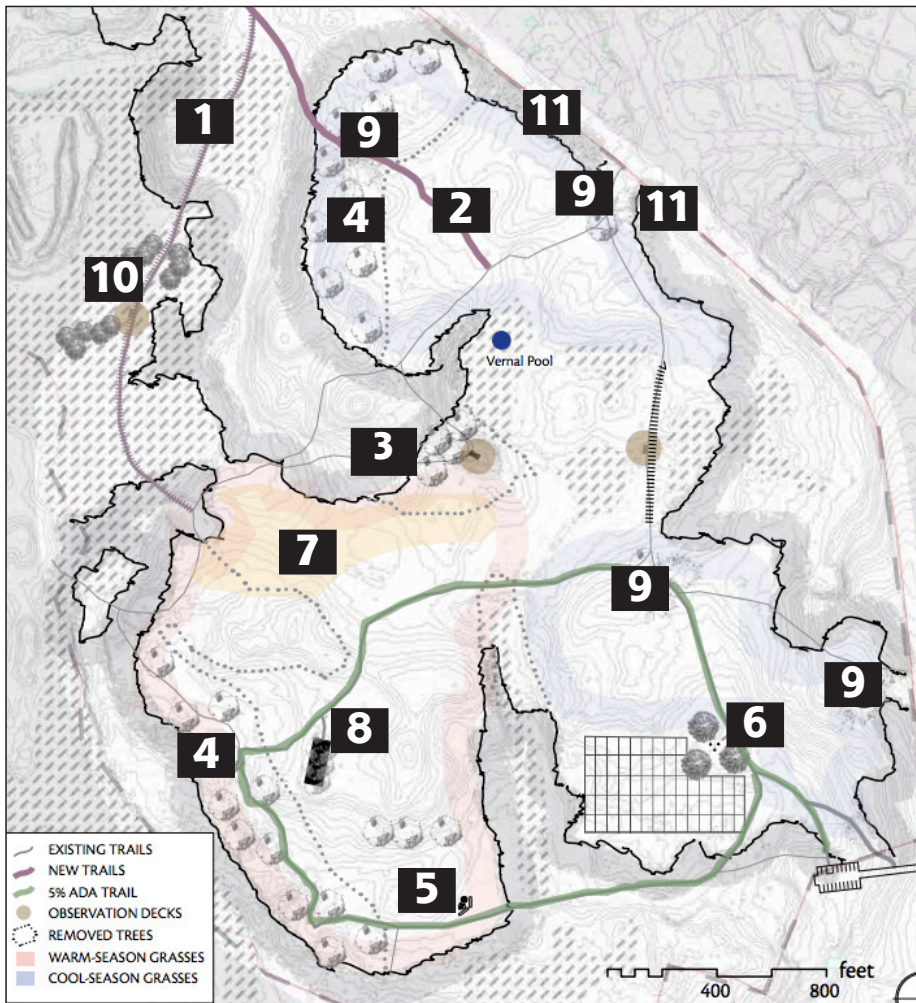




Belmont Citizens Forum

Developing a Conservation Master Plan for Rock Meadow



The proposed Rock Meadow design adds trails and other features such as:

- 1) a boardwalk;
- 2) a path bisecting the north meadow and leading to the former landfill site;
- 3) an extended loop emerging from the central woodland to an observation deck;
- 4) two groves of oaks and hickories;
- 5) a nature-inspired playground of logs, stumps, and rock piles;
- 6) a gathering area near the Victory Gardens;
- 7) experimental burn plots;
- 8) a piggery picnic area;
- 9) four pollinator patches; and
- 10) and 11) evergreen vegetation.

For the complete plan, go to <https://bit.ly/2C4ijHd>.

By Jeffrey North

“Rock Meadow is a beautiful and diverse landscape with differing microclimates, terrains, and experiences throughout the site. This diversity provides both design challenges and opportunities.”

—Excerpt from *Rock Meadow, A Conservation Master Plan*

Past, Present, and Future

When Europeans first arrived in this area around 1630, they noted that the area we now call Rock Meadow was parklike, with open meadows and sparse forest.¹ The native Pequossette people had periodically burned this former glacial pond for a thousand years, keeping it open for their hunting and gathering sustenance. The meadow was kept open in the 18th and 19th centuries for agriculture and livestock until 1945, when

a labor shortage caused those operations to cease. The town of Belmont purchased the property from McLean Hospital in 1968, and the Belmont Conservation Commission assumed management of Rock Meadow as open space and a conservation area. Since then, there have been calls for using the property for purposes other than conservation and passive recreation.

