. Upon meeting with representatives of the Archdiocese of Boston, the committee learned that the Archdiocese had been planning for several years to use the property for a 240-unit mixed-income housing development. This news surprised city officials and local residents, as well as the parishioners of Our Lady's Church.

After further discussions, the Archdiocese offered to sell the property to the city for \$2.5 million, plus a building site suitable for the construction of 100 units of affordable housing. Negotiations continued for several months, but eventually they stalled. Presumably, the request for city land was the stumbling block. In late 2002, the financial situation of the Archdiocese had changed considerably. At that time, the state was looking for a site for a courthouse and the Archdiocese proposed that the state purchase the Our Lady's parcel for that purpose. That proposal was not accepted, but it seemed to indicate a shift in the Archdiocese's plans for the property. Unfortunately, negotiations between the city and the Archdiocese did not resume. In September 2003, the Waltham Land Trust attempted to prompt further discussions by publishing a list of five top

priority parcels that should be acquired by the city. One of those was the Our Lady's parcel.

In early 2004, the Waltham City Council passed a resolution asking newly-elected Mayor Jeannette McCarthy to re-open negotiations with the Archdiocese of Boston, now headed by Bishop Sean O'Malley. By August 2004, the two parties had agreed on a purchase price of \$4,457,000. The Waltham City Council approved the purchase and the remaining details involving surveys and easements were negotiated and sorted out. The property was officially transferred to the City in June of 2005, adding a key piece of the Western Greenway to the "protected" column.

Members of the Waltham Land Trust have already walked the property and identified potential trail sites. The property will link the old Middlesex Hospital land to the north of Trapelo Road with several conservation areas to the south, including the Coleman-Stanton property and the Storer Estate. However, there are a number of parcels between Our Lady's and Coleman Stanton that still need to be preserved.

The Friends of the Western Greenway (FOWG) is a newly formed coalition of organizations from Waltham, Lexington and Belmont working to make the Western Greenway a reality. To date, the groups involved in FOWG are the Mass Audubon Habitat Sanctuary, Waltham Land Trust, Citizens for Lexington Conservation, and the Belmont Citizens Forum. One of FOWG's first items of business is to request that the governing bodies of each municipality sign on to two letters. The first letter, to the State Greenways Program, asks for recognition of the Western Greenway as a valuable regional amenity. The hope is that recognition of the Greenway as a common goal will lead to coordinated efforts to secure the remaining parcels and preserve them as open space. The second letter, to the Division of Capital Asset Management, requests that Lot 1 be transferred to the Department of Conservation and Recreation for permanent preservation as open space. Once these letters have been signed by the municipalities and submitted to the respective agencies, FOWG will follow up with meetings between local and state officials. Meanwhile, FOWG will be working to revise the Western Greenway brochure, develop a logo, and plan for trails and signage along the parts of the Western Greenway that are already open to the public. Stay tuned for more information as we make progress on this exciting project.

UPDATE ON MIDDLESEX COUNTY HOSPITAL PROPERTY

David Kehs

Since the last issue of the WLT Journal, there have been noticeable changes on the former Middlesex County Hospital property. Pulte Homes, which bought the 26-acre development site from JPI, began work on building demolition, site clearing and decontamination. Pulte will be operating under the Special Permit conditions that were previously negotiated between the City of Waltham and JPI. As part of the prior agreement between JPI and Walnut Roseland (the owner of the 11-acre development site in Lexington), Pulte is also demolishing the buildings on the Lexington side of the property, even though no development plan has been approved for the Lexington site.

Plans for a townhouse development on the Walnut Roseland property have stalled over the issue of the secondary access road required by the Town of Lexington's By-Laws. A proposal to allow secondary access through the JPI property in Waltham was rejected several times by the Waltham City Council. But the issue may be raised again. Pulte Homes and Walnut Roseland have entered into an agreement allowing emergency access between their properties if such access is approved by the City of Waltham at a future date. Furthermore, under the terms of the purchase of the building site from JPI, Pulte Homes has agreed to cooperate with Waltham Roseland, or any future owner of the Lexington development site, in attempting

to obtain approval for emergency access through the Waltham site.

The sale of Lot 6 (the 6.93 acre parcel with 5.26 acres in Lexington and 1.67 acres in Waltham) was closed on Friday, April 29, 2005. This is the parcel that was auctioned in August 2004 under the "fast track" auction law (Outside Section 548). The purchase price was \$5,610,000, which corresponds to an auction bid of \$5,100,000 plus a 10% buyer-paid commission of \$510,000. The buyer was identified as "Lexington August Realty Trust" of Watertown. There has been no information about the new owner's plans for the property.

