



NEWS

VOLUME 12 NUMBER 1 FALL 2012

The Arlington Land Trust is a community-based nonprofit organization established in 2000 to protect undeveloped land in Arlington. As a membership organization, ALT accepts donations and welcomes volunteers to support its work.

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Arlington Launches its Master Plan

The Town of Arlington launched a long-range comprehensive Master Plan with a “community conversation” at Town Hall on October 17, 2012. More than 150 people participated in the event that was designed to gather preliminary information on what residents value about Arlington. This meeting was the first of many ways the public will be engaged in creating the Master Plan.



Courtesy of Town of Arlington

Arlington residents gather for the Master Plan kick-off event on October 17, 2012.

“A Master Plan is a blueprint for the future physical development of the Town,” explains Carol Kowalski, director of planning and community development. “Given the Town’s structural deficit, high cost of housing, a downward trend in available land for business use, and the unpredictability of private redevelopment decisions, Arlington cannot afford not to plan. Residents and others are planning their own changes for Arlington all the time. A Master Plan specifies what Arlington has planned for itself. Communities with Master Plans have better bond ratings, get bonus points on grants, and send a positive message to those considering business or

residential locations. Having a Master Plan is more fiscally prudent, efficient, and predictable than addressing improvements and development on an ad hoc basis.”

The Master Plan will be a two-year public process to set goals and communicate a long-term shared vision, followed by a review of current trends relative to land use, economic strength, housing, open space, recreation, transportation, population, demographics, public facilities, and natural, cultural, and historic amenities. The plan culminates in an implementation guide with action steps, a time-line and budget, responsible parties, and geographic locations for various activities.

Arlington Land Trust, Inc. P.O. Box 492, Arlington, Massachusetts, 02476 **Phone:** 781-643-3156 **Email:** info@arlingtonlandtrust.org

An eleven-member Master Plan Advisory Committee will guide the process, along with active involvement by the public, landowners, the Department of Planning and Community Development, and the Redevelopment Board (Arlington's Planning Board). The final Master Plan takes effect upon formal adoption by the Redevelopment Board. The endorsement of the Master Plan by the Board of Selectmen and Town Meeting will also be sought. An experienced Master Plan consultant will work with the Town to guide the process.

Open Space and the Master Plan

Arlington's approved Open Space Plan is the starting point for the open space element of the Master Plan. The Master Plan is expected to arrive at shared objectives for protecting and expanding open space in Arlington, including specific priority action steps for the Mill Brook corridor and other locations.

All Master Plan elements are interrelated. Choices made to protect or expand open space could limit economic development opportunities or housing in certain locations. On the other hand, open space can improve flood control, increase passive recreation opportunities, and boost nearby property values, and it doesn't generate traffic or public service costs.

The Master Plan is about guiding and pursuing desired, shared choices. Members of the Arlington Land Trust are encouraged to participate in this ongoing public process. We are pleased that three of the appointees to the Advisory Committee – Greg Bowe, Charlie Kalauskas and Ann LeRoyer – are current members of ALT.

ALT Member Profile



Otto, Jean and their son Tano Mejia, Sutherland Road residents for nearly 20 years, joined ALT during the effort to preserve Elizabeth Island, and they have been members ever since. The family has a longstanding love of the outdoors. Otto grew up in rural Guatemala and Jean spent much of her childhood exploring family land in Vermont, which is permanently protected with a conservation easement. "We've always appreciated having space to catch frogs, stargaze, or just look at the leaves from a hammock, whether in Vermont or Arlington," reports Jean, "and we appreciate ALT's focus on saving our Town's remaining open spaces."

Renewed Symmes Development Provides More Open Space

Development finally began this past summer on the former Symmes Hospital site off Summer Street. This long-awaited project will include two new parks and other dedicated conservation areas for all Town residents to enjoy.

Almost ten years ago, Town Meeting voted to purchase the Symmes property in order to have a say in how the approximately 18-acre site would be developed. With commanding views toward Boston and a steep, partially wooded terrain, the site had the potential to be a major redevelopment opportunity with significant impacts on the Town.

After a lengthy public process, the Town established parameters and selected a developer to construct a large residential condominium complex at the top of the property, a smaller townhouse-style residential development near the base of the hill, and a medical office building part way up Hospital Road. This development plan included a half-acre Vista Park overlooking Arlington and Boston to the east, and it preserved almost eight acres of existing woods. Both areas were protected by a permanent Conservation Restriction to be held jointly by the Arlington Land Trust and the Arlington Conservation Commission.

