

The Green Dot

Summer

Newsletter of the Dorchester Environmental Health Coalition

2009

Vacant lot becomes a new park

On June 27 a horde of neighborhood children stampeded onto the new Elmhurst Playground to test out the equipment, including the water spray park at right. The new park was built and advocated for by a wide coalition, including the Talbot-Norfolk Triangle United neighborhood association, The Trust for Public Land, The Boston Project Ministries, the City of Boston and others. DEHC's Rosanne Foley sat on the community's parks action committee.

Mayor Thomas Menino did the honors with the scissors and the ribbon, and TNTU held a full block party with DJ and a feast to celebrate. The idea for the park came from community members who have advocated to renovate the city-owned lot for near a decade, and also a TPL study that determined the neighborhood to be one that suffered from a dearth of open space.



Photo by Pete Stidman

Teens believe tending crops could help “stop the violence”

When we asked a few of the youth involved in our urban agriculture work to write a paragraph in response to a request from the Dorchester Reporter for a vision of green Dorchester in 2050, I wasn't surprised to read that everyone had a strong vision of gardens, farms and healthy food. But I was surprised to read in their responses was the link they made between this possible reality and a decrease in violence. One of our youth described the neighborhood as “more friendly and people coming together when they have problems and less shooting.” Another felt that “with more farms you have less violence,” and yet another thought that youth programs

associated with neighborhood farms was important so “kids could stay out of trouble and stop the violence.” The Food Project staff members do not talk much about how or whether our programs impact our youths' involvement in our attitude towards violence, but clearly to these young people they see a link between a greener future and a safer community.



Teens working at The Food Project, like those seen here tending to crops just off East Cottage Street in 2004, are making a link between urban farming and reducing violent crimes.

—Image courtesy The Food Project

—Danielle Andrews, Urban Grower at the Food Project (Special thanks to the Dorchester Reporter)

Dorchester's Farmer's Markets

—Tuesdays—

Dorchester House

1353 Dorchester Ave.

11am to 2pm

(July to Oct.)

—Thursdays—

Bowdoin St. Health Center

230 Bowdoin St.

3pm to 7pm

(July to Oct.)

Codman Sq. Health Center

637 Washington St.

1pm to 6pm

(June 25 to Oct. 19)

—Fridays—

Peabody Square

Odwin Learning Center

1963 Dorchester Ave.

3pm to 7pm

(July 10 to Oct. 30)

—Saturdays—

Fields Corner

Park Street Shopping

Center Parking Lot

9am to Noon

(July 11 thru Oct.)

—Sundays—

Franklin Park

Zoo's main entrance

1pm to 4pm

(Mid-Aug. thru Oct.)

City's recycling program gets easier, and hopefully stronger

Jim Hunt III of the city's environment department is hoping that single-stream recycling will be this city's ticket to cleaner streets, saving taxpayer money, and reducing Boston's contribution to landfills.

The basic effect for Dorchester residents is that you no longer have to sort paper from plastic and glass, it's all in one bin. It may take a year or so for everyone in the city to get a fancy new recycling cart, but as of July 1, go ahead and mix it up.

Making recycling easier is a sure ticket to increasing its flow, according to cities that have tried the method, and Boston is adding two new types of recycling items as well. You can now recycle the cardboard and metal "spiral cans" that often

carry coffee or potato chips, and you can also recycle rigid plastics such as that used for laundry baskets and toys. That goes along with pretty much all paper, cardboard (including pizza boxes), aluminum, tin, glass and plastic containers, including milk and soy milk cartons that the city already collects.

The city is sending out 300,000 Recycling and Trash Guides to every resident in Boston to explain it all.

The large, 64-gallon blue bins used for single stream in buildings are being

distributed this month in Jamaica Plain and Roxbury, and to other neighborhoods over the next 12 months. In some areas, clear plastic bags will become the norm. But all city residents will be free to mix

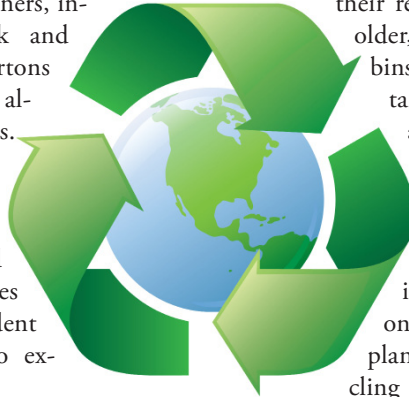
their recycling in the older, smaller blue bins—or any container that has a recycling sticker from the city's recycling department on it—starting on July 1. If the plan boosts recycling in the way officials expect it to, the

city could save nearly \$1 million avoiding the cost of send-

ing recyclables to landfills.

