

Friday, July 14, 2023

Mayor's Newton Update

FamilyAid Proposal for a Family Shelter

The Commonwealth's emergency shelter system continues to be over capacity with significantly more families facing housing instability and homelessness. Here in Massachusetts, our State has an affirmative duty to provide emergency shelter to families experiencing homelessness, sometimes referred to as a "Right to Shelter."

Earlier this spring, plans by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC, formerly known as the Department of Housing and Community Development) to establish an emergency shelter for two years in Newton at the former Hotel Indigo did not move forward.

The State is now partnering with FamilyAid, a non-profit focused exclusively on reducing the cause, scope and impact of homelessness on children and parents. The new proposal is to create a "Family Navigation Center." Families facing homelessness will live in 42 units of transitional housing and receive education, training and other support services.

FamilyAid is in the process of leasing the former Chetwynde nursing home property at 1650 Washington Street (next door to the Warren House). While some details are still being ironed out between FamilyAid and the property owners, the proposal looks likely to be filed for administrative site plan approval from the City of Newton in the next few weeks.

FamilyAid, founded more than 100 years ago, provides education and training programs, homelessness prevention and diversion services, and stable housing support to create bridges from temporary to permanent housing to more than 5,000 residents each year. Their mission is to put children and parents on a path to permanent housing. FamilyAid operates over 150 units of temporary and

permanent housing throughout Greater Boston in collaboration with the State EOHLC, including in Brookline.

More specifically, FamilyAid plans to enter into a long-term lease (55 years) for the property which will be home to its second “Family Navigation Center.” They will provide both housing and a variety of on-site services to families. The services will include job training, financial literacy, adult education, life skills, nutrition courses, and housing search and placement. Their clients typically move from this temporary housing to permanent housing in under a year. (FamilyAid continues to support the families when they are permanently housed for another two years.)

This type of housing is a temporary family shelter. To be clear, while a family will only live at 1650 Washington Street for about a year, FamilyAid is leasing the building for 55 years and thus expects to operate the family shelter permanently.

All of the residents at 1650 Washington Street will be families with children under the age of 18. Based on the current demographics of FamilyAid’s clients, the majority of the residents are anticipated to be single mothers with children age 4 and under.

Families may include both U.S. citizens and new immigrants, including refugees/asylum seekers.

FamilyAid expects to have approximately 15 staff members on-site on weekdays from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. In the evenings, overnight, on weekends and holidays, the families will be supported 24/7 on-site by trained FamilyAid staff.

The proposal for 1650 Washington Street includes renovations. They will be renovating the first floor of the property to support the on-site services (education, training, and life skill development skills), a kitchen & dining room, laundry facilities, and an indoor educational playspace. The second and third floors would be updated to accommodate 21 units of transitional housing for a total of 42 living spaces. An outdoor educational playspace will be created. (The site includes 40 parking spaces.)

FamilyAid anticipates the renovation work to take between 4-6 months to complete, with occupancy potentially in early 2024.

Representatives of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) will be in close contact with staff from the Newton Public Schools to coordinate enrollment plans for any school-age students who may be enrolling in NPS and to provide financial assistance to the district for these additional students. Families will also have the option of having their children continue their schooling at their previous school instead of switching to NPS.

DESE is expected to provide an initial \$1,000 (for initial costs such as computers and other supplies) for each student entering NPS, as well as an additional \$100 per day per student (which translates to \$18,000 for a full academic year). DESE also reimburses school districts for transportation costs.

Our new School Superintendent Anna Nolin has provided the following statement as the Newton Public Schools prepares to welcome and support new students:

Earlier this school year, Interim Superintendent Kathy Smith let the school community know that a possible emergency assistance family shelter might be opening at the former Hotel Indigo. Since then, the State decided not to move forward at that location, but a similar temporary family shelter proposal is coming forward. This housing, slated to be located at 1650 Washington Street, will have 42 housing units. Any students who may need to matriculate to Newton Schools will do so with our full support and with the partnership of the City of Newton and FamilyAid.

