Protect the past, improve the present, plan for the future.

Last fall Friends’ volunteers planted several hundred spring bulbs in the park. We hope that you will enjoy them. We will be working on renewing the Sensory Garden located in the playground area. We are always looking for volunteers for planting, pruning, watering and weeding. If you are interested in helping out this year, you may contact us through our website - www.buttonwoodpark.org.

In February City DPI workers took down some of the dead trees in the park. Most of the dead trees were located on the Brownell Avenue side of the pond and near the Senior Center. We have been asking for this work for two years. There are still more trees that need to be removed. Dead trees are not only aesthetically displeasing, but are a safety issue, especially when they are located near the walking paths, playgrounds or sports fields.

While money was appropriated last year for replacement of the Buttonwood Pond dam, no timetable for work on its replacement has been announced. The city did to get the grant for geese mitigation, so there is no news on that front yet.

Mary Rapoza, Director of Parks, Recreation & Beaches, reports that funding for stormwater management and redesign of the Oneida Street parking lot and surrounding landscape at the Community Center has been received. The planning process will begin soon and the Friends will be part of the planning process.

*Bulb planting volunteers and Friends Board Members*

*Dianne Logan*  
*Frank Farrell*
In 2022 the National Association of Olmsted Parks will be celebrating the 200th anniversary of the birth of Frederick Law Olmsted. As a member of NAOP, the Friends of Buttonwood Park is planning to hold several events during Olmsted 200, and has formed a planning committee. Information on our plans for the Olmsted 200 Celebration in 2022 will be forthcoming.

Buttonwood Park is an Olmsted-inspired park, based on the principles of Olmsted as set out by Charles Eliot of Olmsted, Olmsted & Eliot in 1895. Olmsted himself never visited New Bedford. The design was done by Charles Eliot and never was officially adopted by the City of New Bedford for lack of funds as the whaling industry was on decline and textile manufacturing had not begun to flourish.

“One of the challenges for our Olmsted 200 Celebration is to make this historical and not-well-known-to-much-of-the-general-public person interesting and relevant. The NAOP Olmsted 200 planning group has come up with this cartoon-like rendering of Olmsted. It’s different, unfamiliar and fresh. One of the things that makes Olmsted still relevant today is that many of his principles are enduring principles which have stood the test of time and are as relevant as ever, if not even more so, to our modern society. Our task is to interpret and present him in contemporaneous terms. As with so many things with the park and the Friends, we do a balancing act – active vs. passive recreation, trees vs. open space, ornamental vs. the naturalistic, old vs. new. Success is often determined by how well we maintain that balance.”

Richard Leary, President-Friends of Buttonwood Park

Fuller Memorial Parkway

Most people don’t give a second thought to the roadway that bisects Buttonwood Park, let alone what the name of the roadway is: it is dedicated to 1st Lt. Walter Emerson Fuller, a New Bedford resident, veteran of WWII missing in action and presumed dead in 1943. Fuller Memorial Parkway, originally a continuation of Court Street, is built on top of the Buttonwood Pond dam.

Lt. Fuller, born on February 3, 1918, was the son of William O. and Louise Fuller, and became an officer in the United State Army Air Force. He was a navigator/bombardier and assigned to the 5th Air Force, 38th Bombardment Group, 405th Bombardment Squadron aboard a B-25C-10 “Mitchell” bomber named the “Daisy Mae” stationed at 17-Drome (Durand) near Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea. The bomber and crew flew at least 10 combat missions prior to their final mission on October 13, 1943.

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The Yoshino Cherry trees on the west side of Buttonwood Park pond were planted in 1931. Sixty trees were given to the city by the Garden Club of Buzzards Bay. The lifespan of the Yoshino Cherry is eighty years, which explains why our trees are now in such poor condition and many have died. Some of us can remember their beauty fifty years ago and how we looked forward to their blooming each April. This year the Friends are planning to have our Yoshino Cherries professionally pruned and possibly planting a few new ones.

The Yoshino Cherry (*prunus x yedoensis*) is a deciduous, flowering tree that yields a profusion of fragrant, pale pink-white blooms in the spring. The tree's bark exhibits a glossy quality, and its foliage is dark green in the summer and yellow in the fall. It was introduced to America in 1902. Japanese legend states that each spring a fairy maiden hovers low in the warm sky, awakening the sleeping cherry trees with her delicate breath.

The Yoshino Cherry is the flowering tree planted around the Tidal Basin in Washington, D.C. Those trees, too, are in trouble due to age and the flooding of the sidewalks, making them impassable at times and endangering the trees’ roots. To solve this problem, renowned landscape architects from across the country reimagined the future of the Tidal Basin and National Mall.

Fuller Memorial Parkway (continued from page 2)

On that day, the bombing mission was to attack Tobera Airfield near Rabaul. On the return flight, the aircraft became disoriented in bad weather and clipped a mountain ridge. The pilot, Lt. Delbert Campbell ordered the 5-man crew to bail out and witnessed the aircraft turn and make its final crash dive. After parachuting, Lt. Campbell and two other members of the crew walked to a nearby rubber plantation near Rorona (Raron) and were taken back to their airbase. Another injured crew member was transported to a hospital in Port Moresby. Although he successfully bailed out of the plane, Lt. Fuller was never seen again nor were his remains ever recovered.

Although declared to be officially dead by the USAF in 1943, his family apparently never lost hope. Lt. Fuller’s name appears on the tablets of the missing at the Manila American Cemetery, Philippines, and on his family headstone in Oak Grove Cemetery in New Bedford, as a cenotaph, where it plainly reads Lt. Walter E. Fuller, Missing in Action.

Robert Bromley
The Friends are working with the Garden Club of Buzzards Bay and Mary Rapoza, Director of Parks, Recreation & Beaches to develop a Pollinators’ Plot in Buttonwood Park. At a meeting in the fall at the park, it was decided that the plot would be located northwest of the Senior Center (the Warming House) near the pond.

The most common pollinators are bees, wasps, moths, butterflies and beetles, but birds and mammals serve as pollinators also. A pollinator is anything that visits flowers to drink nectar and helps carry pollen from the male part of the flower (stamen) to the female part of the same or another flower (stigma). The movement of pollen must occur for the plant to become fertilized and produce fruits, seeds and young plants. Populations of bees and other pollinators are declining around the world as habitat is being lost to agriculture and human development. Pollinators may have specific habitat needs for overwintering, foraging and nesting.

The first step will be to prepare the plot by tilling it and then suppressing the grass and weeds that are currently there with black plastic. After the grass and weeds have died off, a variety of colorful young plants and seeds will be grown which are selected to appeal to pollinators. Ideally the black plastic could be laid by mid-March and seed sowing around mid-May. The hope is that this area can also be used in the future as an educational tool.

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While we will be unable to hold an open Annual Meeting again this year, be assured that the Board of Directors has been meeting monthly over Zoom. Fortunately, since many of our activities take place outdoors. much of our work has continued.

In May you will be receiving our Membership Mailing. We hope that you will support us by renewing your membership or if not a member now, by becoming one.