"Recycling is one of the easiest steps individuals can take to both improve our environment and reduce costs of waste disposal," said Jim Hunt, Chief of Environmental Services for the City. "The pilot programs we advanced in several Boston neighborhoods increased recycling by more than 50 percent and clearly demonstrated that Boston residents want to do their part to recycle more."

Get more info at cityofboston.gov/publicworks/recycling.



Pick up a "Kill-A-Watt," on loan at your local library

Ever wonder how much energy your stereo/toaster/clock radio is using when it's not turned on? Now you can find out, for free.

The city is lending out, via your local library, DEHC, and a number of other organizations, a fancy little thing called a Kill-A-Watt. A Kill-A-Watt is a device that plugs in between your wall outlet and any given appliance, and then tells you how much electricity it's sucking out of NStar.

It's a short step to multiply the appliance's kilowatt-hour reading by the rate you pay for electricity (shown on your latest electricity bill).

For example, if you leave a 60-watt light bulb burning for 10 hours a day, that's equal to .60 kilowatt hours (kWh). If NStar charges you .25 cents a kWh, that comes out to \$.15 a day, and over \$54 a year!

And of course, if we use less energy, the liquid natural gas power plants that supply Boston will spew less pollution and carbon dioxide into the air, and the process of global warming will slow down a bit—helping to preserve our air and Dorchester's coastline.

"This program is yet another way that we are engaging residents in a campaign against wasteful energy use," said Jim Hunt, Chief of Environment and Energy for the City.

Check out a Kill-A-Watt at your local library branch, at DEHC in the Lenane Building in Fields Corner, or find more locations and information at cityofboston.gov/environmentalandenergy.



The Green Dot

is a quarterly publication of the **Dorchester Environmental Health Coalition**. It can be found on the Internet at dehc.org, via e-mail to subscribers, and in print at Dorchester's public libraries.

DEHC is a community-led network that tackles urban environmental health and justice issues to improve the health of those who live, work, play and learn in Dorchester. The coalition is funded by an anonymous foundation.

DotWell, DEHC's fiscal partner, works with **Dorchester House Multi-Service Center** and **Codman Square Health Center** to provide integrated clinical and community services to address health disparities, build social capital, and meet the complex needs of the dynamic Dorchester community.

DEHC signs Neponset Dam agreement

Months of community meetings and planning have created consensus on a new plan that would tear down one dam and lower and build a fish ramp over another—the Baker Dam at Lower Mills—restoring an ecology that has been absent in the Neponset for hundreds of years.

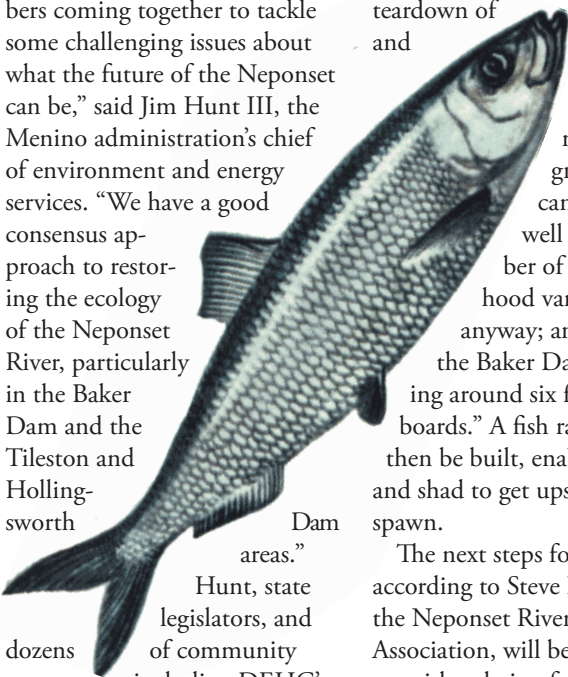
“Here’s a good example of the state, the city, watershed activists and historic preservation activists and community members coming together to tackle some challenging issues about what the future of the Neponset can be,” said Jim Hunt III, the Menino administration’s chief of environment and energy services. “We have a good consensus approach to restoring the ecology of the Neponset River, particularly in the Baker Dam and the Tileston and Hollingsworth Dam areas.”