As pressures for more development in Belmont increase, what will the property look like for future generations? The recently completed *Rock Meadow, A Conservation Master Plan for the*

Town of Belmont, Massachusetts, envisions a host of improvements, consistent with the parklike historical landscape, that enhance the value of the land for nature and for people, including elements such as:

- Observation decks to view the meadows and wooded areas;
- “Pollinator patches”—clusters of perennial plants that will attract bees and butterflies;
- A picnic area on the old piggery foundation, an elevated spot made into a gathering area;
- An ADA-compliant trail to provide walker and wheelchair access to large portions of the property;
- Meadow expansion to create habitat for bobolinks, vesper sparrows (threatened in Massachusetts), and pollinator-supporting flowers;
- New plantings of oak and hickory to create savanna-type habitat and enhance grassland bird nesting and food sources;
- Sheep and goat grazing areas to maintain open spaces and as a tribute to McLean Farm’s food production legacy;
- Nature-inspired playground of logs, stumps, and rock piles and a Victory Gardens gathering area;
- An eco-historical tour with educational signage describing the geological history, old and new management (by indigenous people and the McLean Hospital’s working farm), and the various habitat types and the ecosystem services they provide;
- Parking lot expansion and improvement with erosion controlling-bioswales, rain gardens, and regrading.



Public feedback emphasized the importance of birds, bats, and other wildlife to Rock Meadow. Pictured here, a female Eastern red bat roosting in a tree with her two pups.

©MERLINTUTTLE.ORG



SAM FREEDMAN



MICHAEL TAUREAN GAGNON

The foundation is all that remains of the original piggery, left. The rendering on right gives an idea of how the proposed piggery picnic area might look.

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. The *BCF 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.

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Commissioning a Master Plan

As stewards of Rock Meadow, the Belmont Conservation Commission has periodically explored various planning tools and stakeholder engagement to construct a plan that would address the desires of the people of Belmont as well as the many nonresident users of the land. In late 2017, Mary Trudeau, agent for the commission, conducted a search for professional landscape design services. With a generous grant from the Judy Record Conservation Fund, the commission was able to contract with the Conway School in Easthampton, Massachusetts, for a team of graduate students, faculty advisors, and practicing professionals to conduct an assessment of the meadow and create a master plan.

With this assignment, designers Sam Freedman and Michael Taurean Gagnon, members of the class of 2018, fulfilled their third and final major project and received credit toward graduation and a master’s of ecological design degree.

The objectives given by the Conservation Commission to the student team were broad yet practical:

1. Design an eco-historic walking tour to educate visitors about the historical, cultural, and ecological value of this land.
2. Confront the challenge of aggressive non-native plants.

3. Increase ecosystem services from the area, study ecological corridors, and manage for wildlife habitat.
4. Address the challenges of an unsightly, erosion-prone parking lot.

The Planning Process

The Conway team conducted two community stakeholder meetings in Belmont, on May 8 and May 29, 2018, to present initial site analyses (history, local contexts, flora, fauna, and soil and habitat types) and to gather public feedback on design priorities. At each meeting, the students presented analyses, findings, and preliminary designs. This was followed by gathering input from attendees with the help of maps and questionnaires, leading to a group mapping activity in which small teams of community members came to rough consensus and presented to the rest of the meeting attendees. Individual and group responses were recorded and compiled into maps, charts, and word clouds. This illuminated important findings, for example, that the Victory Gardens and the “quiet openness” of the meadows are treasured features of the reservation. Areas of concern include invasive non-native plants and the arrival experience at the parking lot.

Before, between, and after the community stakeholder meetings, the students were hard at work researching the history and use of the land, creating detailed inventories of plant and animal species, reviewing past treatises about the meadow,

and mapping the various trails and habitat and soil types.

What's in the Plan?

The master plan begins with a context section describing the history, regional connections, and existing conditions of the conservation area. Next, the analysis section specifies the soil types, slopes, drainage, vegetation, and wildlife, along with a summary of the May 2018 community input that was a key element of the process. The subsequent design section begins with a vision statement (see next page), followed by a narrative and graphic presentation of a new piggery picnic area, observation decks, eco-historic tour, and improvements to the parking lot. No alterations are suggested for the Victory Gardens. This section concludes with the final design that emerged from various alternatives. Finally, the plan includes detailed cost estimates and phasing over a 10-year period, along with five plant palettes with recommendations for specific trees, shrubs, forbs (herbaceous flowering plants), and grasses.

Vision

During the first community meeting, participants expressed their desire to have an overarching vision statement to capture Rock Meadow's core identity, inform design alternatives, and guide conservation efforts into the future. The statement below was crafted by the students based on input from attendees at the first community stakeholder meeting and presented at the subsequent community meeting:

Rock Meadow shall be a meadow for years to come, continuing its hallowed legacy borne from glaciers and preserved by the First Peoples for thousands of years. It will be home to thriving plants, abundant wildlife, and rich dark soils. For the people of Belmont and the surrounding region, Rock Meadow shall be a refuge that supports both tranquil stillness and mindful movement through the experience of nature. It shall be safe and accessible to all and serve as a unique and

Continued on page 6

The Future of the

As most in Belmont are aware, there is a barn located adjacent to Rock Meadow, sitting back from Mill Street just south of the Rock Meadow parking lot. It is brick, substantially built, and was once part of a farm that supported McLean Hospital. Although now boarded up, it is in reasonably good repair. Belmont Town Meeting recently approved monies from Community Preservation Act funds for minor repairs to help prevent deterioration.

