

FRIENDS OF SAXONVILLE

NEWSLETTER • FALL 2016

Sudbury River Crisis

by Ron Chick, River Stewards Committee Chair

The community effort to develop a plan to restore the Sudbury River in Framingham to a more nature state is now in motion. The river is an important natural resource to the greater MetroWest Community, both for its beauty and for its recreational use. A healthy river is symbolic of a thriving and dedicated community.

Eurasian water chestnuts and other invasive vegetative species continue to proliferate at an astounding rate. Billions more water chestnut seeds will drop to the riverbed this season. Each seed

may produce 100 new plants the following year. The seeds can remain viable for 12 years or longer! All forms of life on the river have been severely affected – waterfowl, fish, birds, etc. There is an

additional concern regarding the potential for a mosquito infestation if the river becomes stagnant.



Water Chestnut Rosette and Water Chestnut Seed © University of Florida Center for Aquatic and Invasive Plants.

The Framingham Conservation Commission (FCC) is in the process of filing a Notice of Intent (NOI) with the EPA to address the invasive plant species that now cover over 94% of the 1.2-mile section of Sudbury up river from the Saxonville Dam. The FCC has formed an advisory committee with community members and representatives of town and state governments to work on a plan for the crisis and to pursue funding for this important effort.

This section of the river is in grave danger of dying if no action is taken. A multi-year extensive effort is necessary to restore the river to a natural state. Your support will be paramount to its success.

Please be available for a future call to action. Sign up for email alerts by contacting me at ronchick@comcast.net and for quarterly enews from FOS at www.Saxonville.org. ❖



Water Chestnuts clogging the Sudbury River make it un-navigable for recreational use © Ron Chick.

Saxonville Trails

by Herb Everett, TrailHeads Chair

FOS recently formed a “TrailHeads” committee to work on improving and maintaining local hiking and biking trails.

Visit Saxonville.org/trailheads for preliminary trail maps, information about our goals and news updates.

We welcome feedback and suggestions for improving our maps via email at trailheads@saxonville.org. ❖



TrailFest along the Cochituate Rail Trail on May 14th © Damianos Photography.

Village Improvement Initiative

by Steven Weisman

At the FOS Annual Meeting last spring, FOS unveiled a new initiative to encourage comprehensive local investment and improvements in the Village Center, including McGrath Square. The objective would be to build on upgrades underway at the Central Street Bridge, on Water Street at McGrath Square, at the School and Concord Streets intersection, and the recently completed and very popular Cochituate Rail Trail. The goal would be to restore Saxonville's village center as a pedestrian friendly place, rather than a high-speed crossroads.

To that end, over the past few months, the Friends' Village Improvement Committee has held a number of meetings and discussions with Town representatives to develop concrete strategies for physical upgrades to the Village center to improve "walkability" and support local businesses. Conversations have included the Department of Public Works, Conservation Commission Agent, and Town Manager.

The response from all public officials has been very positive and supportive of our goals. Here is where things stand at this time:

- McGrath Square: The current public infrastructure is over 50 years old. DPW plans to request funding from the May 2017 Town meeting for a design and renewal project. The goal will be to complete the design in time

to secure funds in May 2018 for capital improvements.

- Village speed limit: FOS has proposed and DPW is considering instituting speed limit advisory signs (yellow) for the business district with a speed limit advisory below.
- Walkability: Near-term, DPW is evaluating our suggestion to add one or more new crosswalks on Concord Street at Saxonville Mills which would be signaled for public safety.
- Additional parking in the Square: Ideas under discussion include metered on-street parking on one side of Concord Street and upgrading the tired Town-owned parking lot at Concord and Danforth Streets. This would provide short term parking for doing business in the Square and at the Mills.
- Re-aligning traffic lanes: Traffic lanes around the Square will continue to be re-aligned and sized to help slow traffic and create designated bicycle lanes that connect the Cochituate Rail Trail with other in-town destinations. DPW's goal is to better balance motorized and pedestrian traffic.

We will continue to share our progress as more details become available. Again, we are very appreciative of Town officials for their support for Saxonville village improvement. ❖

Welcome to Historic Saxonville

by Steven Weisman

A new Town-wide "gateways" initiative will be piloted this year in Saxonville and Downtown. The initiative's goal is to establish standards for 'wayfinding' signage for the Town as a whole, for the individual villages and the Downtown, and for places of interest and local destinations.

The Town DPW recently shared a Wayfinding Signage Master Plan with the Friends of Saxonville that was prepared for the Town in 2016 by BETA Group Inc. The Plan's intention is to tie together various types of town signage and help guide future signage design. BETA found that current public sign placement and design in Framingham lacks consistency and standardization, making wayfinding difficult for vehicles and pedestrians.



Saxonville

Quoting from the Plan, the wayfinding program would:

- Establish a public signage program, focusing on signage for the historic villages and surrounding areas
- Create attractive and easily recognizable signage for wayfinding and marketing/branding
- Add new "wayfinding" signage guiding visitors to Framingham's public destinations and local information



The Master Plan suggests sign design guidelines, sign location recommendations for town and village gateways and arrival points, and different "levels" of sign applicability. The goal would be to create a unified palette of sign colors,

symbols, fonts, and graphics that is easily recognizable and can be applied to both road vehicle and pedestrian oriented wayfinding signage.

The DPW has asked FOS to collaborate on developing design recommendations for Saxonville that can be shared with the public this fall. The DPW would like to have the first signs in place by December 2016. ❖

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Please support our Business Members!

For more information, visit
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Vibes from the Village

Weekend of Spirit at Open Spirit

Join us for Open Spirit's 4th Annual Weekend of Spirit on September 23 and 24. Our theme is "Voices of Spirit: Listening, Claiming, Proclaiming Our Truths."

This mini-retreat is only \$25 if you register by September 9. www.openspiritcenter.org, (508) 877-8162.

Events at FireSeed Arts

- Art au Pair artist collaborative with poetry slams, open mic and band nights, www.artaupair.com.
- Rock & Roll Yoga (donation based) www.thereaddressashland.com/upfront-yoga.
- Evolving together – humane education programs.



Contact pvazquez@fireseedarts.com for updates, info and scheduling, or to bring your events or organizations to this dynamic and exciting space in the Mills. ❖

Welcome New Board Members

Kathy Gagen

A lifelong resident of Framingham, Kathy and husband Tom raised their family in a Victorian home in Saxonville that they have renovated and lived in for over 30 years. Three of their four boys work alongside their father at the family business, Carby's Lumber on Hartford Street. Kathy was a special educator in Framingham Public Schools. She led gardening programs at school and elsewhere in the community. Kathy is honored to serve on the FOS board, working to preserve and improve the living and working experience of "The Village." She is focusing her efforts on the Village Improvement Committee and fundraising for the Anthenaeum.

Ralph Funk

Ralph was born in Nebraska and migrated to South Carolina, Washington, D.C., and Maryland. Specializing in computer design, he enjoyed a long career at Honeywell Computer and NEC Computer Systems where his responsibilities required extensive worldwide travel. Ralph lives in Framingham with his wife Elizabeth. His family has devoted considerable effort to the loving care and maintenance of the town's oldest standing home (John Bent House, c. 1665). In addition to the 60-foot back porch, a Medway barn (c. 1800) was reconstructed on the identical site in 2000. Ralph served on the Framingham Historic Commission as they created the Demolition Delay Bylaw, the Treasurer of the Framingham Civic League Board and the Framingham Board of Public Works. In addition to his large family, his current community interests include Danforth Art and the Framingham History Center. ❖

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