Hunt, state legislators, and dozens of community groups including DEHC’s Rosanne Foley, who participated in creating the agreement, were on hand on a Tuesday evening

in May at the Baker Square Condominiums to sign a list of recommendations to the state’s Department of Conservation and Recreation, which oversees the two Commonwealth-owned dams. Funding has not been identified for the work, nor has legislation made it a certainty just yet.

The recommendations include a cleanup of PCBs that have been discovered at both sites; a teardown of the Tileston and Hollingsworth Dam, which neighborhood groups agreed can’t be seen well from a number of neighborhood vantage points anyway; and lowering the Baker Dam by removing around six feet of “flash boards.” A fish ramp would then be built, enabling herring and shad to get upstream and spawn.

The next steps for the project, according to Steve Pearlman of the Neponset River Watershed Association, will be coming up with a design for the ramp and estimating the costs of the cleanup, both in preparation for applying for grant money.



A dispatch from...

DotBike

Over the past year DotBike has taken up a number of advocacy efforts with the intent of making Dorchester a better neighborhood for us all to cycle in. We’ve reported in the past about some of the more visible efforts that have bore fruit—like the new city bike racks that have been springing up all over town and our participation in several community events. However, we’ve continued to work on several other projects and kept our eyes out for ways to influence and guide policies that will make Dorchester a better and safer place to cycle. The progress on most of these efforts has been much slower but is still moving along.

We have met with project managers at the MBTA about improving bicycle parking facilities at T stations in Dorchester. I just received a report that a new rack was installed at the Fields Corner Station in a visible and convenient location, so this is good.

But as Ashmont Station is nearing completion we need to make sure that adequate facilities are included and certainly there can be improvements at other Dot stations.

The Dot Ave. intersection redesign project is reaching the final stages. There was a recent meeting where designs were presented and it was clear that while some bike accommodations had been included they were given short shrift. In response, we asked for input from DotBikers and wrote up extensive comments and suggestions as to how bike boxes, lanes and minor curb reconfigurations would not only make these intersections safer for cyclists but could also be thought of in the context of a continuous bike lane along much of Dorchester Ave. We’ll have to wait and see if these suggestions get incorporated into the final designs.

There has also been a group of us working with BNAN to close the gap between the Neponset Greenway and the Harbor Trail with an off road bike path. We’ve had several positive interactions with many interested parties and we have recently heard that National Grid who had previously refused to even consider allowing a path to pass by the gas tanks is now having discussions with DCR on possible options.

These are just a few of the things we are keeping tabs on, small steps forward.

—Andy Schroeder, DotBike

Got something to say?

The Green Dot is the community’s tool to talk about how the Dorchester environment affects our health, and how we, in turn, impact our environment.

If you have something you’d like to write for the Green Dot, or just want to feed us an idea for a future topic, send us an email at:

dorchesterenviro@gmail.com

DEHC partners**ACORN**

Alliance for a Healthy Tomorrow
 Alt. for Community & Environment
 Annapolis Neighborhood Assoc.
 Arnold Arboretum
 Ashmont-Adams Nbd. Assoc.
 Ashmont Hill Association
 Boston Climate Action Network
 Boston Green Justice Coalition
 Boston Public Health Commission
 Boston Urban Asthma Coalition
 Boston Urban Forest Coalition
 Bowdoin Street Health Center
 Breath of Life: Dorchester Teens
 Civic Health Institute, DotWell
 Clam Point Neighborhood
 Clean Water Action
 Codman Square Health Center
 Codman Sq. Nbd. Dev. Corp.
 Conservation Law Foundation
 Dot House Multi-Service Center
 Dorchester Park Association
 DotBike
 DotWell
 Earthworks
 Fields Corner Civic Association
 Fields Corner Main Street
 The Food Project
 Four Corners Main Street
 Franklin Park Coalition
 Friends of Ronan Park
 Greater Bowdoin/Geneva N.A.
 Greater Four Corners Action Cln.
 Grow Boston Greener
 Hub on Wheels
 John Snow, Inc. (JSI)
 Lead Action Collaborative
 MassBike
 MassCOSH
 Neponset River Watershed Assoc.
 New Ecology Inc.
 Park Patrol
 St. Marks Area Main Street
 SCI Dorchester
 Trust for Public Land
 The Urban Ecology Institute
 Viet-American Init. for Dev.