Although there are currently no plans for restoration, future use of the barn was discussed during the recent Rock Meadow planning study (see "Developing a Conservation Master Plan for Rock Meadow," page 1), and it became apparent that the barn is an asset that could play a significant role in Rock Meadow planning. Use restrictions, put in place when Belmont received title, state that the barn "may be renovated, used, and maintained for such uses as environmental education, the storage of materials and equipment associated with management of the Premises or management of the cemetery area, and office space for staff of the cemetery and/or the Premises."

Belmont's open space is rapidly becoming precious and will certainly become much more so as the density of our built environment increases. And because the barn location is central to our cluster of conservation areas, including Rock Meadow, Lone Tree

McLean Barn

By Robert Kennedy



Hill, Habitat, Beaver Brook Reservation, and Waverley Oaks, the barn is likely to take a role as an education center for them all.

A comparison can be made to the role of the new visitor center at Walden Pond in Concord. Being within the Walden Pond State Reservation, funding for this facility was provided by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation.

I recently arranged a tour and learned that it was built to LEED standards (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) of environmentally friendly materials, and designed as a place for individuals and groups to meet, to become familiar with the history of the area, and to obtain maps of walks and trails of area conservation-related attractions.

The visitor center includes displays, a bookstore, a conference room, office space, and restrooms. No active food service is provided; however, a deck with sheltered seating provides rest for weary legs. The space can be reserved for local events. A monthly lecture schedule is filled for most days of the month and has been enthusiastically attended.

It is easy to imagine our own barn being similarly used, opening a new dimension of understanding and appreciation for our precious conservation areas for generations to come in Belmont.

Robert Kennedy is an architect and Belmont Town Meeting member.

Continued from page 4

stunning linkage to the rest of the forested Western Greenway. It shall be an educational hub through which Belmont's ecological and cultural past and present may be witnessed and celebrated . . . Rock Meadow shall be a verdant sanctuary where humans and nature meet—indeed, where they may be one.

Next Steps

Rock Meadow, A Conservation Master Plan can be viewed and downloaded on the town website at <https://bit.ly/2C4ijHd>.

Beginning with its September meeting, the Belmont Conservation Commission will draft an approach to this 10-year plan, starting with community dialogue and the most immediate priorities (such as control of black swallowwort, buckthorn, honeysuckle, and other non-native plant species that are harmful). The estimated

cost for all site improvements, amenities, landscaping, and design described in the plan is between \$600,000 and \$1 million, so a fundraising effort must be deliberated and planned as well.

Thanks to the generous contributions of the Judy Record Fund, the community, and our Conway School team, Belmont now has not only a vision but also a practical plan for preserving open space, improving accessibility and eco-historical education, and supporting plants and wildlife.

Jeffrey North has served on the Belmont Conservation Commission since 2010. He also serves on the Land Management Committee for Lone Tree Hill and previously served as a trustee of the Judith K. Record Memorial Conservation Fund.

Footnote

¹ Adams, Curtis. "Rock Meadow Conservation Land in Belmont, Massachusetts." 2008.

Sewer Repairs In Progress to Clean Up Wellington Brook and Winn's Brook

By Anne-Marie Lambert

All images and graphics courtesy of the Town of Belmont, prepared for the town by Stantec Consulting Services Inc.

A home in Belmont with four occupants sends about 210 gallons a day of wastewater into the town sewer system.¹ When an underground sanitary sewer pipe collapses in a neighborhood where the storm drain is located below the sewer in the same underground trench, the sewage leaks into the storm drain and then into our rivers and ponds. This happened on Homer Road, a small street off Hastings Road. The sewer pipe and storm drain serve three homes upstream of a recently detected collapse.

It is quite common for sewer pipes to be above stormwater drains in Belmont. Stormwater drains were originally installed to capture rain from streets, and were only later used to capture runoff from homes. In a number of locations, the stormwater drains are purposely placed relatively low and with open joints so that rising groundwater can be directed towards streams and ponds, reducing flooding to neighborhoods.

Glenn Clancy, Belmont's director of Community Development, does not know how long the sewer pipe under the intersection of Homer Road at Brettwood Road had been collapsed before recent CCTV camera footage confirmed the collapse was the cause of the *E. coli* detected downstream. His staff checked for recent "Dig Safe" markings on nearby utilities like gas and electric to see if they would reveal a possible cause but mainly focused on addressing the \$8,500 repair. The repair was completed June 13 by local contractor F.E. French, in time to be included in the town's July 3 compliance report to the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The town is working under a federal consent order to reduce the pollution it sends into Boston Harbor. Thanks to this repair, an estimated 630 gallons per day of sewage are now flowing to the treatment plant at Deer Island in Boston Harbor



The sewer pipe is located above the storm drain in this repair under Homer Road.

rather than through the storm drain system into Wellington Brook.

