

# Friends of the Quinobequin

Notes of 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting, March 27, 2014, Brigham House, Newton Highlands

The initial meeting of The Friends of the Quinobequin, the newly formed Committee of the Waban Area Council, dedicated to the restoration of the parkway and parkland along the Charles River between Route 9 and Route 16, was held on Thursday, March 27, 2014, at 7pm at Brigham House in Newton Highlands.

The meeting was organized by: Sallee Lipshutz, Waban Area Council President; Maureen Reilly-Meagher, Waban Area Council Vice-President; Jerry Reilly, Upper Falls Greenway Organizer; and Ward 5 Alderman John Rice. Waban resident, Chris Meagher, served as recorder. Also in attendance were Brian Yates, Ward 5 Alderman-at-Large; and Waban Area Councilors: Rena Getz, Joe Corkery, Barbara Bower, and Kathryn Winters. Other interested Newton residents included Jim Lerner, Member of Upper Falls Greenway (Upper Falls); Robert Ellertson, Chestnut Street (Waban); Cecily Grable, Quinobequin Road (Waban); Sharon Ben Levi, Varick Road (Waban); Roger Strang, Mechanic Street (Upper Falls); Carole Grossman, Quinobequin Road (Waban); Robert Greenstein, Waban Ave (Waban); Seth Kosto, Quinobequin Road (Waban); Susan Cammer, Waban Ave. (Waban); Chrys Martin, E. Quinobequin Road (Waban); Marilyn Broyles, Neshobe Road (Waban); and Judy Kohn, Quinobequin Road (Waban).

The meeting was called to order at 7pm by Sallee Lipshutz who greeted attendees and described the reasoning behind forming The Friends of the Quinobequin under the aegis of the Waban Area Council. She distributed a handout: 1.)describing the motivational charge and work begun already in forming The Friends of the Quinobequin organization; and 2) containing a two-page “on-the-ground” interest and engagement questionnaire to elicit ideas, enthusiasm and participation by attendees in FOTQ activities. (See attachments 1 and 2)

Sallee also distributed a copy of a plan developed but not implemented by the DCR (See attachment 3) as a means for the attendees to begin a conversation. She asked the audience to complete the questionnaire distributed and to take the DCR plan home to study it and to come to a future meeting to discuss the desirability of advocating for implementing any or all of that plan in carrying out our goal of repairing the condition of the parkland.

Maureen Reilly Meagher then identified other “Friends” groups around the city, citing their many accomplishments, including path and trail maintenance and community activities. Maureen spoke about The Friends of Hemlock Gorge, The Upper Falls Greenway Group and the Friends of Crystal Lake. (See attachments 4, 5 and 6 for info on all three groups) She drew attention to volunteer opportunities through the City’s [Newton Serves](#) program on April 27, 2014 and noted that there is a project site for Quinobequin Road listed on the City’s web site. She also spoke about the possibility of carrying out a Friends of Quinobequin activity on May 18 during Waban Village Day’s Running Event.

John Rice then gave details of the earlier meeting he had convened on March 6, 2014 with State Rep. Ruth Balsler, State Sen. Cynthia Creem, representatives from the City (Jennifer Steele, Aaron Goldman, William Paille, Ana Gonzalez) Jerry Reilly, Sallee Lipshutz, and Maureen Reilly-Meagher, whose purpose was to advise our State legislators of the interest from the neighborhood in the formation of the Friends group and of our local need, due to jurisdictional challenges, for state engagement and support from the State agencies and commissions with whom we would work.

Jerry Reilly noted some work that has already occurred in the last few years on the parkland, such as invasive plants being cleared from walking paths and a remarkable project implemented by young Girl Scout, Melissa Moody, who worked closely with DCR to produce an innovative trail guide that uses smart chip information accessed on a smartphone to identify various woodland plants and trees along the Charles River path in Waban (See attachment 7).

The meeting was then opened for comments from the audience. Many attendees stated that they desired improvement and better maintenance of the paths as they had the deep desire to use the parkland but found it difficult or impossible to do so because of issues with poison ivy, poison oak, ticks, rotted wooden footbridges and uneven and muddy surfaces. The current conditions of the trails, boardwalks, and roadway forced them, they reported, to stay away or rarely enjoy a walk along the riverbank.

There were others who were interested in a safer path nearer the road that would get pedestrians away from the street. Many stressed feeling unsafe while walking, running or driving and also noted the lack of safe ways to cross Quinobequin Road.

The group suggested many great ideas for parkland use and activities, including: 1) A picture competition to spur interest in the parkland 2) A public garden area 3) A "Save a Tree" adoption program 3) A clean up event on the 1st Saturday of every month 4) The development of a Master Plan for restoration 5) Activities closing Quinobequin Road to cars for an occasional picnic, music event, BBQ, Promenade, or "Quinobequin Day" focused on parkland restoration, planting, etc.

The meeting closed at 9:30pm with nearly all attendees signing up for Newton Serves and other clean-up activities.

Respectfully submitted:

Chris Meagher  
Waban Resident

Supporting Documents:

- 1.) Friends of the Quinobequin Background: [Background of "Friends of the Quinobequin"](#)
- 2.) Why a Friends Group- Interest & Engagement Questionnaire: [Why a Friends Group \(Participants\).pdf](#)
- 3.) DCR Suggested Plan for Quinobequin Path: [DCR Quinobequin Path NOI Plans](#)
- 4.) The Friends of Hemlock Gorge: [Friends of Hemlock Gorge](#)
- 5.) The Upper Falls Greenway: [Upper Falls Greenway](#)
- 6.) The Friends of Crystal Lake: [Friends of Crystal Lake](#)
- 7.) Girl Scout Melissa Moody Project, Charles River Wetlands Trail: [Melissa Moody Project](#)