



Belmont Citizens Forum

Pleasant Street Building May be Saved

By Sue Bass

The beautiful Art Deco building at 948-1000 Pleasant Street that once housed Peter Fuller Dodge and Isuzu is not on the verge of demolition after all. Paul Tocci bought the building for \$5 million on December 1 from sisters Claire and Lorraine De Milia. Tocci says the building is structurally sound. He is renovating it and looking for tenants. While Tocci won't say he'll never replace it with a larger building, he plans to keep it for the next five to 10 years.

"We thought we'd have to tear it down," Tocci said. But a structural engineer told him, "Don't take this building down. It's fine."

The building has been vacant for more than 15 years, and in recent years, it was allowed to deteriorate. Rain and snow fell inside; grass grew there.

Rain and snow fell inside; grass grew there. After the first big storm this winter, Tocci had to plow inside as well as outside.

After the first big storm this winter, they had to plow inside as well as outside, said Paul's brother Adam. Windows and skylights were broken. Copper wiring and even copper flashing were ripped from the building.



SUSAN JONES

The former De Milia Building, South Pleasant Street.

Now, the windows, doors, roofs, and skylights are being fixed, graffiti are being painted over, wiring replaced, and new lighting installed. The handsome building is attracting attention. Paul Tocci said he has been approached by a gym and a karate studio and was talking to Dunkin' Donuts. He's open to hearing from other potential tenants for the 21,500-square-foot building. Tocci wants to put awnings up and "make it look right. Hopefully with an eye to five to 10 years down the road" building a larger development.

The showroom, whose graceful curves are accented by buff and clay-colored brick, was built in 1945 by Joseph De Milia, the father of Claire and Lorraine De Milia, for his Pleasant Street Garage, a Dodge dealership. De Milia had already been in business on the site for several decades. The Tocci brothers recalled that their uncle

Edsel Tocci's bricklaying company did most of the masonry work on the current building—so the two families' connection goes way back. "They [the De Milia sisters] knew enough about my family; I knew enough about theirs," said Paul Tocci. He noted that he grew up in town and graduated from Belmont High School in 1977, although he now lives in Sudbury.

Tocci recently sold his abutting business, Waverly Landscape Associates at 1010 Pleasant Street, though he remains a regional vice president. Perhaps the sale gave the De Milia sisters the idea that he might be looking for a new investment.



SUSAN JONES

Snow inside the South Pleasant Street building.

Belmont Citizens Forum

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Belmont Citizens Forum Inc. is a not-for-profit organization that strives to maintain the small-town atmosphere of Belmont, Massachusetts, by preserving its natural and historical resources, limiting traffic growth, and enhancing pedestrian safety. We do this by keeping residents informed about planning and zoning issues, by participating actively in public hearings, and by organizing forums. Our *Newsletter* is published six times a year, in January, March, May, July, September, and November. Published material represents the views of the authors and not necessarily those of the Belmont Citizens Forum. Letters to the editor may be sent to P. O. Box 609, Belmont MA 02478 or to info@belmontcitizensforum.org.

At any rate, Tocci said, they walked over, had an hour-long meeting, said they'd like to retire and sell, and the deed was quickly done. "It was the biggest deal Paul has ever done with the least amount of paperwork," said Adam Tocci, who handles much of the paperwork for his brother's investments.

This event is astounding Belmont real estate circles.

They walked over, had an hour-long meeting, said they'd like to retire and sell, and the deed was quickly done. "It was the biggest deal Paul has ever done with the least amount of paperwork," said Adam Tocci.

Many people have tried to buy the building, some even thought they had bought the building, but the sale always fell through. A desire for an active business there even drove the town to obtain an MBTA grant to study combining the town's two commuter rail stations in a new station on the site. That study has now been dropped. When asked to comment about the sale, Claire DeMilia said, "We have been working to sell the property for over 18 years."

The news that the building will be saved for now cheered Arleyn Levee, a nationally known landscape historian and preservation consultant who serves on Belmont's Historic District Commission. "It's a character-defining building," she said. "Someone took a great deal of care to create this façade. It's unique. It's certain unique to Belmont. There are other Art Deco buildings, but nothing of its character."

Sue Bass is a Director of the Belmont Citizens Forum.



SUSAN JONES

Interior view, 948-1000 South Pleasant Street.



SUSAN JONES

Graffiti inside 948-1000 South Pleasant Street.