Like all cities and towns in the Commonwealth, we work under the State's McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act to support families who will temporarily reside in Newton. This involves coordination of services, transportation, and school supports, funded through additional state monies for this purpose. Some students living at the family shelter will attend Newton schools and some will be bused to their prior community as the Act allows for continuity of educational services and the child's circle of social life and activity to be maintained. No matter what school these students attend, our student services team will be ready to support students in this transitional period (typical stay in a shelter is 12 months) in their young lives.

I am confident our Newton schools and community members will embrace these students and families and help them integrate into our community.

I will keep you posted on any new developments as the Mayor and I work to do right by all children and the City and its resources.

Our team, including Health and Human Services, Newton Public Schools, Inspectional Services, Planning, Law, Parks, Recreation & Culture, Newton Police, and Newton Fire will all be working closely with FamilyAid and the State to understand all the facets of the proposal so we are prepared to support families while they are in Newton.

We anticipate that FamilyAid will be seeking a building permit soon to undertake necessary renovations under the Massachusetts Dover Amendment. The Dover Amendment provides an exemption from local zoning when the use of a building qualifies as a religious or educational purpose; family shelters which provide educational services typically qualify.

The building and any renovations are required to be reviewed and approved by Newton's Inspectional Services, Fire and Health staff.

I have been in touch with City Councilors from both Ward 3 and Ward 4 (this location is in Ward 3, right on the border of Ward 4). In the coming weeks, FamilyAid will be meeting directly with these Councilors.

We will hold a community Zoom meeting in early September to provide more information and answer all questions. Please check the City website at newtonma.gov/FamilyAid for the date/time of the meeting, updates, as well as some initial answers from FamilyAid to what we expect to be Frequently Asked Questions.

This past spring, when we announced the potential for an emergency housing shelter to open at the former Hotel Indigo, I was heartened by the flood of Newtonians who reached out to offer resources, experience, helping hands and warmth to their potential new neighbors.

I look forward to this fresh opportunity here in Newton to help families at such a difficult time in their lives. This is both an important responsibility and a privilege to welcome children and parents facing housing instability to our city and schools.

Recycling Expands to Include Businesses and Multi-Family Properties

The City has just started new recycling requirements for businesses and multi-family properties requiring them to recycle cardboard. A year from now, the recycling requirements increase to include all common recyclable materials (including aluminum cans, plastic and glass bottles, and office paper) starting on July 1, 2024.

Newton joins over 140 cities and towns in Massachusetts mandating recycling for all properties, including single family, two family, multi-families and businesses. Included in the Newton ordinance is a requirement for waste haulers providing trash collection services to businesses to also provide recycling services.

Recycling continues to be an important environmental practice. All commonly recyclable materials have been banned from disposal in Massachusetts since 1990. Recycling also now provides 40% of the raw materials used in the global supply chain.

If your business already has a recycling service and is recycling cardboard, there is no further action needed. If your business is only recycling cardboard currently, keep in mind that your recycling program will need to expand to include aluminum cans, plastic and glass bottles, and office paper by July 1, 2024.

If your business (or tenants) does not currently have recycling service, the City recommends working with your waste hauler to add recycling service for cardboard as soon as possible, with the goal to have cardboard recycling in place by September 30, 2023.

We understand that some businesses and multi-family complexes may face challenges in starting a recycling program, including finding space for recycling receptacles and paying the cost of adding a new service. One free option is using the City of Newton Resource Recovery Center located at 115 Rumford Avenue. Our facility will accept for free cardboard and single stream recycling dropped off by Newton businesses.

We are also hosting technical assistance webinars and in-person events to assist you.