The fate of Lot 1 (the 53.93-acre parcel with 47.47 acres in Lexington and 6.45 acres in Waltham) is still undecided. Plans to auction the parcel under the "fast track" auction law (Outside Section 548) were put on hold because the issue had sparked so much controversy. In June, the state's Division of Capital Asset Management (DCAM) sponsored a presentation by Sasaki Associates, who had studied the possibility of a housing development on the property. Sasaki showed that up to 48 homes could be built under current zoning and wetlands regulations. Fortunately, the "fast track" auction law expired without being replaced before any action could be taken on the property. In the coming legislative session, it is likely that new procedures will be adopted for the disposition of surplus state land, and it is possible that special legislation will be introduced to determine the fate of Lot 1. Concerned citizens are encouraged to pay attention to these issues and to make their opinions known.



DAVID KEHS

Site clearing in process on the Middlesex County Hospital property. A water detention basin is planned for the area shown in the foreground.

WLT INTRODUCES NEW PROGRAM MANAGER

Stephen Rourke

The Waltham Land Trust is very pleased to introduce our new Program Manager, Karen Patterson. Karen recently relocated from Morristown, NJ to Natick, MA and joined us officially on August 1st, 2005. Karen is a native of Massachusetts, but had been living out of state since graduating from Clark University in 1992. She and her husband Jeff, their sons Ben (5) and Finn (1) and two Labrador Retrievers Allie and Magic are very happy to be back in Massachusetts!

Prior to joining the Waltham Land Trust, Karen was a Project Director for the Great Swamp Watershed Association where she gained extensive experience working for non-profit organizations and with municipalities to protect rapidly diminishing open space resources throughout the Great Swamp watershed, located just 25 miles west of Manhattan. As a Project Director she was responsible for GIS mapping and analysis, the water quality monitoring program, many aspects of outreach and education, and the GSWA Conservation Area. In addition, she was a member and then Chair of Morristown's Environmental Commission. During her tenure there, she led the Commission's efforts to complete the Town's first-ever Environmental Resources Inventory, obtained a



Program Manager Karen Patterson visiting Stonehurst

grant to carry out the town's first-ever Open Space and Recreation Plan, and helped secure County funding for the purchase of an important wetlands parcel threatened with residential development.

As the part-time Program Manager for the Waltham Land Trust, Karen will have a wide variety of responsibilities. She will be working with the Development and Membership Committee to strengthen both the organization's finances and its membership base so that the Land Trust can continue to fulfill its mission of protecting Waltham's open spaces. She will coordinate volunteer activities (see related article "Think Globally, ACT Locally!") and provide important support to the WLT's Land Preservation Committee, including: maintaining the GIS mapped inventory data, researching and writing case studies and other documentation appropriate for acquiring, protecting and preserving open space resources, and maintaining contact with property owners, the City Council, other stake holders, and the public on open space issues. Finally, she'll keep the WLT organization running in top shape, providing general, administrative and finance support to the Board of Directors, coordinating communication with members and donors, and maintaining the office. Please feel free to get in touch with Karen via email at kpatters@walthamlandtrust.org, phone at 781.893.3355 or by visiting her in the office at 240 Beaver Road.

Giving Stock?

Did you know that The Waltham Land Trust accepts gifts of stock? A gift of appreciated stock may have considerable tax benefits for you. Information your broker will need to make a gift of stock is as follows:

Fidelity
DTC No. 0226
For Benefit Of (FBO)
Account No. Z42-761230

For more information or to notify the Waltham Land Trust of a gift of stock, please leave a message for Diana Young at 781-893-3355 or send an email to info@walthamlandtrust.com.

THINK GLOBALLY, ACT LOCALLY!

Karen Patterson

Remember that saying? It's more important now than ever before. With national and international problems often leaving us feeling helpless to act, the Waltham Land Trust introduces our new resource for local action. Each Journal issue will highlight ways for our members to ACT locally in preserving Waltham's environment. In between Journal issues, please check our web-site (www.walthamlandtrust.org) for current volunteer opportunities.

Throughout the Waltham Land Trust's six year history, many members have received, and willingly responded to, phone calls from Outreach and Education Chair Inge Uhler seeking volunteers to help with one activity or another. In fact, up until August 1st, 2005, the Land Trust was an all volunteer organization, with the Board of Directors handling all administrative, fundraising, membership, outreach and project work. Without volunteers, the Land Trust would not exist. And, now that the Land Trust has a staff person to provide a regular presence in the office and oversee project work, we can better utilize the talents of our members. So whether you've volunteered in the past, or have always meant to but never quite got around to it, please get in touch with Karen and let her know how you would like to help. Below we've highlighted three areas we currently need help in, but if you have skills not mentioned here that you would like to offer please do so. Karen can be reached at 781.893.3355 or via email at kpatters@walthamlandtrust.org.