Alewife Station Becomes Regional Bike Hub

By Meg Muckenhoupt

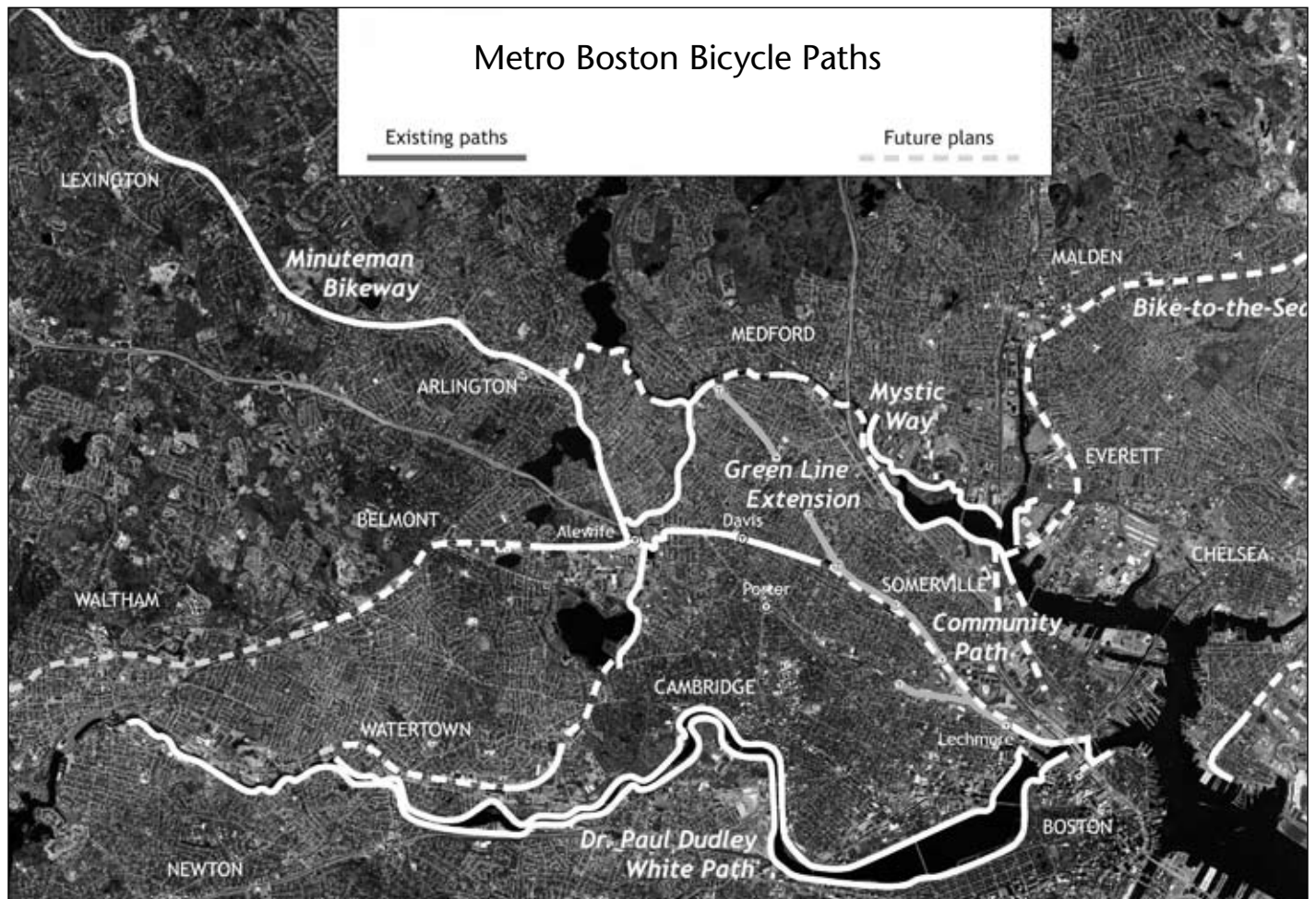
When the community path from Brighton Street, Belmont to Alewife station is completed, Belmont walkers, joggers, and bicyclists will face a happy choice: Should they hop on the T, or bike on to Arlington? Or Davis Square? Or perhaps pedal to the Mystic River? Within a few years, travelers will have even more choices. Alewife Station is rapidly becoming a bicycle transportation hub for Boston's west suburbs.

Three of the five bicycle paths that converge at Alewife are currently under construction; all of them will be complete by 2012. Looking beyond next year, even more paths are proposed that would carry riders and walkers to the Charles River, Assembly Square, Lechmere, Revere—and even Northampton.

Five Paths Give Travelers Options

Five multi-use paths converge at Alewife today. The venerable Minuteman Bikeway, open since 1993, links Alewife with Bedford via Arlington and Lexington and is used more than 2 million times a year in all seasons, according to the official Minuteman web site. The Brighton Street-to-Alewife path is familiar to many Belmont commuters as a hard-packed dirt path alongside the Alewife Reservation. Mass Highway is paving the path with a four-season surface and installing a fence separating the path from the commuter rail tracks at the Brighton Street end.

To the north, Mass Highway is constructing the Alewife Brook path (also known as the Minuteman Connector) that will run on both sides of the Alewife Brook. The Arlington side is



Present and future bicycle paths converging at the Alewife MBTA station.

a stone-dust path, which slows bikes down, but is still usable by cyclists, parents with strollers, and wheelchair users. The Cambridge/Somerville side is being paved, so cyclists can ride towards Medford more rapidly.

Connecting Alewife to the east is the Linear Path, which circles Cambridge's Russell Field on the way to Davis Square. Travelers who wish to ease their eyes with views of Fresh Pond can travel on sidewalks along the Alewife Brook Parkway before arriving at the Pond's path system.

More Paths To Come

Fresh Pond is a mere way station for path planners. The real goal is to extend a bicycle path from Alewife all the way to the Dr. Paul Dudley White bicycle path alongside the Charles River. Then, Alewife commuters would have an easy route from Alewife to Newton, Harvard Square, and Boston. The last two winters, all 17 miles of Charles River paths have been plowed by New Balance Boston in partnership with the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation.

The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation recently signed a 99-year lease with the MBTA for a rail trail on a right-of-way from Berlin, Mass., to Waltham's border with Belmont.

Watertown has a plan to build that very path on a lightly used rail line right-of-way. The first portion of that path opened last October—although from an Alewife perspective, it isn't a very useful route. The first segment of the Watertown Branch path, as the Watertown path is called, links School Street and Arlington Street in Watertown. It doesn't quite reach the river, and it certainly doesn't get to Fresh Pond, but it does run along the proposed Fresh-Pond-to-the-Charles route. The Watertown Town Council and Watertown Department of Public Works

Community Path Sites

Minuteman Bikeway <http://www.minutemanbikeway.org/>

Somerville Transportation Equity Partnership <http://www.somervillestep.org/>

Friends of the Community Path (Somerville) <http://pathfriends.org/scp/>

Medford Green Line Alliance <http://www.medfordgreenline.org>

Bike to the Sea <http://www.biketothesea.com/>

are working on a plan to develop another short section of the path between Bacon Street and Main Street.