Summer 2023 Recycling Technical Assistance

Webinars

These webinars will review the new regulations, discuss recycling collection, and offer strategies to launch a successful recycling program:

- Wednesday, July 19 - Business Recycling Webinar (small business focus) - [Register](#)
- Tuesday, August 1 - Business Recycling Webinar (large business focus) - [Register](#)

Free on-site technical assistance consultations are available on Wednesday, July 26 and Tuesday, Aug. 22. A representative from Recycling Works will come to your business or multi-family property to offer ideas, suggestions and best practices for launching or improving your recycling program. Cost savings, space constraints, working with your hauler, and program logistics can all be discussed.

Complete [this form](#) to reserve your spot for either date.

Curbside Recycling Education Project Continues

Newton's Sustainable Materials team is continuing the successful educational cart-top decal campaign.

Large decals (see below) will be applied on all recycling carts in our ongoing effort to reduce recycling contamination. By all of us reducing contamination when we recycle, we help the environment and reduce our recycling costs. The decals, designed by the MassDEP, inform residents of what materials are acceptable in our green carts.

Since we're going to be at the curb, we'll also be gathering some data. Data collection on what's going into our trash and recycling carts throughout the city is needed to understand how we can

improve in the future, with an emphasis on advancing waste reduction efforts. Volunteers will lift cart lids and leave messaging about contamination, if needed. Waste reduction helps the environment and will help us find ways to reduce trash and recycling volumes as disposal costs are expected to increase significantly in the next 10 years.

We are seeking volunteers to assist with this effort to cover as many of Newton's neighborhoods as possible. Volunteers need to demonstrate an interest in recycling education and waste reduction and must pass a background check. We are also hiring a few paid part-time project leaders. Here is the [job posting](#).

If you are interested in volunteering, please complete [this survey](#) about your availability. Please email us at recycling@newtonma.gov with questions or for more information.

More Candidates Pull Papers for Nov. 7 City Election as Deadline Nears

The deadline for candidates is a week and a half from now, Tuesday, July 25.

In the last few weeks, several more candidates have pulled nomination papers to run in the Tuesday, Nov. 7 election, while two candidates who had previously pulled papers have announced they are not running.

As of noon today, the following candidates have pulled papers to run for the eight Ward only City Council seats:

Ward 1: Incumbent Maria Greenberg

Ward 2: David Micley, Daniel Gaynor (Incumbent Emily Norton is not seeking re-election)

Ward 3: Incumbent Julia Malakie

Ward 4: Doris Ann Sweet, Randall Block (Incumbent Chris Markiewicz is not seeking re-election; Bruce McVittie who had pulled papers announced he is not running)

Ward 5: Incumbent William Humphrey, Paul Coletti

Ward 6: Martha Bixby, Lisa Gordon, Mark Holt (Incumbent Brenda Noel is not seeking re-election)

Ward 7: Incumbent Lisle Baker

Ward 8: Incumbent Holly Ryan, Stephen Farrell

Candidates who have pulled papers to run for the sixteen At-Large City Council seats (two per Ward):

Ward 1: Incumbents Alison Leary and John Oliver

Ward 2: Incumbents Susan Albright and Tarik Lucas

Ward 3: Incumbents Andrea Kelley and Pam Wright

Ward 4: Incumbents Lenny Gentile and Josh Krintzman

Ward 5: Incumbents Deb Crossley and Andreae Downs, and Rena Getz

Ward 6: Incumbents Alicia Bowman and Victoria Danberg, and Lisa Gordon

Ward 7: Incumbents Mark Laredo and Becky Grossman

Ward 8: Incumbents Rick Lipof and David Kalis

Candidates who have pulled papers to run for the School Committee (One candidate from each Ward is elected citywide):

Ward 1: Incumbent Rajeev Parlikar

Ward 2: Incumbent Chris Brezski

Ward 3: Incumbent Anping Shen

Ward 4: Incumbent Tamika Olszewski

Ward 5: Incumbent Emily Prenner

Ward 6: Incumbent Paul Levy

Ward 7: Amy Davenport, Jonathan Levin (Incumbent Kathy Shields is not seeking re-election; Stefanie Solomon who had pulled papers announced she is not running)

Ward 8: Barry Greenstein (Incumbent Cove Davis is not seeking re-election)

City Council and School Committee members are elected every two years; School Committee members have a four-term limit or 8 years. (The City Council (and the Mayor) have no term limits.) The Mayor, who also sits on the School Committee, is elected every four years and will be on the ballot in 2025.

