

# The Huntington News

THE INDEPENDENT STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF THE NORTHEASTERN COMMUNITY [www.HuntNewsNU.com](http://www.HuntNewsNU.com) For the students, by the students since 1926

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## Boston Common to be redone by fall

By Zack Sampson, News Staff 3/24/11

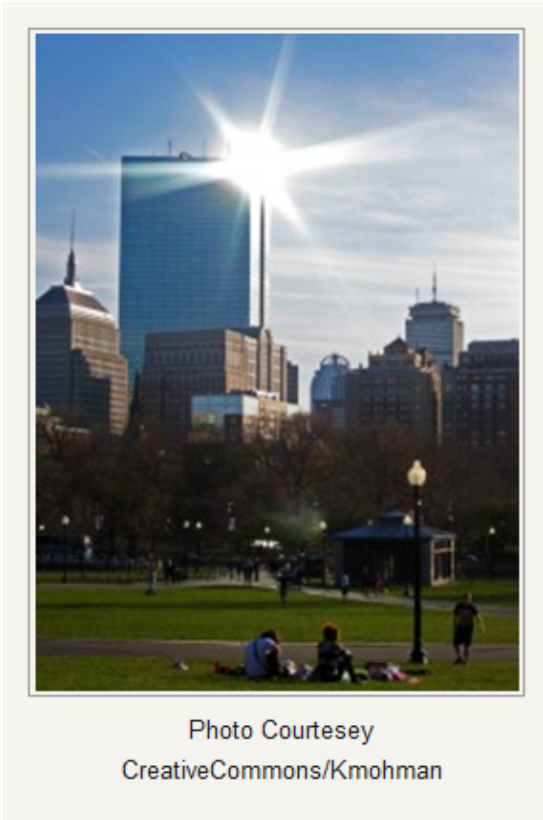


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A new, decked-out Boston Common will debut this fall, with free wireless Internet access and a renovated plaza featuring movable tables and chairs, a food cart, reading room, chess rentals and a lunchtime piano player.

"I think it will be a much more inviting space for everyone to enjoy. So I think it will become more of a destination attraction," said Toni Pollak, Boston's Parks Commissioner.

The Friends of the Public Garden, a local park advocacy group, is leading the \$1.5 million project to restore the Brewer Fountain area of the Common with license from the city.

Liz Vizza, executive director of the Friends of the Public Garden, said the restored location will also feature granite instead of cracked concrete and new landscaping. She said her organization's goal is to have visitors "discover a place that was a wonderful place and will be a wonderful place again."

The renovation is noteworthy in its extensiveness and represents a first for both the Friends of the Public Garden and the city.

"It's the most ambitious project the Friends has ever done and the most ambitious landscape partnership that the city has ever done," Vizza said.

The Friends of the Public Garden is fundraising for the project with help from Biederman Redevelopment Ventures Corporation (BRV), a New York based parks consulting company.

"Our organization has been raising money from foundations and private sources, and we have contributed a significant amount of money from ourselves," Vizza said.

Daniel Biederman, BRV's president, said his group has secured some corporate sponsorship for the restoration. He could not discuss which companies were supporting the effort in detail.

Vizza said she expects people to visit the new plaza for a variety of reasons.

"Maybe certain people will be drawn to the reading room, certain people will be drawn to listening to a piano at lunch time," she said. "I think probably the most valuable thing is having a restored place with a working fountain and some nice food to eat, and some nice tables and chairs to sit and enjoy it in."

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Some at Northeastern agree with Vizza, saying the added amenities are collectively appealing.

"I think having an actual place to sit is nice," said Deanna Kluger, a freshman history major. "And then there is food, there are books so you can sit outside and read, grab a snack, which is nice."

Other Northeastern students have shown an interest in certain amenities in particular. Don Nuzzio, a freshman chemistry major, said he specifically likes the idea of a piano player.

"I think it will set a nice ambiance, an atmosphere," he said.

Biederman, who specializes in park restoration, elaborated on the restored location's wide appeal.

"Tourists will gather there because it is the start of the Freedom Trail and the State House, even something like Cheers which is two blocks away from the heart of the Common. All of those people will come out of their visit saying it was a wonderful experience," he said.

He also said shoppers at nearby Downtown Crossing will use the plaza as a welcomed leisure spot.

"If you're at Downtown Crossing and can walk one block to the Common for lunch or just to see things going on at the Frog Pond, whatever, it makes a more attractive day," he said.

Biederman said nearby residents will also appreciate the renovation.

"Beacon Hill residents and residents of other nearby residential neighborhoods will be happier living near the Common because it seems better tended," he said.

Vizza said some locals might also find work in the plaza. People will need to service the grounds and manage the amenities. The Friends of the Public Garden will also look for musicians to play the piano.

"We're definitely open to having local people help us out, and whether those people are volunteers, interns, or paid, is in the early stages of seeing how all that is going to play out," she said.

She added that college students might find work-study or volunteer opportunities managing the book room.

"I would be involved," Kluger said. "I've always wanted to work with books. It's definitely more opportunity for work study."

Despite the size of this particular renovation project, Vizza said she does not see it as the start of a total makeover of the Common by the Friends of the Public Garden. She said the city is mostly responsible for further renovation efforts.

"In general, restoration work is the kind of work that the public owners of these parks need to be doing," she said.