The reason for this piecemeal development is that Watertown doesn't own the entire right-of-way. The segment connecting Grove Street to Fresh Pond is owned by Pan Am Railways. Pan Am filed papers to legally abandon the right-of-way in 2005 but did not pursue the process; the tracks still belong to Pan Am Railways. Part of the proposed path near the Arsenal Mall is blocked by a Lexus dealership which built into the right-of-way. The segment from Watertown's Town Hall to School Street is owned by abutting property owners. Other segments are still in early planning stages.

The Mass Central Rail Trail is Coming

The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation recently signed a 99-year lease with the MBTA for a rail trail on a right-of-way from Berlin, Mass., to Waltham's border with Belmont. As of this writing, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council is planning to release its report later this spring on potential bicycle routes through Belmont that would connect with that trail.

To the north and east, several fragmented multi-use trails run along the Mystic River and Mystic Lakes. The 2009 Mystic River Master Plan published by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation calls for a continuous path from the Lower Mystic Lake to Everett. At present, none of the missing link paths are either being designed or constructed, although the city of Somerville is discussing the "Wellington Undercarriage" path to extend the existing Mystic River Recreational Path under Route 28 to link the Ten Hills neighborhood with Assembly Square.

If these paths are built, cyclists could connect to the "Bike to the Sea" path. This bicycle and pedestrian trail from the Malden area to the beaches of Lynn and Revere is planned along the abandoned Saugus Branch right-of-way from the Malden area to the beaches of Lynn and Revere.

The Green Line Extension Path Debate

Somerville plans to extend the Linear Path, which runs from Alewife to Davis Square, to Lowell Street, and onward to North Point,



SUSAN JONES

East Coast Greenway

Cyclists will be able to connect to an even larger trail network, if the East Coast Greenway reaches its goals.

The Greenway is a 2,900-mile network of trails planned from Florida to Maine. The route passes through Boston and west along the Charles River before joining the Mass Central Rail Trail, according to trails advocate Craig Della Penna.

Speaking in Arlington on February 17, Della Penna also predicted that the Mass Central trail, which passes through Belmont, would be completed through to Northampton "in 8 to 10 years."

Adam Auster

Cambridge, in the right-of-way alongside the planned MBTA Green Line extension. The first segment of this trail will be constructed in 2011; a second segment reaching the future Washington stop is planned, but its \$4.5 million funding was removed from the state Transportation Improvement Plan for 2011-2015, and its future is in doubt.

The problem with this path is its direction. Extending the path from Davis Square toward North Point will serve many bicyclists, commuters, walkers, and joggers; but the proposed Green Line extension doesn't stop at Davis Square. Instead, it continues past Lowell Street through Medford to Tufts University and potentially to Route 16. Local residents are concerned about the traffic the extension will generate. Extending the bicycle path as well could help keep more travelers who wish to use the Green line on bikes and off the road.

This year, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council is holding a series of meetings to gather public input about the proposed Route 16 stop. Whether these meetings will result in concrete plans for multi-use paths is not clear.

Meg Muckenhoupt is Editor of the Belmont Citizens Forum *Newsletter*.

Selectman Candidate Answers BCF Questions

Every year, Belmont voters elect one member of the town's three-person Board of Selectmen. This year, incumbent Ralph Jones is running unopposed. The Belmont Citizens Forum asked the candidate to respond to the following questions. Jones was given eight questions and limited to 800 words total, or an average of 100 words in response to each question.

1. The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation recently signed a 99-year lease with the MBTA to create a rail-trail from Berlin, Mass. to Waltham's border with Belmont. How can we speed up development of a community path linking the Alewife-Brighton path and this rail-trail?

Jones

The Citizens Forum has advocated a rail-trail along the railroad tracks from Blanchard Road to Belmont Center. This proposal has been opposed by residents of Channing Road.

To resolve this conflict, I suggest that the members of the Citizens Forum engage in a facilitated meeting with Channing Road residents to identify shared interests that might lead to a compromise solution.

2. How can the state help Belmont become more sustainable while preserving its small-town atmosphere?

Jones

I see no inherent conflict between sustainability and a small-town atmosphere. The efforts of Sustainable Belmont and the Belmont Energy Committee can be implemented without compromising the character of our town. Most do not require any financial assistance from the state, but they do benefit from more stringent building codes that emphasize energy conservation.

3. How would you go about preserving the Uplands?

Jones

As a Selectman, I think that all actions that could be taken have been taken. The Conservation Commission is pursuing an appeal of a decision of the Massachusetts DEP. Local legislators passed House Bill 701, but the Governor did not sign it.

The developer (O'Neill) has applied for a building permit. The permitting process is governed by state law and is implemented by the Inspector of Buildings. I think it would be inappropriate for Selectmen to interfere with the work of the local Inspector of Buildings.

4. How can our region maximize local aid?

Jones

To answer this question, I am going to define "our region" as those nearby cities and towns with which we are trying to develop regional solutions for service delivery. There is some financial assistance coming from the state to facilitate regionalization and energy conservation, and we have been active in pursuing such assistance when available.

5. How can we reduce flooding?

Jones

The way to reduce flooding, as explained by Will Brownsberger in the May/June 2010 issue of the Belmont Citizens Forum *Newsletter*, is to clean drainage channels and reduce the area covered by impermeable surfaces that convert rainfall into runoff. We also can try to reduce or mitigate the adverse effects of flooding (e.g., sanitary sewer back-ups and flooded basements).

The town is spending almost \$6 million on a flood-control project that is designed to provide relief to homeowners in the Winn Brook neighborhood, where there have been the most frequent reports of flooded basements. The project involves reconstruction of some of the storm water pipes in the neighborhood, construction of a storage conduit that can hold

storm water during wet weather events, and release that water at a later time, and reduction of inflow and infiltration (I&I).