Interested in running? There's still time; find more information [here](#).

Candidates have until 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, July 25 to return their signatures to the City Clerk's Office. Election staff in the City Clerk's Office then have until 5:00 p.m. on Aug. 8 to certify that each candidate has the required number of signatures from registered Newton voters needed to appear on the election ballot.

Preliminary Municipal Election

A preliminary election will be held on Tuesday, Sept. 12 if three or more candidates are certified to run for a seat on the School Committee or a Ward seat on the City Council, and/or if five or more candidates are certified to run for an At-Large seat on the City Council.

If necessary, early, in-person voting for the preliminary election will be held at City Hall on Tuesday, Sept. 5 from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and on Wednesday, Sept. 6 from 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Early In-Person Voting for Tuesday, Nov. 7 Municipal Election

In-person voting for the Nov. 7 municipal election will be held at City Hall for five days:

Saturday, Oct. 28 from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Sunday, Oct 29 from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Monday, Oct. 30, from 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Tuesday, Oct. 31, from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Wednesday, Nov.1, from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Vote by Mail

Voters will be able to vote by mail in the Nov. 7 election (and the preliminary if needed). Ballots will be sent to all registered voters who request one. More information and specific dates will become available in the coming weeks.

Four Affordable Housing Opportunities

The City of Newton is offering [down payment/closing cost assistance grants](#) of \$10,000 to eligible applicants who qualify to purchase four deed-restricted, permanently affordable condominium units at the new Bristol Waban Condominiums, 20 Kinmonth Street in Waban Center.

Applications are being accepted by MCO Housing Services through Monday, Aug. 21 for the one-, two- and three-bedroom units for applicants at 80% of the area median income (AMI), and for a one-bedroom unit at 110% AMI. Prices range from \$243,900 to \$354,250.

Click [here](#) for more information on the units and on eligibility. Click [here](#) for an application.

Key Dates:

- Virtual Public Information Meeting: Monday, July 24 at 6:30 p.m. Zoom meeting ID: 848 0803 9151, Passcode: 815808
- Application Deadline: Monday, Aug. 21

- Lottery: Friday, Sept. 1 at 3:00 p.m.

Questions? Call Maureen O'Hagen at 978-456-8388 or email your questions to lotteryinfo@mcohousingervices.com.

88th Annual Italian Festival in Nonantum

Festa: Fun, family, music, great food, community, carnival rides and so much more continues through the weekend at Pellegrini Park, 11 Hawthorn Street in Nonantum.

As Festival President Frank Battista has said, Festa (a.k.a. the St. Mary of Carmen Society's 88th Annual Italian Festival) truly has become not just a neighborhood event, but an event where everyone who attends is family.

Warmly,

Ruthanne

(Photo: With Festival President Frank Battista and School Superintendent Anna Nolin at Festa on Thursday night with the Uncle Joey's Cannoli tent in the background.)

P.S. Music, dancing and camaraderie are back on Sundays at the Newton Centre Bowl just down the hill off Tyler Terrace in Newton Centre. Bring along a blanket, a chair, pack a picnic or grab some take out from one of our great local restaurants and enjoy the **Sunday Summer Concerts in the Park** which run weekly through Sunday, Aug. 13 from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. Koliba Afro Pop is scheduled to perform their West African Rhythms, Reggae, Ska, Zouk and more this Sunday, July 16. With rain in the forecast, check newtonma.gov/concerts to make sure the concert is still on. (Depending on the band's availability, we try and extend the season to reschedule if cancellation is necessary.)