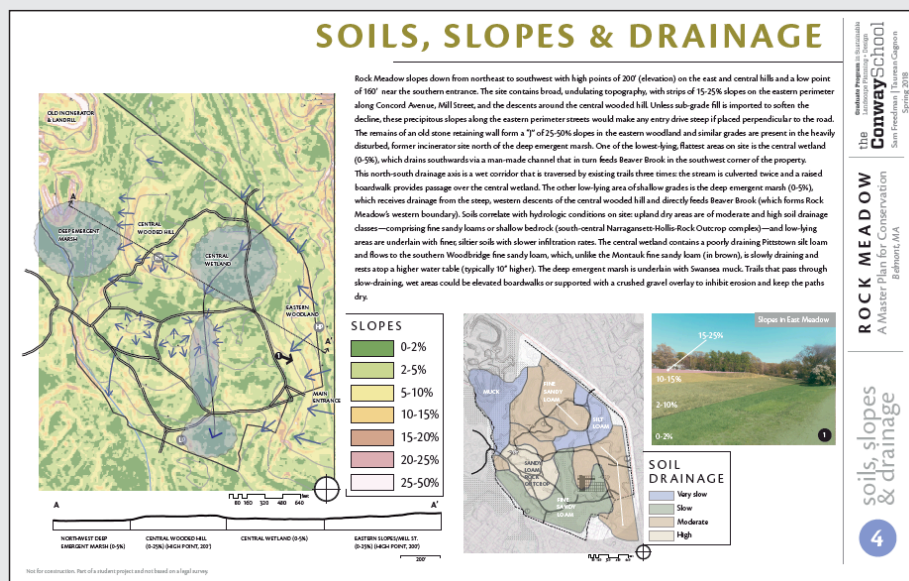
Similar to the Winn's Brook story reported in March ("Sewer Leaks Mean Detective Work," *BCF Newsletter*, March/April 2018), the detective work which led to the identification of this underground leak started with water-quality measurements at the outlets to Wellington

CORRECTION

In the print edition of the March/April 2018 issue of the *BCF Newsletter*, the article "Finding Sewer Leaks Means Detective Work" mistakenly stated that, "Belmont has greatly accelerated investigating underground sources of pollution in our drinking water," when the author's original words were "in our waterways." We apologize for this error and any resulting confusion; Belmont drinking water comes from reservoirs in central and western Massachusetts, not from the streams that run through Belmont.

Community Input Welcome

The Belmont Conservation Commission is eager to hear from the community as they begin translating the proposed Rock Meadow Master Plan and budget into prioritized steps for the next decade. Please send your comments or questions to Mary Trudeau, agent for the commission, at mtrudeau@belmont-ma.gov. You may also send comments to bcfprogramdirector@gmail.com for possible publication as a letter to the editor in the November/December issue of this newsletter.



This is a page from the analysis section of the new Rock Meadow master plan. The complete plan describes Rock Meadow's history, geology, vegetation, and wildlife; proposes alterations to the meadows and parking lot; adds new features like an eco-historic tour and observation decks; and recommends specific plantings for 10 distinct areas around the property.

For the complete plan, go to <https://bit.ly/2C4ijHd>.

SAM FREEDMAN AND MICHAEL TAUREAN GAGNON, THE CONWAY SCHOOL GRADUATE PROGRAM IN SUSTAINABLE LANDSCAPE PLANNING + DESIGN

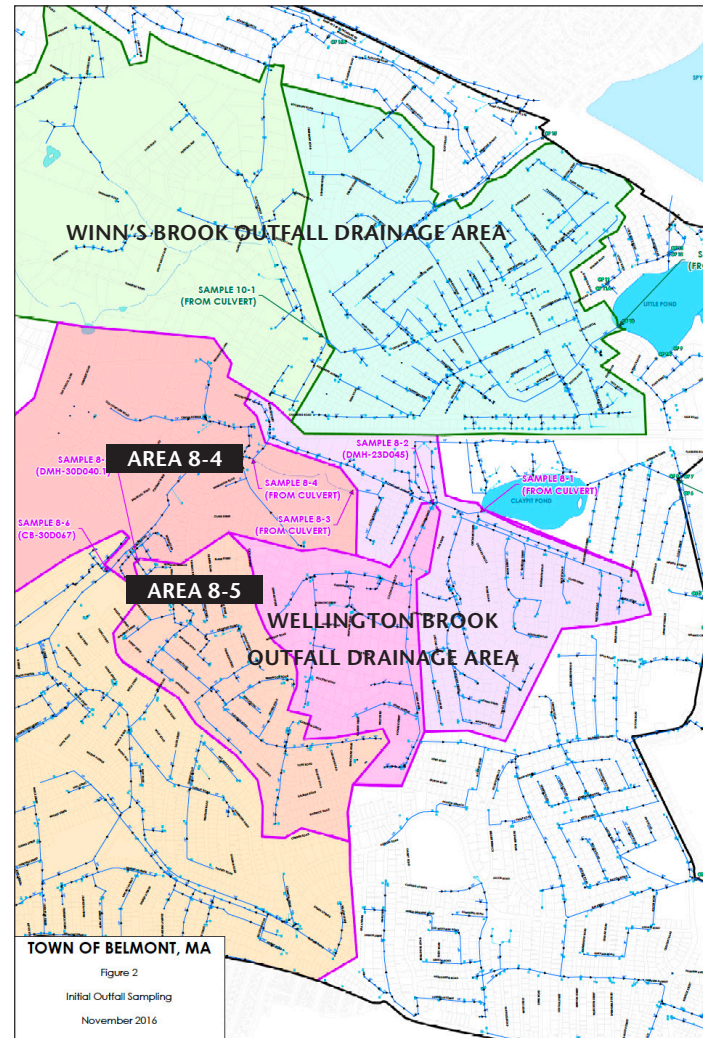
Wellington Brook and Winn's Brook outfall drainage areas, showing Areas 8-4 and 8-5.