Hydraulic models of sewer flows show that large volumes of storm water runoff, which should be dispersed on land or into storm drains, is flowing into our sanitary sewer system. This causes sanitary sewer pipes to surcharge, sending wastewater into our storm water drains or into basements.

6. How can the town weigh the benefits of development and abutter concerns?

Jones

Weighing the benefits of development and abutter concerns is the responsibility of the Planning Board, and the Planning Board undertakes this task through public hearings involving both developers and abutters. As a Selectman, I have argued that the Board of Selectmen should not try to usurp the authority of the Planning Board.

7. What opportunities do you see to improve efficiency in town government?

Jones

I have focused on several areas for improved efficiency this year: restructuring the human resources function, selecting a single labor counsel for both schools and general government, and consolidation of the mainte-

nance of buildings and facilities into a single department that would serve both schools and general government.

We also have been seeking new opportunities for regionalized service delivery in many areas—a new initiative each month. Ultimately, I would like to see a stronger Town Administrator who could exercise greater management authority over all non-school services provided by the town.

8. With all the sewer work done in Belmont and elsewhere, why is half of what Deer Island processes still clean water? What should Belmont do to reduce the problem?

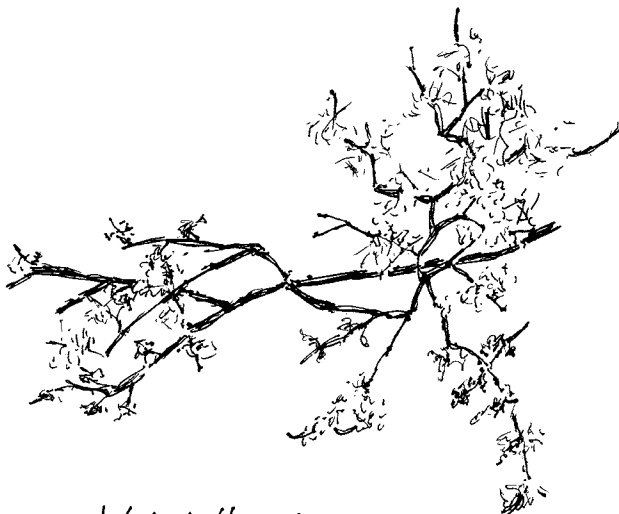
Jones

Deer Island processes clean water through an expensive treatment plant because cities and towns in the MWRA region continue to send storm water into the collection system that carries sanitary sewer wastewater to Deer Island.

For Belmont to fully eliminate storm water flowing into the MWRA wastewater system, we would need to have a sanitary sewer system with maximum mechanical integrity, i.e., minimize leaks into the storm drains, or vice versa. We also will need to eliminate all illegal inflows into the sanitary sewer system.

This is a huge undertaking. To ensure that our sanitary sewers have as few leaks as possible, we will need to re-line or replace the remainder of our system that has not already been repaired. To eliminate illegal connections (e.g., downspouts connected to the sanitary sewer system) requires a costly process of smoke testing to identify the connections, disconnect or close them, and then enforce the closures.

For an excellent summary of the issues associated with Belmont's storm water flowing into the MWRA wastewater system, see Sumner Brown's article, "Belmont Flood Data Shows Leaking Sewers" in the BCF Newsletter, May/June 2010.



Witch Hazel

Winn Brook was Once in the 'Great Swamp'

By Sumner Brown

Before property in Belmont was valued at \$1 million per acre, our town included part of the Great Swamp around what is now Fresh Pond. Arlington and Cambridge shared the Great Swamp with Belmont.

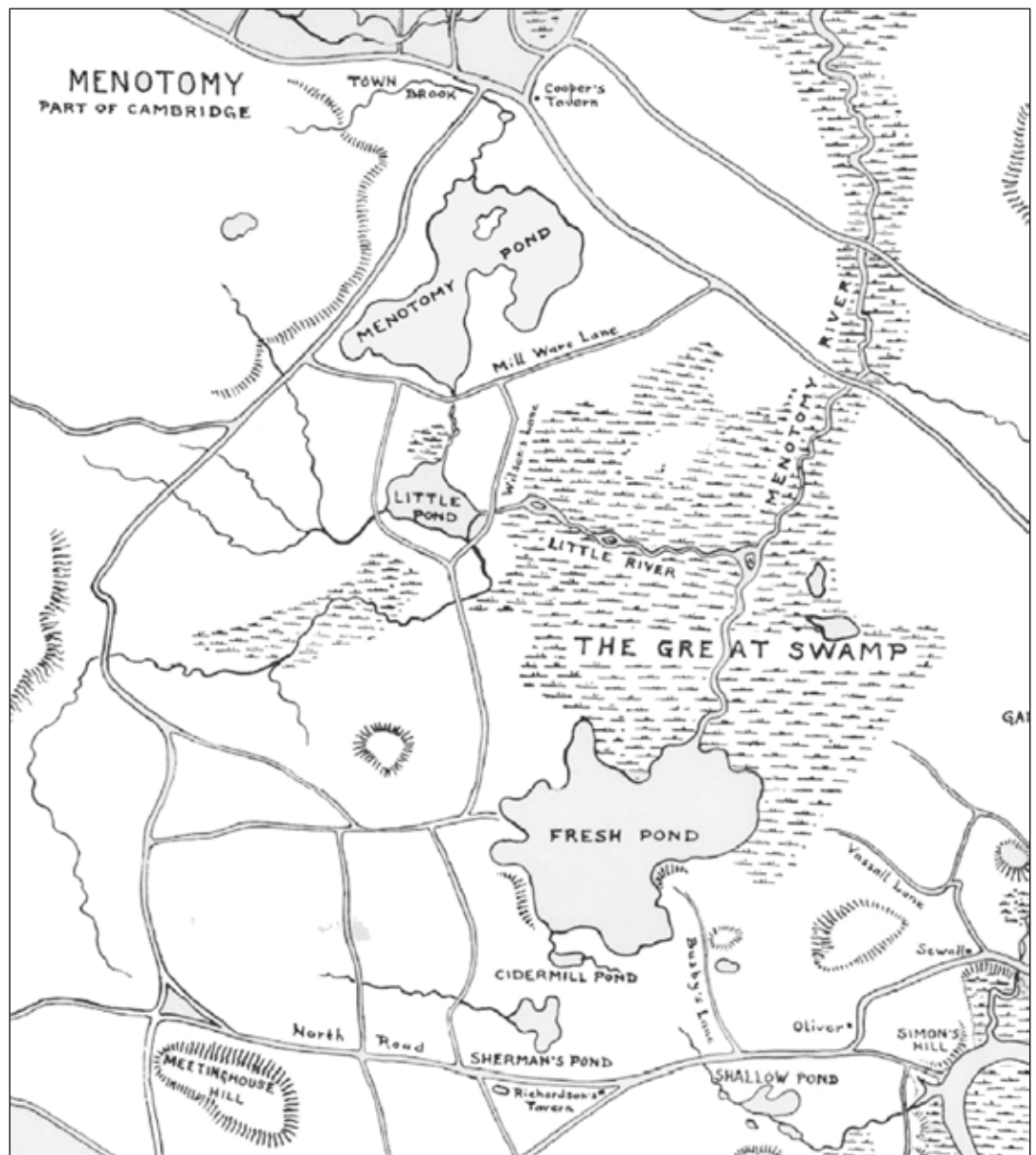
A hundred years ago, the Great Swamp was fertile farmland. If you looked south from Pleasant Street toward what is now the Winn Brook neighborhood, you could see farm land extending toward the railroad line. The railroad was high enough that it did not get flooded. A bit of flooding in the spring caused no great trouble for farming. Now that the surrounding land has been developed, though, the Great Swamp's flooding causes serious trouble for Arlington, Cambridge, and Belmont, as we know.