Jericho Hill Cleanup Day

November 5th 8:30 AM – 12 PM. Put on your long work pants and shirts and join us for some much needed cleanup and maintenance of Jericho Hill. The site has long been used as an out of the way party place and has lots of broken glass that needs to be cleaned up. In addition, some trail maintenance is needed. Come for all or part of the morning. Please call Karen for directions to the meeting site.

Committee Members needed!

The Board of Directors has three regular committees: Land Preservation, Development and Membership, and Outreach and Education.

Land Preservation meets in the WLT office at 7:30 PM on the 2nd Monday of each month to keep abreast of issues impacting various parcels of land around town and make decisions about advocacy efforts needed to further the goal of protecting Waltham's open space.

Development and Membership meets in the WLT office at 7 PM on the 3rd Tuesday of each month and is

just starting its new Business Partnership campaign. If you have ties to one or more businesses in Waltham and would be willing to solicit their Partnership with the Waltham Land Trust you could be a big part of getting this important initiative off the ground.

Outreach and Education does not have a regular meeting time, but it truly is the face of the organization, planning and hosting the various recreational, social and educational events for the Land Trust.

Please consider joining one of these important committees and contributing your time, skills and energy to a very worthy cause. You don't have to come to every meeting to be a member, there are plenty of ways to be involved.

Green Space Blues Jam Planning Committee

We need a few good volunteers to help plan and coordinate this year's Green Space Blues Jam. This is a fun and exciting event and we could use a few energetic, creative people to get started on planning for the spring 2006 event.

UPCOMING EVENTS

October 16th, 4 – 6 PM

Pack a Picnic at the Blue Heron Bridge, Watertown. Look for the umbrella at the southeast corner of the Stop and Shop lot.

October 19th, 7 – 8:30 PM

WLT Development and Membership Committee meeting. New members or observers always welcome!

October 26th, 7 – 9 PM

Waltham Land Trust Annual Meeting in the Great Hall at the Girl Scout Reservation, 265 Beaver St, Waltham.

November 5th, 8:30 AM – 12 PM

Jericho Hill Cleanup. Call the office at 781.893.3355 to register and for directions.

November 8th, Election Day

Vote YES on the Community Preservation Act #1

November 14th, 7:30 – 9:30 PM

WLT Land Preservation Committee meeting. New members or observers always welcome!

November 15th, 7 – 8:30 PM

WLT Development and Membership Committee meeting. New members or observers always welcome!

Waltham Land Trust Journal

is published by Waltham Land Trust, Inc.

PO Box 541120

Waltham MA 02454-1120.

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Waltham Land Trust, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) charitable corporation, and is a member of the Land Trust Alliance and the Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition.

An electronic file (pdf) of this newsletter is available on our web site, <www.walthamlandtrust.org>.

Officers: Stephen Rourke (President), David Kehs (Vice Pres.), Marie Daly (Clerk), Diana Young (Treasurer)

Directors: Katherine Buttolph, George Darcy III, Lynn Harvey, Daniel Melnechuk, Joris Naiman, Marc Rudnick, Scott Siderman, Lesya Struz, Inge Uhler.

Waltham Land Trust's Mission

We are a group of Waltham citizens who want to save open space in our city. Our mission is to acquire, preserve or restore land in a way that

- ♦ balances conservation and access,
- ♦ maximizes the natural value of land,
- ♦ reduces habitat fragmentation, and
- ♦ permanently protects and conserves natural resources;

So that

- ♦ public appreciation of natural resources grows,
- ♦ native habitat is preserved and restored, environmental quality of life is improved (air, water, noise and light pollution are reduced),
- ♦ biodiversity is increased, and
- ♦ a legacy of conservation is perpetuated in Waltham.

Please send any comments to the return address below, or email to <memberlink@walthamlandtrust.org>.

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Waltham MA 02454-1120

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Your final newsletter? Complimentary copy? Please renew your membership or consider joining today!

Vote Yes on Question 1

Election Day is Tuesday November 8th, 2005.

Adopt the Community Preservation Act to

- **Mandate that our tax dollars are used to improve our quality of life.**
- **Get Waltham *our* share of matching state funds for *our* priorities.**
- **Give a little and gain a lot!**

Please renew or join

If the mailing label on this issue of the Journal says *Your Final Newsletter*, it's time to renew your membership. If it says *Complimentary Copy* please consider joining today. To renew or join please use the enclosed membership application and return to:

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