Due in part to the downturn in the economy in 2008, work on the redevelopment plan never began, the developer defaulted on its loan, and the property went through the foreclosure process. In the spring of 2011, a number of developers expressed interest in revitalizing the Symmes site, largely along the lines previously approved by the Town.

Two of those developers joined together to form Arlington 360 LLC, obtained ownership of the site, and received the Town's blessing to proceed. In April 2012, Arlington 360 commenced work on a 164-unit apartment complex and 12 townhouse condominiums at the top of the site.

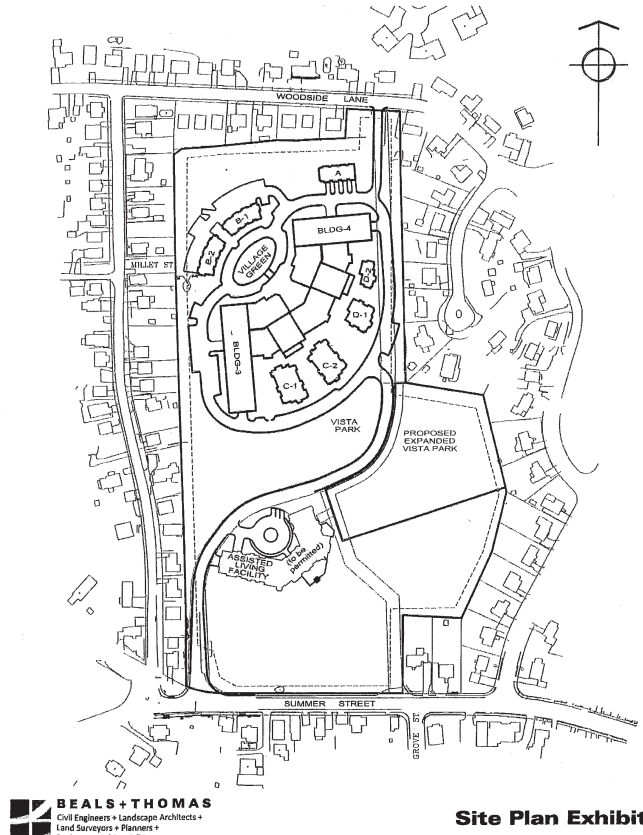
In place of the townhouse condominiums near the foot of the property, Arlington 360 proposed an assisted living facility to be developed by another entity with that expertise. The Arlington Redevelopment Board approved that change, and a two-acre portion of the Symmes site was recently transferred to Shelter/Brightview Arlington for a 90-unit assisted living facility. Work on this part of the site is expected to begin next spring. A temporary sales trailer for the facility and a small temporary parking area are being built in the woods along Summer Street.

Instead of a medical office building, a second park will be created on the land retained by Arlington 360 up the hill from the assisted living facility. This new Lower Symmes Park, at almost two acres, will replace a current parking lot across the road from the Vista Park. It will abut the Symmes Woods and be designed for passive recreation with views of the Boston skyline framed through the trees. It will contain pervious pathways, mowed strips within an open meadow area, and landscaped beds as well as a limited number of benches and picnic tables.

Arlington 360

Exhibit C-1
Site Plan (w/Assisted Living Component)

Arlington, Massachusetts



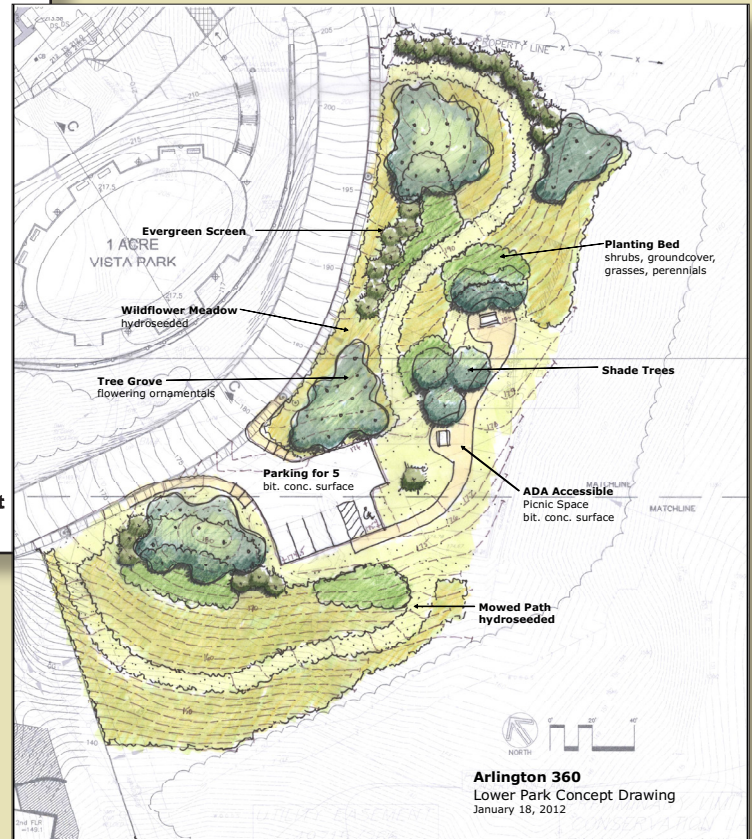
BEALS+THOMAS
Civil Engineers + Landscape Architects +
Land Surveyors + Planners +
Environmental Scientists