Sheila Cook, author of a history of the area titled *The Great Swamp*, gave a talk on the topic on February 13. Her talk and her book described the natural and cultural history of the Great Swamp. This area was transformed by the glacier that covered Belmont with a mile of ice 15,000 years ago. It left clay deposits that were recently used to make brick and the flat topology that was called

the Great Swamp.

If the Great Swamp had not been developed decades ago, most development there would be now prohibited by the Wetlands Protection Act. More accurately, Winn Brook, East Arlington, and West Cambridge would have been protected from the consequences of wetland development

Sumner Brown is a Director of the Belmont Citizens Forum



The Great Swamp as of 1777, in a 1925 map drawn by Samuel F. Batchelder

Mystic River Film Shows How Sewers Overflow

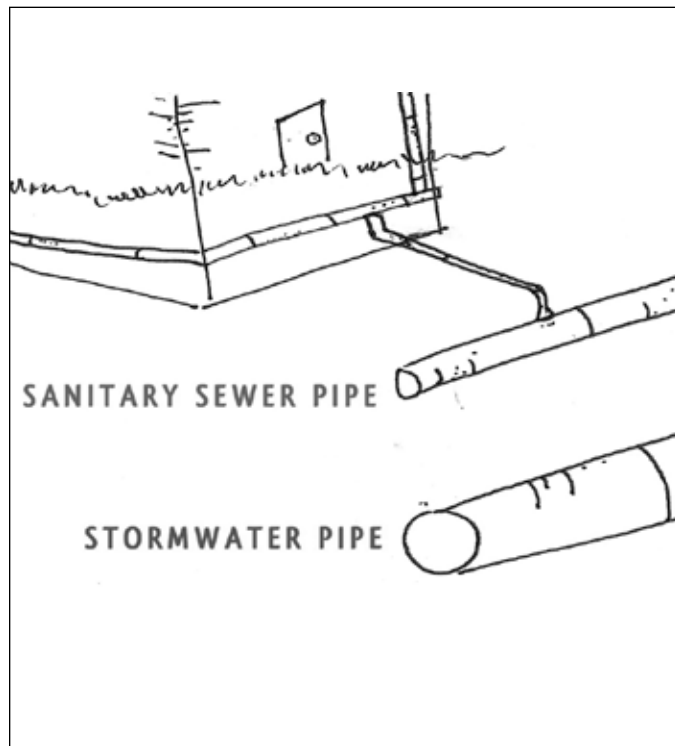
In the fall of 2010, four Emerson college students created a documentary film about the Mystic River and its pollution by sanitary sewer overflows (SSOs). Titled *The Mystic Unseen*, the 10-minute short film includes an animation explaining how SSOs get started.

The drawings below are stills from the film, drawn by Carly Silverman and Sarah Ginsburg. The text is excerpts of narration by Patrick

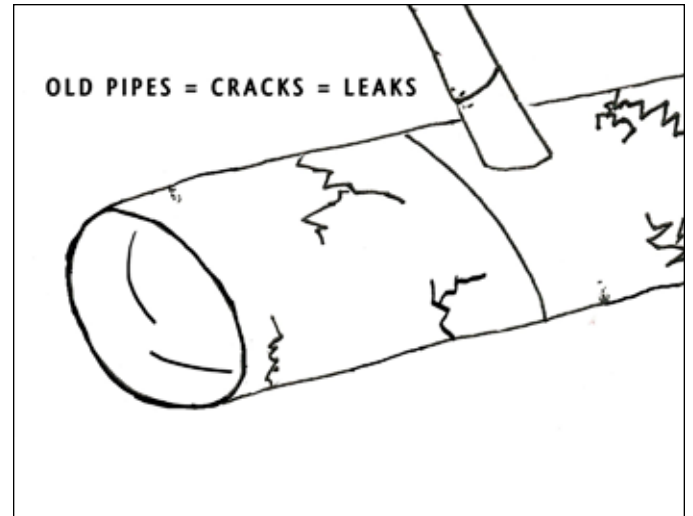
Herron, Mystic Monitoring Network Director, Mystic River Watershed Association.

