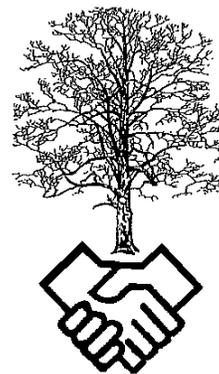


# Community Caring Institute: *A Centering Point*

Hamlett & Hauck Research and Resource Center

John E. McManus Leadership Forum



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His All Holiness Bartholomew  
Archbishop of Constantinople, New Rome, and Ecumenical Patriarch  
Rum Patrikhanesi  
342 20 Fener-Halic, Istanbul

February 24, 2011

Your All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I of Constantinople,

We respectfully ask Your Holiness to please stand with us in preserving and conserving one of the most pristine hillside woodlands left in the city of Boston.

Hellenic Hill, a rising sea of green, ancient trees overlooking Jamaica Pond (a frequently used park located within Boston's Emerald Necklace), is currently owned by multiple parties and, most notably, by Hellenic College/Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology. Recently, the school has posted 12.5 acres of this undeveloped, cherished land on the real estate market for millions of dollars.

While private developers have desired this land for decades, hoping to build high-priced housing, they have not succeeded. Since 1990, community groups have stopped the several development plans. Twice, we have fought the sale of the land to private developers, and the hillside has remained untouched. We also restricted the height of a new dormitory, ensuring that it would not interfere with the most impressive of skylines- nature's.

This land is part of the park and part of the community. Even though it is private land, the aesthetics of the park were designed to incorporate this hill, releasing people out of the harsh concrete of the city and into the natural world. Residents of Boston flock to the park, and terms of race, creed and income become nonexistent in this space.

Furthermore, the degradation of this land due to development could severely impact the life of Jamaica Pond and of the park. Contamination from the construction process and from increased human activity would likely endanger the purity of the water in the Pond, which is still an emergency water source in Boston. Changes in land use and the removal of trees may potentially impact the natural springs that feed the Pond. The removal of trees means the destruction of homes for the Pond's animal residents and for migrating birds. This is not just about beauty, but also about the survival of an important ecosystem.

Human health is also at risk; by degrading the natural environment, we reduce our exposure to green spaces, open fields, clean air and more, directly impacting our physical and mental health. While the owners of the new lots would benefit, the public would lose a place to rest their mind, to breathe clean air, and to enjoy physical activity.

Like Your Holiness, we believe that man has become reckless in its care of the earth, consumed by greed. Like Your Holiness, we believe that social justice is closely linked with our treatment of the ecosystem, and those with money and power often benefit at the cost of the poor. Like Your Holiness, we believe that “the survival of the natural environment is also the survival of ourselves.”

We hope that Your Holiness stands with us and continues to fight for the trees, animals, and all those without a voice. We ask for your help in preserving and conserving one of the last standing ‘forests’ in the city of Boston for the betterment of society and the longevity of our planet. We trust that your ideals and the principles of the Church will insert themselves into the decision-making process about this priceless land and continue your work in preserving spaces for the community at large and for generations to come.

Respectfully,

Alison Yoos

Crystal Carrington

Carmen Alcivar

Gerald Wright

Jeff Foulkes

Lynn Niizawa

*For The Committee for the Preservation of Hellenic Hill  
Community Caring Institute*

**CC: The Reverend Nicholas Triantafilou, President of Hellenic College, Inc**