Site Plan Exhibit

Left: Arlington 360's proposed overall plan for the Symmes site with housing, an assisted living facility, and two parks.

Right: Preliminary concept drawing of the new Lower Park, about half way up the hill on Hospital Road, across from the Vista Park.

Proposed Plans for the Symmes Site



Arlington 360
Lower Park Concept Drawing
January 18, 2012

Courtesy of Arlington 360 LLC

In the relatively flat area between Summer Street and the assisted living site lies the bulk of the Symmes Woods, which is dominated by Norway Maple trees. While the property was undeveloped for many years, debris such as concrete blocks, gravel, and metal slid down the steep slope and into the woods. Arlington 360 had agreed to conduct a clean-up of the woods, which happened last summer. A few trees had to be cut or pruned to facilitate this clean-up.

Arlington 360 also agreed to fund a forest management plan. The first part of that plan, a forest inventory, was also completed during the summer. This inventory will help guide management of the Symmes Woods once construction work is complete and residents have moved into the new apartments and townhouses. The Arlington Land Trust and Arlington Conservation Commission will foster the creation of a "friends of" the Symmes Woods group to provide input on how to manage the woods and other protected areas around the

Symmes site. Management decisions likely will include whether and where to locate foot trails and what new species of trees should be planted.

Management of the Symmes Woods, Vista Park, and Lower Park is currently governed by a management plan agreed to by the developers, the Arlington Redevelopment Board, the Arlington Land Trust, and the Arlington Conservation Commission. When the work is complete, all these open spaces will be protected by a Conservation Restriction and Public Access Easement held by the Land Trust and Conservation Commission. An interim restriction and easement are in place now to govern these areas during construction.

To learn more about the forthcoming development, visit <http://arlington360const.com/>



2013 Arlington Reservoir Calendar

The Reservoir Committee of Arlington Vision 2020 assembled a 2013 calendar with scenes around the Reservoir to draw particular attention to the new Wildlife Habitat Garden and to the overall Reservoir environment—one of Arlington's open space treasures.

The garden now surrounding the new bridge and spillway has been planted with native shrubs, trees, and perennials that attract local wildlife and provide food, water, shelter, and places to raise young. The garden is the result of many years of planning and hard work by the Reservoir Committee. Designed by Arlington resident and landscape designer Martine Gougault, the garden is now a valued public amenity for the immediate Reservoir neighborhood and the entire Arlington community.

Inspired by an anonymous donation from an Arlington Land Trust member, the garden is now supported by contributions from other ALT members and local residents, along with valuable assistance from the Arlington Conservation Commission and Department of Public Works. The DPW crews prepared the site and installed water pipes and spigots that help sustain the garden, and they continue to contribute materials such as wood chips for the pathways.

The calendar is being sold for \$10 each at these local businesses: Arlington Swifty Printing (in the Heights), Firefly Moon (gift store in the Heights), Book Rack (in the Center).

For more information about the Arlington Reservoir Committee, see <http://www.arlington2020.org/reservoir/>

Busa Farm

Dennis Busa, former owner and current farm manager, has received another lease from the Town of Lexington for the 2013 garden season. He will be operating the CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) program again with Busa Bucks and extensive Pick Your Own opportunities as he has done for many years. Large shares are \$400 for 450 Busa Bucks and \$200 for 225 Busa Bucks. To sign up, mail a check and registration to Dennis Busa, 6 Westminster Ave., Lexington MA 02420.

Meanwhile, Lexington officials are still working on the Request for Proposals process for a long-term community farming program, and considering final placement of the affordable housing units that have been proposed as part of the project.

Learn about Coyotes in Arlington and Environs

Coyotes, or sometimes just their tracks, have been spotted throughout our region, including on Elizabeth Island when Spy Pond is frozen over.