The entire film can be viewed at the Mystic River Watershed Association's web site, www.myrwa.org

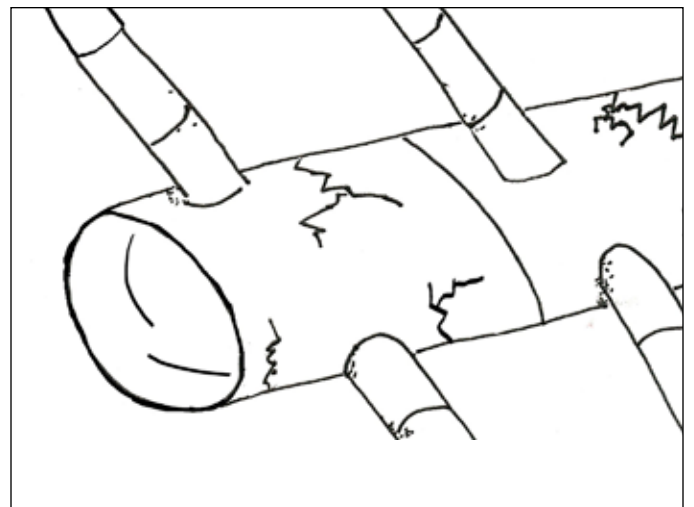
Drawings by Carly Silverman and Sarah Ginsburg



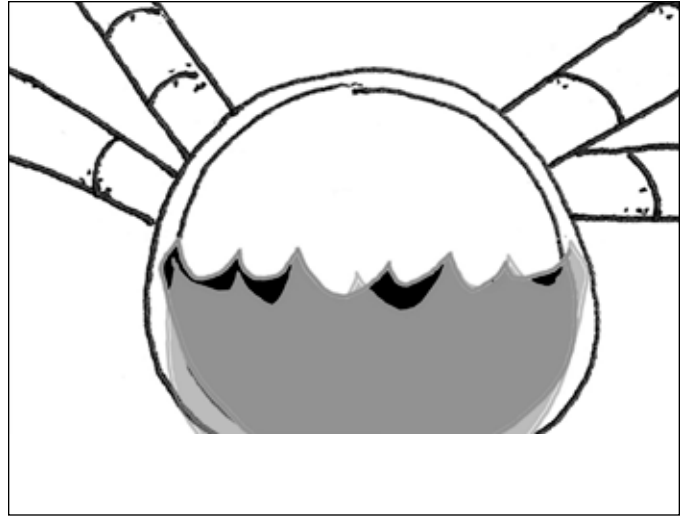
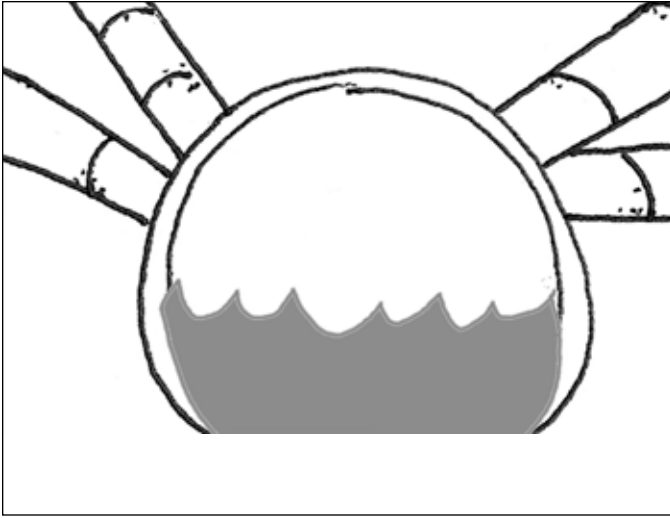
Sanitary sewer overflows are in parts of the system where sewage and the rain water are supposed to be in two separate pipes.