Brook at the bottom of Belmont Hill, where contamination has been measured for over a decade. Starting in 2017, this was followed by measurements in each major stormwater catchment area in town.

The land and drains sending stormwater into Wellington Brook are divided into eight distinct "sub-catchment areas" (see map at right). Measurements taken last year at a point near Pearson Road where stormwater in a Wellington Brook sub-catchment area on the west side of upper Common Street (area 8-5) flows into the sub-catchment area that includes the stone bridge by Belmont Center (area 8-4) showed extraordinary levels of contamination. In this area, the sewer and storm drain pipes often take quite different routes downhill—in some blocks they even tilt in opposite directions. Of the upstream locations in area 8-5 that engineers checked next, the drain under the intersection of Brettwood and Pierce was one of the worst.

The next step after testing stormwater in the drains is to do selective door-to-door dye testing of homes in the upstream neighborhood: this involves depositing dye into basement plumbing then monitoring at a manhole to see if the dye shows up in the downstream storm drain system, indicating there is seepage between the sewer system and the storm drain system. Using this method, engineers were able to narrow the problem down to the intersection of Homer Road and Brettwood Road. Stantec engineers then opened a nearby manhole cover and used special CCTV camera equipment to inspect the drain and confirm the likely culprit: sewer and stormwater damage in the same location.

Because the job was under \$10,000, Clancy was able to solicit three contractors without a formal bidding process and have the repair completed within the 60 days required by the EPA. In the past, this type of problem might have taken years to find and fix through the town's Pavement Management Program (PMP). As it turns out, Homer Road happened to be on the list of roads to assess under PMP in 2018 anyway. However, due to the time required to



analyze a new road survey earlier this year, Clancy estimates that the earliest this Homer Road repair would have been found and completed under the PMP would have been October. As a result of the town's detective work, four months' worth of wastewater from three households are now flowing to Deer Island instead of Wellington Brook.

Lining Laterals

Sometimes dye testing reveals a problem with the lateral pipes connecting a home to the sewer under the street. When a lateral is cracked but not collapsed, the problem can be fixed by working from the manhole to relin the lateral, without digging up someone's yard and the street. The past year of detective work has identified at least four laterals in need of relining.

In anticipation of the need for this type of repair work, this summer the town solicited bids and opened a contract with National Water Main for \$164,700 to cover relining work based on

the length and diameter and connection type associated with each type of repair. This is a new type of contract for the town. The goal is to make it easier for the town to meet the EPA's 60-day turnaround time once the need is confirmed.

Mystery Pipes

In the process of inspecting town drains, CCTV cameras revealed a third type of problem: mystery pipes feeding into the main drains but not recorded on town maps. These represent illicit connections from the sewer system to the stormwater system. From its opening under the intersection of Orchard and Common Streets, Stantec engineers sent a small "push camera" 76 feet up two 4-inch mystery pipes but could not find the source. It remains a mystery when this happened and whether this was a simple mistake, or a conscious (and successful) attempt to avoid a more expensive solution to diverting wastewater from a renovation or development, or simply an attempt to avoid permitting fees, which have been in place for about 10 years.

Regardless of the motivation, in one case, it is relatively straightforward for the town to use taxpayer money to redirect the mystery pipe from the stormwater drainage system to the sewer system. Here, too, as long as the job is under \$10,000, state law allows the town to solicit quotes from three contractors and get it repaired in relatively short order. In the other case, the mystery pipe is lower than the sewer main, so a pump would be required to redirect its contents. Town engineers are debating what action to take.

Next Chapter

Clancy is pleased with progress so far, especially with the fact that the town is already making early progress on meeting a November deadline to measure the remaining Winn's Brook catchment areas, e.g., those draining into Spy Pond. He and his staff are still deciding whether to go ahead and line all the laterals in similar condition in a neighborhood where a problem has been found. He may also consider testing for downstream pollution when other utility work risks damaging sewer or stormwater drains.