The Land Trust annual meeting on January 29, 2013, will feature John Maguranis, noted coyote expert, Belmont's animal control officer, and the Massachusetts representative to Project Coyote, a national organization that promotes educated coexistence between people and coyotes. Its goals include championing progressive management policies that reduce human-coyote conflict, supporting innovative scientific research, and fostering respect for and understanding of America's native wild "song dog."

John Maguranis served as a U.S. Army veterinary technician for more than 20 years, caring for a wide range of animals from bald eagles to bison. Upon retiring from the Army, he put his veterinary skills to work for wildlife in Massachusetts. He quickly recognized the unfair press regarding coyotes and started a campaign to educate the community about why coyotes matter ecologically and why they deserve respect and appreciation.

John has made hundreds of presentations about living with coyotes, empowering communities, nonprofit organizations, and other local animal control officers with the tools, information, and resources they need to coexist. His love for the environment, wildlife, and ecology has driven him to become a strong advocate for America's song dog and for conservation issues in general. He has worked collaboratively with many organizations and researchers throughout New England on policy-related issues and field research while advocating for better treatment of coyotes and all wildlife.

John's passion and engaging personality have been instrumental in helping to foster educated coexistence and compassionate conservation. He is able to distill information from scientists, researchers, and biologists and present it in a way that is meaningful and memorable.

To learn more about living with coyotes in our community, come to the annual meeting at the Senior Center, 27 Maple Street, on January 29, 2013, 7–9 pm. For more information about Project Coyote, visit www.projectcoyote.org.

Arlington Families Visit Elizabeth Island

Land Trust board members and volunteers welcomed visitors to Elizabeth Island during the Friends of Spy Pond Park Fun and Work Day celebration on September 8. Critical help was provided by the Arlington-Belmont Crew, which provided a motor boat to ferry many Arlington families and others across a wind-tossed Spy Pond.

While canoes and kayaks were essentially grounded due to high winds, Greer Dent of the A-B crew navigated the team's launch between the Spy Pond Park boat ramp and Elizabeth Island's north landing. More than 50 people of all ages were able to experience the beauty of the island, most of them for the first time.

ALT board member Ted Siegan and volunteer Susan Stamps greeted the visitors and guided them around the island, while other board members manned the boat ramp and coordinated launches and landings until threatening weather cut the planned visiting time a bit short. The folks who visited, and several who arrived too late for a visit this year, expressed great interest in the island, and some of the younger visitors were quite disappointed when they had to leave the island.



ALT board member Ted Siegan (far right) introduces visitors to the island's flora.

We expect to offer more tours next spring and summer to ensure that all who are interested in the island can experience it up close. And, of course, the island is open to the public and can be visited anytime. The town offers boat rentals in the summer, and walking or skating on the iced-over pond is possible if we have a cold enough winter to ensure safe passage. Consult the Arlington Recreation Department for more information about boat rentals: <https://www.arlingtonrec.com/info/>

Stewardship Update

Following the guidelines in the Elizabeth Island Stewardship Plan that was prepared by Mass Audubon, the Land Trust plans to better define trails and implement erosion control measures. We expect to go before the Conservation Commission in the spring to obtain the required permits for doing minimal landscape work on the island to complete those improvements. If you are interested in volunteering with the Stewardship Committee, contact us at info@arlingtonlandtrust.edu.

ALT Member Profile

Mary and John Deyst

As long time residents of Arlington we feel fortunate to live in a place where good government and active citizen participation are significant aspects of daily life. The recent development of the Wildlife Habitat Garden at the Arlington Reservoir is one very good example of how this kind of cooperation can be very effective. As birders we often visit the reservoir, and this delightful garden is always a very welcoming aspect of our walk. We are fortunate that the Arlington Land Trust has been in the forefront of protecting our green spaces and water resources.



Thanks to you!

The Arlington Land Trust thanks its members and friends for their generous contributions in 2012.

Guardians (\$1,000 and above)

Martin & Marjorie Cohn
John & Mary Deyst
Gerri & Steve Ricci

Sponsors (\$500–\$1,000)

Lisa Fredman
Christopher M. Leich
Roger Tobin & Bonnie Payne

Patrons (\$200–\$500)

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Brad Bennett & Barbara Schwartz
Bob & Elaine Bowes
Mildene Bradley
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The Lowy-Zigman Family
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Ed & Louise Tsoi
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Sandy Vorce & Becky McFall
Robin Watkins
Bruce & Susan Wheltle
Neal & Jean Winston
John & Patricia Worden
Roger & Roberta Wrubel
Joseph Zarba

Members (up to \$50)