P.P.S. While you're at the Newton Centre Bowl, check out our newest "resident" **Sssidney the Snake**. Director of Cultural Development Paula Gannon painted the first rock to create Sssidney and we're looking to all of you to help our snake grow. Find a rock, paint it and add it to Sssidney. You'll find the snake perched along the staircase by the Newton Center Field House (the "hut") at 69 Tyler Terrace at the top of the Newton Centre Bowl.

P.P.P.S. The **8th Annual Linda Plaut Newton Festival of the Arts** kicks off at the Hyde Playground, 90 Lincoln St., Newton Highlands next Friday at 6:30 p.m. with a **Pops-style concert** by the New Philharmonia Orchestra. The following day, Saturday, July 22 features **10 bands on two alternating stages** at the Hyde from noon to 8:00 p.m. with visual arts, vendor craft booths and more. Everything is free thanks to Newton Community Pride in partnership with the Hyde Community Center.

P.P.P.P.S. Bring the **kids and grandkids to sing along** to favorites from *Peter Pan*, *The Wizard of Oz* and other classics with Doug Schmolze at the Hyde Community Center Bandstand, 90 Lincoln St. on Tuesday, July 18 from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m.

P.P.P.P.P.S. The **Newton Senior Center Summer Concert Series** continues at the Hyde Community Center Bandstand, 90 Lincoln St. on Thursday, July 27 from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m. with Roger Tinckneil who performs music from the 1940s swing era and 1950s pop. Plan to attend? RSVP is requested but not required. Stop by 20 Hartford St., call 617-796-1675 or email eoconnell@newtonma.gov. Click [here](#) for more information about the concerts and other programs coming up at the Newton Senior Center.

P.P.P.P.P.P.S. Newton Neighbors is teaming with the Street in Chestnut Hill and Village Bank to collect supplies to help students in Newton and neighboring towns have what they need to start school. The **School Supply Drive** runs through Friday, July 28. New or gently used backpacks, lunchboxes, water bottles, graphing calculators and \$25 gift cards to Star Market. Target or Amazon for school supplies can be dropped at Village Bank locations throughout Newton and at The Bagel Table, Hummingbird Books, OddFellows Ice Cream Co. and Legit Activewear at The Street. Items can also be purchased through Amazon at [amazon.com/wishlist](https://www.amazon.com/wishlist). Find more information [here](#).

P.P.P.P.P.P.S. Want to cheer on the Sox while supporting the Newton Free Library? Join the **Friends of the Newton Free Library at Fenway Park** on Monday, Aug. 7 to watch the Red Sox play the Kansas City Royals. Tickets are \$38 each in the Right Field Grandstand and a portion of the proceeds go to the Friends of the Newton Library. The deadline to purchase tickets is Thursday, July 27. Find more info and purchase tickets [here](#).

P.P.P.P.P.P.S. Earlier this spring, Massachusetts Secretary of Economic Development Yvonne Hao appointed me to serve on the State's 2023 Economic Development Planning Council. The Council is charged with advising the Healey-Driscoll administration as they write a statewide, comprehensive economic development policy and implementation plan. We've been holding **Regional Economic Development Engagement Sessions** across the Commonwealth to gather public input about the State's economic and workforce needs. The next, and final, Engagement Session is for the MetroWest region, of which Newton is a part. Join us this coming Monday, July 17, from 2:00 – 4:00 p.m. in person at Framingham State University. RSVP [here](#) if you'd like to attend. You can also email me your thoughts and suggestions any time, as I advocate for the needs of Newton and businesses, non-profits, residents and municipalities across the Commonwealth on the Council.

Previous P.S.s Happening This Weekend

P.S. The **Newton Farmers' Market** is open on Tuesdays at Cold Spring Park from 1:30 to 6:00 p.m. and at Newton North High School on Saturdays from 9:30 to 12:30. Find more info [here](#).



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