While it's great to see concrete actions to reduce water pollution, I find it discouraging that a sewer collapse was found so close to the periphery of



"Mystery pipes," such as this PVC pipe, top right, found under the intersection of Orchard and Common Streets, can cause expensive additional work when the town must redirect them from the stormwater drainage system to the sewer system.

the drainage system and that sewers can be vulnerable to collapse from nearby utility work. Clancy doesn't agree: he was expecting to find even more problems and has confidence the town can meet the EPA requirement to clean up all the problems within five years. I hope he's right.

Anne-Marie Lambert is a director of the Belmont Citizens Forum.

Footnote

¹ This estimate appears in a July 31 "Report on Compliance" by the town's engineering contractor Stantec and is based on the most recent data available from the Massachusetts Water Resources Association. The MWRA bills the town for delivering clean water and for treating wastewater coming from Belmont at the Deer Island treatment plant in Boston Harbor. Part of the bill is based on the volume of wastewater per household. MWRA then pumps the treated water into a nine-mile conduit out to the middle of Massachusetts Bay.



SARA MCCABE

Two Years of Homer House Restoration Successes

By Wendy Murphy

The Belmont Woman's Club has been working on many projects at the beautiful William Flagg Homer House. Located at 661 Pleasant Street, across from Town Hall in the Pleasant Street Historic District, the Homer House is named for its original owner, William Flagg Homer, a wealthy Boston merchant who built the property in 1853 as a summer residence. William Flagg was uncle to famed American artist Winslow Homer, whose artwork features numerous scenes of Belmont people and places, including his uncle's home.

The Homer House has been actively undergoing restoration since 2016, when the Woman's Club won a Community Preservation Act grant to restore the third-floor cupola. The crowning

Above: The house in August 2018, with cupola restoration nearing completion and the recent addition of a bronze plaque at the intersection of Concord Avenue and Pleasant Street.

glory of the house boasts 360-degree views that reach to Boston and beyond.

Restoration of the cupola will be completed in fall 2018 and will involve replacing its roof, repairing windows and woodwork, painting, and installing a finial on top. Contractor Marshall White and architect Gary Wolf have worked with the Woman's Club, town officials, and Belmont's Historic District Commission to select historically appropriate materials, designs, and paint colors.

In addition to the cupola project, the Homer House has undergone extensive interior renovations, thanks to the Junior League of Boston, which selected the home as its 2017 Designer Show House. The Junior League set up residence for nine months and contracted with more than a dozen designers, who redesigned each room to their taste. The public was invited to tour the redesigned interiors, buy show items, and hire the designers for their own projects. The Show House upgrades vastly improved the condition of the home's interior at little cost to the Woman's Club. All the rooms have fresh paint, and many have luxurious window treatments.

The Homer House has been actively undergoing restoration since 2016, when the Woman's Club won a Community Preservation Act grant to restore the third-floor cupola.

The Junior League also brought an expert to Belmont to repair and restore the lincrusta wallcovering in the library, and paid nearly all expenses. (Lincrusta is a thick, deeply embossed wallcovering introduced in 1877 and made of gelled linseed oil, wood flour, and paper. Because the linseed gel continues to dry and toughen over time, lincrusta is very durable, and examples in many historic buildings have lasted for more than a century.)

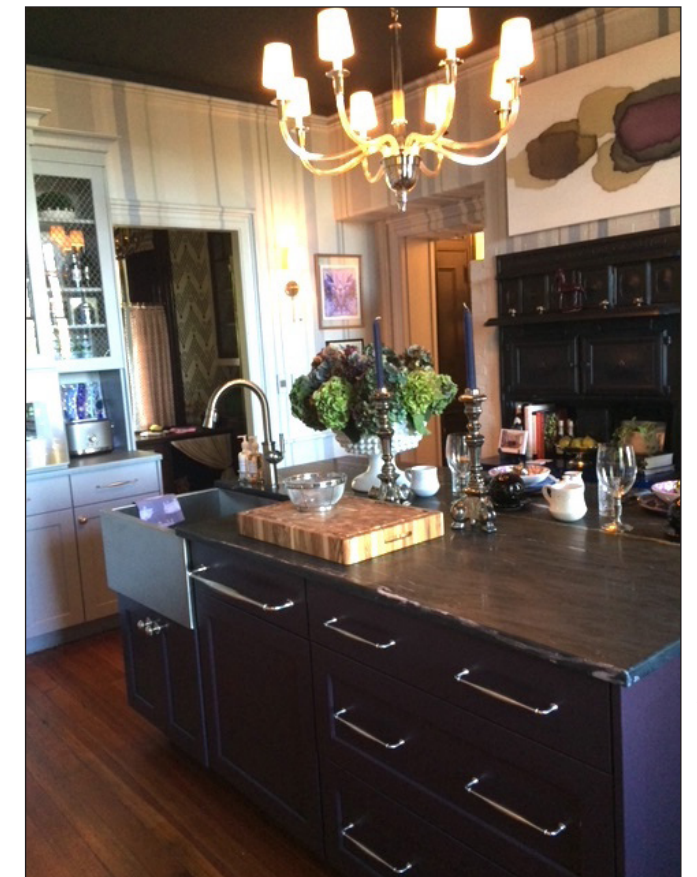
The Homer House gained a modern new kitchen from the Junior League investment as well, enhancing its desirability as a rental property. With state-of-the-art appliances and a center island, the space is far more conducive to catering for large parties, weddings, and other occasions. Rental fees from such events are a significant source of funding to the Woman's Club for building repairs and maintenance. Further increasing rental value is a handicapped-accessible bathroom installed in 2018.