Get Active! Events Calendar

Thu, July 16, 5pm – 7pm**Climate Change Adaptation Public Session**

The Climate Change Adaptation Advisory Committee has been charged by the state Legislature with evaluating strategies for adapting to the predicted effects of climate change. At the Dudley Branch Library, 65 Warren St., 02119

Sat, July 18, 10am – 2pm**Franklin Park Bike Festival**

Free bike “rentals” and myriad bicycling activities for all ages, including learn to ride lessons, special teen events, and guided rides through the adjacent neighborhoods and along the Emerald Necklace. At the Franklin Park Playstead See franklinparkcoalition.org for more.

July 19 to 26**Mass. Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Week**

Several local events, including the Franklin Park Bike Festival.

Sun, July 19, 1pm – 4pm**Ronan Park Kite Day****Thu, July 23, 5pm – 7pm****Columbia Point Master Plan Task Force Meeting**

As of Monday, June 30th copies of the draft Master Plan will be available to download on the BRA website at bostonredevelopmentauthority.org. This plan will be discussed. At Boston College High School, 150 Morrissey Blvd, Dorchester MA

Sat, July 25, 10am – 11:30am**The Well-Tended Vegetable Garden**

Learn planting systems and garden concepts to maximize your garden experience. See www.bostonnatural.org for more. At City Natives Horticultural Learning Center, 30 Edge-water Drive, Mattapan.

Mon, July 27, 11am – 12pm**Kroc Center Groundbreaking**

Please join us for this Ground-breaking Celebration! To learn more about the Kroc Center visit the website at boston.salarykroc.org. At 650 Dudley St., Dorchester.

Fri, July 31, 7am – 8am**Bike Friday with DotBike**

Meet 7:00 a.m. at Peabody Sq, or at 7:10 AM in Fields Corner. When Boston Bikes sees the biggest group coming from Dot, it helps us make the case for directing their efforts our way.

Sat, August 1, 8am – 9am**Tour de Farms**

Ride to area farms. Long and short options start at 8 a.m. and 9 a.m., respectively. See www.dotbike.org

Tue, Aug. 4, 6:30pm – 7:30pm**Friends of Ronan Park meeting**

Discuss anything and everything related to Ronan Park. See www.friendsofronanpark.org. At 230 Bowdoin St.

Wed, August 5, 7pm – 8:30pm**Neponset Greenway Council**

This group oversees and advocates for the public greenway on the banks of the Neponset River. Please double-check meeting location on website www.bostonnatural.org or call Candice Cook at BNAN at 617-542-7696 x16 or candice@bostonnatural.org. At Hyde Park Police Station District 18, 1249 Hyde Park Ave.

Sat, August 8, 11am – 4pm**2nd Annual Dorchester Beach Festival**

Come sail & canoe in the cove! Observe & handle live local tidal pool animals at the N.E. Aquarium’s Traveling Tidal Pool exhibit. Learn about native marine life by embarking on an eco-savenger hunt. Join in ‘old school’ field games, art activities and more! Face painting, moon bounce, kite

decorating & flying. Toddlers to seniors, something for all! At Malibu Beach, Dorchester.

Thu, August 13, 6pm – 7pm**Boston Gardeners Council meeting**

“The Art of Raised Bed Gardening” presented by Dan d’Heilly. At 62 Summer St., Boston.

Aug 20-21**Boston Green Fest**

An entertaining education festival celebrating the many ways we can create a better world by greening our neighborhoods, our communities and the entire Boston area. The festivities will include “Project Recycle Runway”, a walk through the Time Tunnel, gospel with the Boston Community Choir, fun with the “YoYo Show”, lots more entertainment, food, and fun activities for children. Festival-goers will learn what it means to eat and grow local organic food, improve nutrition and healthcare, green our city, build healthy communities, take political action, create green jobs and a green economy. At Boston City Hall Plaza.

Sat, Aug. 22, 10am – 3:30pm**Kites on the River**

At Pope John Paul Park, Dorchester.

Fri, September 18, 7pm**DotPark3: Dinner Dance Auction**

Dorchester Park Association is holding another festive gala to benefit the Dorchester Park Endowment Fund. See www.dotpark.org for tickets and information.

Sun, September 27, All day**Hub On Wheels**

Bicycle festival on City Hall Plaza. See details at hubonwheels.org.

For a constantly updated list of events, see dehc.org.