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Dorothy Anger
Andrew Anway
Janice Bakey
Kevin & Mimi Barbera
Charles & Nancy Barry
Richard & Irene Bauer
Beate Becker
Bill & Madelon Berkowitz
Colin & Susanne Blair
Thomas Block & Dorothy Poole
Jacob & Nancy Bloom
Barbara Boyle
Claire Bryant
Margaret Buckley
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Lavinia & John Connors
Jane Culbert & Henry Olds
Louise Davis
Roger Dempsey & Linda Chase
Barbara Dickson
Elizabeth Durant



Incentivizing Conservation

Are you thinking about donating land for conservation? The Commonwealth's new Conservation Land Tax Credit, or CLTC, is in full swing. Donors can receive up to \$50,000 in tax credits for donations of eligible land or conservation restrictions. The donation must permanently protect important natural areas and resources as certified by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs prior to the donation.

The goal of the program is to protect biological diversity, agricultural and forestry production, and natural recreational assets including scenic and cultural resources. The program has already been a big success, attracting many landowners who considered protecting their land but wanted help to cover donation costs and to defray loss of revenue from a potential sale. The Commonwealth provides a refundable tax credit of 50 percent of the appraised donation value, up to \$50,000.

For more information, including how to apply, visit: <http://www.mass.gov/eea/land-use-habitats/land-conservation/massachusetts-conservation-tax-credit-program.html>.

Status Quo at the Mugar Site

After the lively discussion and presentation of a "conservation vision" for the Mugar property at the Land Trust's 2011 Annual Meeting in January 2012, we have continued efforts to restart a dialog with the Mugar family, thus far without success. During the year several rumors of proposed developments circulated, but none of them have materialized into a formal project.

We will continue to keep alive the vision of permanently protected open space at the Mugar site in the critical Alewife region, which is already overbuilt and cannot accommodate severe flooding and traffic congestion.

ALT MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

If you have not already renewed your ALT membership for 2013, please go to the Web site (www.arlingtonlandtrust.org) to download a copy of the membership form, or sign up at www.networkforgood.org to renew online.

Thank you again for your support. If you have any questions, please contact ALT at info@arlingtonland-trust.org.

Andres Estrada
Kathy & Peter Feinmann
Ron Feldman
Elsie Fiore
Steven Fleming
H. Christian Floyd
Clifton & Carmenza Fonstad
Beth Ann Friedman
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UPCOMING EVENTS

2013 Mass Land Conservation Conference

This annual, day-long training and networking event provides land trust board members and staff, urban parks administrators and advocates, municipal commission members, and others interested in conservation with the information, skills, and connections they need to be most effective.

The 2013 conference theme is “What is a Green Future Worth: From Rural Landscapes to City Parks.” While the benefits of protecting our forests, farms and river corridors are well appreciated, green investment pays many other dividends through the greening of our cities. Land conservation and green communities contribute to more livable neighborhoods, better public health, more vibrant local economies, clean air and water, and opportunities for access to fresh, local food. In an era of budget constraints and increasing pressure on our natural resources, it is more important than ever that we recognize the economic benefits of land conservation to ensure the sustainability of our communities for future generations.

The workshop tracks will include: Urban Conservation and Greening; Economic Benefits of Land Conservation and Emerging Issues; Land Management and Stewardship; Land Protection Tools and Techniques; Legal, Tax and Compliance Matters; and Organizational Management and Fundraising.

The Massachusetts Land Conservation Conference is co-convened by Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition and The Trustees of Reservations’ Putnam Conservation Institute.

When: Saturday, March 23, 2013, 8 am – 4 pm

Where: Worcester Technical High School, Worcester, MA

Information: www.massland.org

EcoFest: EcoFootprints: Arlington People, Places, Spaces

This annual event seeks to raise environmental awareness on varied issues of interest to Arlington residents. This year’s program focuses on open spaces in Arlington. It is cosponsored by Vision 2020/ Sustainable Arlington, Arlington Garden Club, Department of Public Works, and other local organizations. The featured speaker will be Meg Muckenhaupt of Lexington, a writer on many environmental topics and editor of the Belmont Citizen’s Forum newsletter.

When: Saturday, March 23, 2013, 10 am – 2 pm

Where: Arlington Town Hall

Information: www.sustainablearlington.org

ARLINGTON
LAND • TRUST



P.O. Box 492
Arlington, MA 02476

Annual Meeting

Tuesday, January 29

7:00–9:00 pm

Arlington Senior Center
27 Maple Street, Arlington

Wine & Refreshments

Guest Speaker
John Maguranis,

Belmont Animal Control Officer
and state representative
for Project Coyote,