The interwoven histories of the house, the Woman's Club, and the Homer family are now honored on a new bronze plaque at the intersection of Concord Avenue and Pleasant Street. Affixed to a small fence piece adjacent to the sidewalk, the plaque describes the 19th-century

relationship of the house to Winslow Homer's art, explains that the Woman's Club saved the house from destruction in 1927, and notes that the Club donated the land to a public trust in 2010 to prevent future development. A wooden sign on the Pleasant Street side was also recently repainted for better visibility.

The Woman's Club is planning to file another Community Preservation Act grant application next year to fund window repairs. With virtually every window in the Homer House coming apart from its frame, and an estimate of \$2,000 to restore each of more than two dozen windows, the expense will be significant.

In an effort to raise public awareness about the Homer House and its need for financial support from the public, the Woman's Club obtained funds to create a short film explaining the relationship between the Homer House, the town of Belmont, and Winslow Homer's art. The film, entitled *Winslow Homer's Belmont*, was completed



BELMONT WOMAN'S CLUB

As the 2017 Junior League of Boston Designer Show House, the Homer House benefited from many upgrades, including a modern kitchen, which has helped increase rental value.



Restoration of the third-floor cupola will include a finial on top, as seen in the historic drawing below.



PHOTO: SARA MCCABE; ILLUSTRATION: BELMONT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

in 2017 and can be viewed at belmontmedia.org, the Belmont Media website.

Few people are aware that Winslow Homer lived in Belmont, much less that many of his works depict Belmont people and places. The history books describe Winslow Homer as being born in Boston, and later moving to Cambridge, which is technically correct, but the part of Cambridge where Homer lived as a young man became the town of Belmont while he was living there. Indeed, Homer drew a landscape on the day Belmont was incorporated as a town, in 1859, and entitled it "The New Town of Belmont." Though he later moved to New York, his parents continued to live in Belmont, not far from the Homer House.

The history of the Homer House property dates back far before the current 1853 building. The land was first owned by Belmont's founder, Roger Wellington, in 1636. The Wellingtons passed it down for generations within their family until 1826, when Jeduthan Wellington sold it for \$400 to his son-in-law, Samuel O. Mead. Mead and his wife, Mary Maria, built a federal colonial style house on the land. Years later they sold it for \$5,000 to William Flagg Homer, who was married to Mary Maria's sister, Adeline Wellington. Selling the property to the husbands of Jeduthan's daughters was a way of keeping the land in the Wellington family, at a time when women could not legally own property.

Mead's colonial style home was later moved to 504 Concord Avenue, and the Homer House was

built in its place as a summer residence, in 1853. William Flagg Homer eventually lived in the house full time until his death in 1883, after which the property was sold for the first time outside of the Wellington family, to neighbor Susan Blake, who lived across the street, for \$21,000. (By 1844, women could possess property in Massachusetts.) Blake expanded the library and added etched glass to the front doors.

In 1927, a developer had plans to tear the house down and build seven lots on the land. The Belmont Woman's Club rallied to save the Homer House from destruction. They paid a \$5,000 deposit, obtained two mortgages, and purchased the Homer House for \$25,000. They replaced the gas lighting with electricity and began hosting lectures and community events in their new home. A 501(c)(3) charitable organization, the Woman's Club has volunteered ever since to preserve and maintain the Homer House for future generations.

Wendy Murphy is co-president of the Belmont Woman's Club and adjunct professor at New England Law/Boston, where she has taught for 15 years.

BCF Survey Response

In the last issue of the *Belmont Citizens Forum Newsletter*, we asked you to take our reader survey and tell us how we've been doing. Thank you to all who participated. We enjoyed your enthusiastic feedback and were inspired by your thoughtful suggestions, including the following:

- More maps, bigger maps, clearer labeling;
- Attend Meet Belmont and Town Day to give away old copies to generate interest (Editor's note: We do this already; hope to see you there next year!);
- Article suggestions: time-of-day electric billing, commuter rail, continual increases in property taxes, update on Belmont recycling efforts, affordable housing, solar power, electric cars, bike sharing;
- Most important topics: water quality and pollution; open space; development, zoning, and planning.

We look forward to incorporating your preferences into future issues. It's not too late for the rest of you to add your input in our five-minute online survey. Just go to bit.ly/BCFsurvey (or go to the BCF home page for the link). And please feel free to write us with comments or suggestions any time, or to send a letter to the editor at bcfprogramdirector@gmail.com.