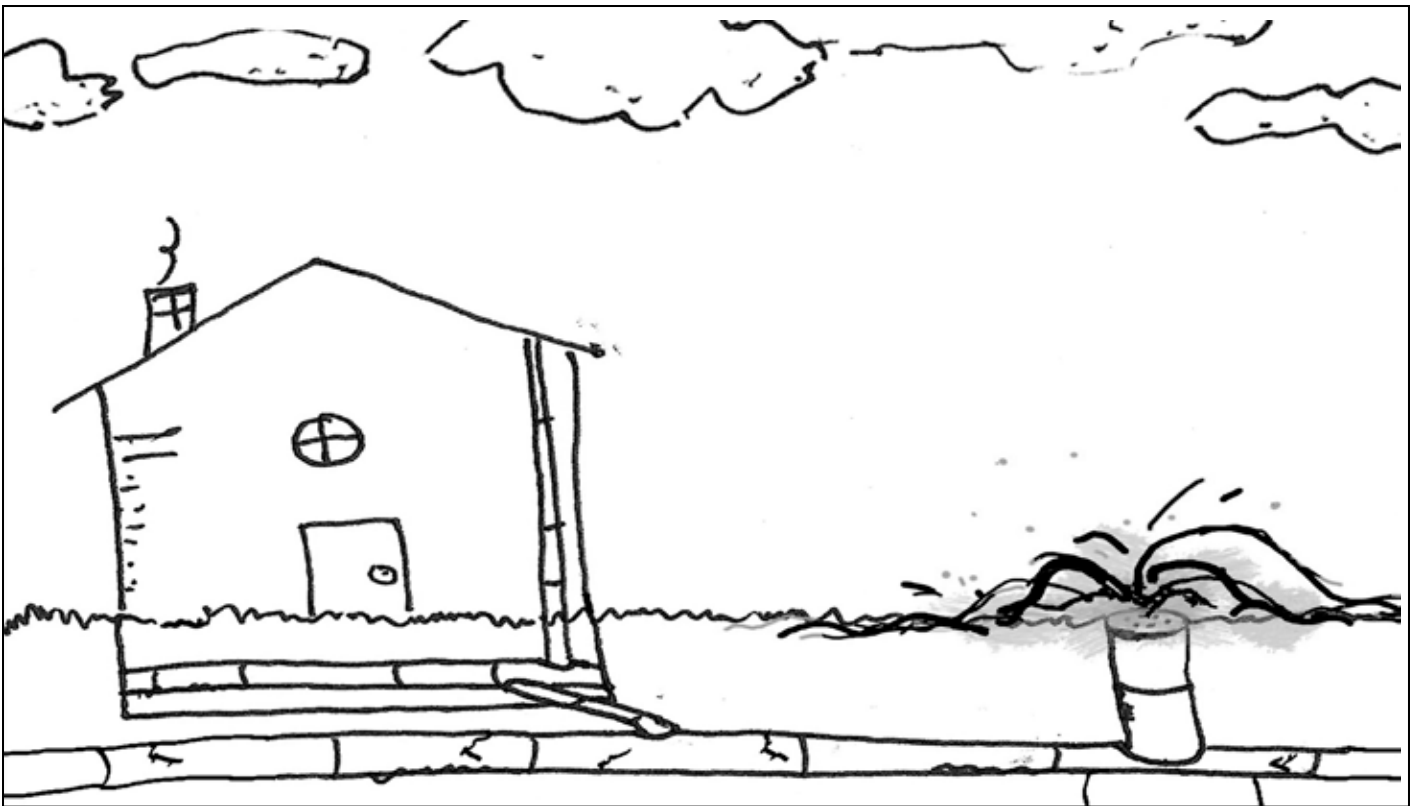
Sewage pipes... are built sometimes 25 years ago, 50 years ago, 100 years ago, and they're old...



Over time a lot of connections get made to that system, either through peoples' houses pumping water out of their basements through a sewage pipe.



Instead of just handling sewage... when a major rainstorm happens, a sewage pipe, which is normally... less than a third full...suddenly gets filled with all the rainwater...



... and that overflows.

Tree Bylaw Would Keep Belmont Shady, Cool

By Dan Lech

This April, Belmont Town Meeting will consider a new tree bylaw proposed by the Belmont Energy Committee. This bylaw would require that people who undertake construction and renovation projects that remove trees either replace them with new plantings or make payments into a town-managed tree fund. Protected trees would include any tree with trunks greater than eight inches in diameter and multi-trunk trees with diameters greater than fifteen inches.

The bylaw would apply to new construction, demolition and re-construction of existing structures, and renovation of non-residential structures which increases that structure's footprint by 10 percent. It would not apply to residential renovation projects or residents who simply wish to remove trees on their property.

The bylaw cites many specific benefits of maintaining a healthy "urban forest," including the following:

- Conserving energy by providing shade and evaporative cooling;
- Improving local and global air quality by producing oxygen and absorbing carbon dioxide and particulate matter;
- Providing habitat for birds and other wildlife;
- Reducing storm runoff;
- Enhancing visual and aesthetic qualities that attract visitors and businesses.

Asked whether the bylaw would drive up the cost of development, Roger Colton, Belmont Energy Committee co-chairman, counters "The empirical research overwhelmingly supports the notion that maintaining and planting trees increases the value of property to a developer rather than impedes the economics of the development."

Colton also feels that the new bylaw would not increase administrative costs. "The bylaw has been written so that it is simply part of the building permit process. The provisions of the bylaw are not substantial enough to require additional staffing or funding for enforcement purposes," Colton said. Colton added that the bylaw would provide needed funding for the town's tree-replacement program which has lacked the money to plant new trees in recent years.

How the Bylaw Works

Under the bylaw, the owner of the proposed construction site would submit a registered site plan to the Inspector of Buildings showing all existing trees with trunk diameters that met the bylaw's criteria. The



ANN COIT SIFNEOS

property owner would then submit a proposal detailing how the trees would be replaced “inch for inch.” The property owner has three options:

- Replant the same number of tree inches on the same property. Replacement trees would be younger and thus have a smaller trunk diameter. If one 12-inch tree were removed, the property owner could plant two six-inch trees or three four-inch trees.
- Replant the same number of tree inches on a different property in town (with that property owner’s permission.)
- Pay a fee of \$100 per tree-inch to the town’s tree replacement fund.

These approaches could also be combined. For example, a property owner could replant six tree-inches and pay into the fund for the other six. Belmont’s Department of Public Works would be responsible for finding suitable town planting areas and planting new trees with tree-replacement funds.

The Inspector of Buildings would issue permits. Property owners would have one year to plant trees after finishing construction or one year to pay into the tree fund after the permit is issued. Property owners who fail to adhere to the bylaw within time limits would be charged a fine of \$150 per tree-inch per day until the tree plan is implemented. Continued violation would result in the revocation of the building permit.

The town of Belmont would also be subject to the bylaw. Colton noted that this should not be an issue in the near future since the two most likely projects—a new public library and the

Correction

In the January/February 2011 Belmont Citizens Forum *Newsletter*, the article “Belmont Mulls New Approach to Recycling” stated that the Pay As You Throw option could face legal challenges in Belmont because curbside waste removal is funded by a 1990 tax override passed specifically to pay for waste removal.

In fact, both Belmont’s town counsel and the Massachusetts Department of Revenue have ruled that Proposition 2½ override funds can only be earmarked for specific purposes in the first year. Therefore, legal challenges are unlikely.

The Belmont Citizens Forum *Newsletter* apologizes for the error.

renovation of the high school—would require few trees to be moved. The proposed Belmont Uplands project would not be affected because the building permit for that project has already been applied for and the bylaw could not be enforced retroactively.

