

HISTORY OF STATION PARK

Station Park was a wooded lot across from the train station in the early 20th century. After World War I, local philanthropist Helen Storrow arranged for a temporary military barracks on Boston Common to be moved to the location to serve as a Girl Scout headquarters. The building later became a restaurant, a gift shop, and a hardware store.

By the 1960s, the location, owned by the Town, had become a rutted dirt parking lot for the nearby Community Store. In the late 1960s, plans were made for the construction of The Mall across Lincoln Road including stores, offices, and parking. In 1970 a group of volunteers including Bisty Donaldson of the Lincoln Garden Club (“LGC”) Warren Flint Sr., and others, began the development of a park on the location, with the aid of the Boy and Girl Scouts and other organizations. The park design included curving stone paths, specimen trees and shrubs, stone benches, and large accent stones, including one at the back of the park with a natural birdbath. LGC members donated many plants from their private gardens.

In 1972, LGC was asked to take over the park’s horticultural maintenance. For 50 years, LGC volunteers have met to plant, prune, weed, and care for the park from April through October. The Town’s Dept. of Public Works maintains the infrastructure (fences, spigots, etc.) and the Dept. of Parks & Recreation mows the grass and periodically refurbishes the stone paths. The Water Dept. assures the water supply. Horticulture students from Minuteman Technical High School periodically help the LGC volunteers with various gardening tasks.

In its history, the park has had several names including “The South Lincoln Park,” “The Mini-Park,” “The Peace Park,” and “Station Park.” LGC refers to it as “Station Park,” in keeping with the Town’s branding of the surrounding area as “Lincoln Station.”

In 1987 a “Peace Pole,” with “May Peace Prevail on Earth” in Japanese and English on its sides was added to the Park. The large wooden arbor was installed in the early 2000s.

Recently, LGC has joined other Town organizations in promoting sustainable gardening and planting of native plant pollinators.

In the fall of 2016, a Hydration Station with water fountain and water bottle spigot was added by the Town. Purchase of the grey granite water fountain block was paid for by an LGC grant.

Some interesting fun facts and notes about the Park include:

Helen Storrow, donor of the Girl Scout headquarters on the site of Station Park after WWI and throughout the 1920s, was an avid supporter of scouting activities. In the 1920s, Mrs. Storrow hosted a visit from Lord Robert Baden-Powell and Juliette Gordon Low, founders of the UK boy and girl scouting movement and the US Girl Scouts respectively. It is probable that Baden-Powell and Low visited the Girl Scout headquarters at the Park location during their stay in Lincoln.

Olive Barr was the first LGC member to manage the volunteers’ care of Station Park. At the end of the 1970s, Olive gave up her role and took over care of a flowerbed also maintained by LGC next to 3-S Pharmacy across Ridge Road from the Park. That flowerbed (no longer maintained by LGC) became known as “Olive’s Garden.” In the mid-70s, LGC was also heavily involved in the renovation of the Italian Garden at Codman House. Each year the LGC Board used its May meeting to split into three groups to work on these three parks.

In the 1970s, LGC was involved in the Town’s efforts to save its remaining elms, including a large

elm near the pond at Pierce Park. It was a sad time – not only did the Pierce Park tree succumb to Dutch Elm Disease in 1976, but a beautiful bench made of elm wood donated by an LGC member disappeared shortly after it was installed at Station Park in 1977.

Mike Farny bought the adjacent land to the Park from Joe Hurd, owner of the Community Store, to open a bike and ski store known as “The Lincoln Guide Service” in ~1980s. In 2001, after Mike Farny sold the land, significant changes in the Park were needed. LGC members were required to move a number of trees and a great deal of plant material to allow for construction of a retaining wall between the park and the new owner’s parking lot. In spring 2002, flowering specimen trees were added along the wall.

A list of trees planted in the Park to memorialize LGC members includes:

1980: A Kousa Dogwood was planted to honor Mrs. Charles V. Briggs, first Lincoln Garden Club President (1928-1930) who had recently passed away. When LGC took over Station Park in 1972, LGC membership was limited to 100. Membership opened to all later in the 1970s.

2001: A Japanese Pagoda Dogwood was planted for Alice Davis, mother of Julie Jewett.

2002: A River Birch was planted to honor Berkeley Bottjer, an avid LGC, Lincoln Library, and Audubon Society volunteer. She was known for her eclectic architectural design and house renovations including bright colors and mixes of antique and contemporary furnishings. Sadly, Ms. Bottjer passed away a few hours after the tree was planted.

2016: Although not in memory of an individual, local tree expert Alaric Naiman donated and planted a Magnolia Macrophylla at the back of the Park.

After 2016, the Park began to suffer from frustratingly low water pressure. Attempts were made to fix it to no avail. In 2022, new Water Dept. Superintendent Darin LaFalam suspected that a blockage in the pipe coming from the mainline under Lincoln Road was to blame. His staff identified a “Jelly Bean Solution.” A wad of crushed jelly beans was forced with a handpump through the Park’s pipe to the mainline. With much effort, the jelly beans burst through and the water pressure was restored!

Notes compiled by Cathy Moritz, Station Park Director, Lincoln Garden Club, Sept. 17, 2022.