Alewife Poetry Stroll



MARY BUCHINGER BODWELL

Poet Elizabeth Quinlan reads by Little River during the August 18 Alewife Poetry Stroll. This event was sponsored by Friends of Alewife Reservation and featured two poets, Quinlan and Barbara Thomas. Belmont Citizens Forum board member Anne-Marie Lambert served as nature guide to educate participants about the history of the land, water, wildlife, and people who have known this place.

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Remember, you can always find printed copies at the Belmont Public Library and at the Beech Street Center. And if you are looking for previously published issues, you'll find them on our website, going back to 2000, at belmontcitizensforum.org.

To request electronic delivery only, email us at bcfprogramdirector@gmail.com. Please use "Electronic" in the subject line.

And thanks to everyone who has gone digital so far!

Environmental Events

Mystic River Watershed Association
Tuesday, September 11, 8–9 PM
 Mass Rivers Alliance Policy Director Gabby Queenan will present ways to engage in effective advocacy for the Mystic River. mysticriver.org. 20 Academy Street, Arlington.

CoastSweep Cleanup
Friday, September 21, 9 AM–12 PM
 Join Charles River Conservancy for their annual CoastSweep Cleanup. CoastSweep is a statewide event to raise awareness and clean waterfronts. With CRC you will remove litter and debris from the parklands and collect data on the specific types of debris found. Volunteers can work in two locations in Cambridge and Watertown. mass.gov/coastsweep. To volunteer, RSVP via email to Sasha at svallieres@thecharles.org.

Belmont Recycling Days
Saturday, September 29, 9 AM–12 PM
 Drop off oversized cardboard and old barrels and recycling bins that can't be reused. Cardboard must be flattened at home and kept dry. Remember, barrels smaller than 32 gallons can be reused as a container for yard waste. Stickers for these barrels are available at the DPW Office, Winters Hardware, and Hillside True Value. Recycling bins can be reused as storage or as a container to bring your recyclables from the house to the cart outside. belmont-ma.gov/dpw-highway-division. Town Yard, 37 C Street, Belmont.

Saturday, October 20, 9 AM–1 PM
 The semiannual Big Recycling Day includes paper shredding, electronics, textiles, eyeglasses, books, CDs, DVDs, propane tanks, and bicycles (no cardboard or styrofoam). Belmont residents only. No rigid bulky plastics. Fees may apply. Details will follow as the date approaches: belmont-ma.gov/dpw-highway-division. Town Yard, 37 C Street, Belmont.

Grow Native Massachusetts Workshops
Saturday, September 22, 9 AM–1 PM
 Invasive Plant Identification and Management with Chris Polatin, founder of Polatin Ecological Services. Come to gain a detailed understanding of how to successfully control the most common invasive species, with options for both mechanical and chemical control. This program will start in the field and end in the classroom. \$42 for members; \$52 for non-members. grownativemass.org. The Great Hall at Cedar Hill, 265 Beaver Street, Waltham.

Wednesday, October 17, 5:30–7:30 PM
 Landscaping for Bird Diversity with Claudia Thompson, founder of Grow Native Massachusetts. Come for an in-depth exploration of how to create landscapes that support bird diversity. We will also consider the pros and cons of direct human intervention through bird feeders and houses, and how best to support native songbirds in preference to non-native species. \$28 for members; \$38 for non-members. grownativemass.org. The Great Hall at Cedar Hill, 265 Beaver Street, Waltham.

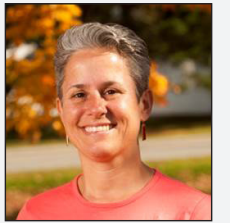
Sustainable Belmont Meetings
Wednesday, September 12, 7–8:30 PM
Green Strategies for a Fabulous School Year
 A panel of Belmont residents will briefly explain this year's school district sustainability initiatives. Meet a middle-school Trash Basher and learn about waste reduction, composting, and recycling, Safe Routes to School, and climate change. This is a kid-friendly event with toys for the little ones, a craft project for older kids, and snacks for everyone. sustainablebelmont.net. Belmont Public Library, Assembly Room, 336 Concord Avenue, Belmont.

Wednesday, October 3, 7–8:30 PM
Climate Action Plan Targets Along the Way
 Belmont's Energy Committee members and Sustainable Belmont will present interim targets in the town's Climate Action Plan. You will leave this meeting with tangible steps to reduce carbon emissions. sustainablebelmont.net. Check website for location.

Belmont Stormwater Working Group Meeting on Climate Resilience

Wednesday, September 26, 7–9 PM

Julie Wormser, deputy director of the Mystic River Watershed Association, will speak about their Climate Resilience program to work with municipalities, businesses, and community organizations on a regional climate resilience strategy for the watershed. Discussion will include the ways that Belmont groups, businesses, and the town can help increase resilience to both drought and flooding from climate change. mysticriver.org. Belmont Public Library, Assembly Room, 336 Concord Avenue, Belmont.



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