Nearby towns and cities such as Cambridge, Lexington and Newton have tree bylaws. According to Colton, “The proposed Belmont bylaw is based on these other models... because they have been successful.” The Energy Committee, the Conservation Commission, the Historic District Commission, the Vision Implementation Committee, and Sustainable Belmont have already endorsed the tree bylaw.

The bylaw will go before Town Meeting this April. If you wish to express an opinion on the tree bylaw, contact your precinct’s Town Meeting Members. A list is available on the town web site under “Town Meeting Information.”

Dan Lech is a 12-year Belmont resident, wine professional, and musician who is trying to think globally and act locally .



Environmental Events

By Sally Rifkin

Family-Friendly Nature Walk

Saturday, March 19, 1-3 p.m.

Bring your family for an educational romp through Alewife Reservation with Susan Agger, the Maynard Ecological Center Director for Cambridge Public Schools. Wear appropriate clothing and rugged footwear and bring a water bottle. Free. Sponsored by Friends of Alewife Reservation. www.friendsofalewifereservation.org/events.htm, (617) 415-1884. Meet at the Friends of Alewife Reservation kiosk across from the Alewife T stop, next to the circular garage.

Wild Trees at Fresh Pond

Sunday, March 27, 1-3 p.m.

Learn how soil, weather, water, and animals influence where wild trees grow. Consider various trees

Belmont Railroad Bridge Alliance

The Belmont Citizens Forum has joined with private individuals and other organizations to plan a project to refurbish the Belmont Center railroad overpass bridge.

Under the guidance of Lisa Harrington, an architectural conservator, the Belmont Center Railroad Bridge Alliance proposes to clean the stonework, repair and repaint the wrought iron fencing along the top of the bridge, replace broken lighting, and relandscape the area using a local landscape architect's design, as reviewed by the Belmont Garden Club. This project also promises to connect the many people interested in a clean and refurbished bridge with no expense to the town.

Please consider a donation to the Belmont Citizens Forum earmarked for "Belmont Center Railroad Bridge" to support the bridge project.

in the field with Chief Ranger Jean Rodgers, then look at seeds and field guides inside. Bring a field notebook, binoculars, and a camera, if possible. Registration required. Free. Sponsored by Friends of Fresh Pond. www.friendsoffreshpond.org/upcomingprograms.htm#mar4, (617) 349-4793, jrodgers@cambridgema.gov. Location will be given upon registration.

Sustainable Belmont Monthly Meeting

Wednesday, April 6, 7 p.m.

For more information, see www.sustainablebelmont.net. Flett Room, Belmont Public Library, 336 Concord Avenue, Belmont.

Know Your Food: Backyard Chickens

Saturday, April 9 12:30-4 p.m.

Join a growing number of backyard farmers enjoying the benefits of raising their own chickens. Different breeds, requirements for housing and feeding, and egg production will be covered. Registration required. Sponsored by Drumlin Farm. \$30 for members; \$40 for nonmembers. www.massaudubon.org/Nature_Connection/Sanctuaries/Drumlin_Farm, (781) 259-2200, drumlinfarm@massaudubon.org. Drumlin Farm, 208 South Great Road, Lincoln.

Earth Night

Saturday, April 9, 6-10 p.m.

Join the Environmental League of Massachusetts for Boston's biggest benefit, drawing hundreds of the state's business, environmental, and community leaders. The event's Earth Fair showcases products and services of local businesses and non-profits working to protect the Massachusetts environment. Free. Sponsored by companies in the Boston area. Sheraton Boston Hotel. www.earthnight.org, (508) 698-6810, EarthNight@classic-communications.com. 39 Dalton Street, Boston.

Future of New England Farms and Forests

Tuesday, April 12, 7 p.m.

The annual meeting of the Citizens for Lexington Conservation will feature a talk by Brian Donahue, Associate Professor of American Environmental Studies at Brandeis University, titled, "The Future of Farming and Forests in New England". According to Prof. Donahue, Massachusetts has been losing

forests to development since the 1970s at a faster rate than it gains unused agricultural land. Donahue suggests that between one-quarter and one-half of the land in every township ought to be 'commons,' either publicly held or privately-owned but subject to conservation easements. Free. www.lexingtonma.org/clc/HomePage.htm. Cary Memorial Hall, 1605 Massachusetts Avenue. Lexington.

Annual Earth Day Charles River Cleanup

Saturday, April 16 9 a.m.-noon

The Annual Earth Day Charles River Cleanup is organized by a collaborative of groups including Charles River Watershed Association, Senator Steven Tolman's Office, Charles River Conservancy, The Esplanade Association, the City of Newton, The Trustees of Reservations, Emerald Necklace Conservancy, and the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation. Free. Registration required. Organized by www.crwa.org/

crlcleanup/2011/cleanupmap.html. On sites along the Charles River.

29th Annual Run of the Charles Canoe and Kayak Race

Saturday, April 30 7 a.m.-5 p.m.

The Annual Run of the Charles showcases the improvements in the Charles River, while drawing 1,500 paddlers and hundreds of spectators to enjoy a day on the river. The event features a variety of races for all skill levels, from expert to novice. Registration required; price varies depending on category of participants. Free for spectators. Sponsored by businesses in the Boston area and elsewhere. www.crwa.org/rotc/rotc.html, (508) 698-6810, rotc@crwa.org. Parking is on Great Plain Ave, Needham/Dedham and is limited. Locations along race course can be found at the website www.crwa.org/rotc/2010/Directions.pdf.

We need you.

If you can volunteer even a few hours a month, you can make a difference. You do not need to be an expert—just a person who cares about our town.

I can devote time to:

- ☐ Archaeology & Historic Preservation
- ☐ Environmental Protection
- ☐ Planning & Zoning
- ☐ Community Path
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