

Tuesday, Nov. 21, 2023

Mayor's Newton Update



It's heartbreaking that we're seeing a rise in all kinds of hate incidents in Newton, including ones that are antisemitic and Islamophobic.

In addition, today we are receiving numerous emails asking about Israeli hostage posters and blue ribbons on City property that are being removed by City of Newton staff.

Once the City permits private individuals or groups to display messages that could be regarded as political speech on City property, the City has no ability to regulate content. In other words, if the City allows a sign or flier with a particular viewpoint on City property, even one that it endorses, the City could not then prohibit or remove signs with opposing or different messages in the future.

As such, our City employees routinely remove signs and fliers put up on City property, including on trees, traffic signal poles, fences, and windows.

We cannot permit these signs to go up on City property for these reasons.

Trying Again: Additional Ongoing Funding for School & City Operations

I have submitted a new proposal to the City Council to transform \$26 million of one-time funds into ongoing additional funding for both the Newton Public Schools and City operations.

I first proposed a plan to the City Council in August 2023 to use a large tax settlement from Eversource for ongoing funding to help us teach our 11,000 plus students, staff our Police and Fire Departments, pave our roads, run our Library, and more.

In October, the City Council voted against the proposal.

With their ideas in mind, I'm trying again.

I'm proposing a mechanism used by a lot of cities and towns in Massachusetts to use one-time funds sustainably for ongoing operations: a Debt Service Stabilization Fund.

By using the \$26 million in the Debt Service Stabilization Fund over time for principal and interest payments on bonds we issue for capital investments, the

City of Newton will have more flexibility and available funding to support programs and services for School and City operations.

Read more about the new proposal [here](#).

I continue to be committed to providing additional funding to the Newton Public Schools and to propose ways to support our students and educators as well as our residents and businesses.

I look forward to working with the City Council to move the creation of this transformative fund forward.

Recount in Ward 6

The vote for the Ward 6 City Council ward only seat is being recounted.

Based on the unofficial results, Lisa Gordon received 1,287 votes, 23 short of Martha Bixby who received 1,310. Gordon and Bixby both ran for the open seat on the City Council when incumbent Ward 6 Ward Councilor Brenda Noel did not seek re-election.

State law allows any candidate to initiate a recount within ten days of the date of the election (which was Friday, Nov. 17.) To initiate a recount, the candidate must file a recount petition form with the Newton City Clerk, Carol Moore, stating that they believe the records of the votes cast are erroneous and specifying the particular reasons for the recount request. The candidate also needs to include the signatures of 10 registered voters from the Ward to be recounted.

The recount is requested by candidate Lisa Gordon who asked for a hand recount of each ballot cast for the Ward 6 Ward Councilor seat. Gordon's petition alleges that "numerous ballots and absentee ballots were received and accepted from people not qualified to vote." In addition, she alleges, "numerous ballots counted for Martha H. Bixby or as blanks should have been counted for Lisa Gordon." The Recount Petition is posted on the City Clerk's Election webpage at newtonma.gov.

The recount petition was received by the City Clerk's Office last week and the petition met the required amount of certified signatures. The Election Commission is expected to set the date of the recount as Saturday, Dec. 2, at 9:00 a.m. at the Newton Free Library, Druker Auditorium, 330 Homer St. The public is welcome to observe the recount.

On the day of the recount, teams of poll workers will count every one of the approximately 2,600 ballots cast. The candidates' representatives will be allowed to monitor the counting and can challenge the count of the vote on any ballot. If a vote is challenged, poll workers will be in attendance to act as "runners," shepherding the disputed ballot in question to the Election Commissioners who will make the final determination.

Only the votes for the Ward 6 Ward Councilor seat will be recounted. The results of the other 23 seats on the City Council and the eight School Committee seats are not being challenged.

The unofficial election results can be found [here](#).

Results of the recount are expected to be available at the end of the recount and will be posted at newtonma.gov.

Congratulations to Coach Nile Fox and the Newton North Girls Volleyball team who won the Division 1 State Championship on Saturday in a five set nailbiter over Barnstable. This is the Tiger's second state title in as many years and the fifth since 2014.

(Photo: From Left, Chloe Lee, Katelin Simmons, Alexa Marucci and Lucy Pernise hoist the Championship trophy at Worcester State on Saturday. Photo Credit: Ken McGagh for the Boston Globe.)

New School Committee Leadership for 2024

Congratulations to the newly elected Chair of the Newton School Committee Chris Brezski and Vice Chair Emily Prenner.

The two members of the School Committee were elected by their peers last night to succeed Tamika Olszewski as Chair and Kathy Shields as Vice Chair. Tamika and Kathy led the committee admirably over the past two years, including a successful search for our new school superintendent, Dr. Anna Nolin.

As a member of the School Committee, I look forward to moving towards another level of excellence in our Newton Public Schools with Dr. Nolin, Chair Brezski, Vice Chair Prenner and my colleagues on the School Committee. Superintendent Nolin delivered a thorough assessment of NPS and a visionary plan for a better future yesterday. Click [here](#) to read Newton - Nolin Entry Plan 2023. (Dr. Nolin suggests focusing on the Executive Summary and pages 49-83 if you don't have time to read all of it.)

Continued Progress on Village Center Zoning

The City Council is working its way through the various City Councilor proposed amendments to Village Center Overlay District rezoning, going through proposals for each village center, block by block (and in some cases, building by building.)

Councilors are scheduled to continue at a special meeting on Wednesday, Nov. 29, with more discussion on West Newton and Newtonville village centers and a decision whether to include Auburndale because of its importance with respect to future commuter rail improvements. (Click [here](#) for a letter from Massachusetts

Secretary of Housing & Livable Communities Ed Augustus regarding Auburndale and click [here](#) for more detailed info from my last update.)

Giving Thanks

This Thanksgiving, as I gather with my family, I will give thanks for each of them as well as the people of this good City of Newton— our residents, our businesspeople, our organizations and non-profits who are doing so much for so many.

Rose Saia who leads the Centre Street Food Pantry let me know their volunteers served a record number for a Saturday, providing groceries for 1,100 people in 250+ households. Also on Saturday, Priya Wanger helped over one thousand people run in an all age friendly Turkey Trot, starting and ending at the Zervas Elementary School. On Sunday, Amanda Kavalcik and Rose Micozzi had a slew of happy people in Wellington Park in West Newton celebrating a fabulous new play structure funded by neighbors and businesses and installed by our Parks, Recreation and Culture staff.

(Photo: I'm cooking for everyone on Thursday, including our two grandchildren Henry (5) and Jeremiah (2 ½) who had great painted faces on Halloween!)

I will also give thanks for the people who make this city hum – educators, police officers, fire fighters, road crews and plow drivers, attorneys, crossing guards, building inspectors, planners, accountants, assessors, people who work with our older residents, run our library, our camps and programs, take care of our village centers, parks, fields and open space, run our elections, give flu shots and health advice, and so much more.

This Thanksgiving, I'm grateful to all the people who make up the tapestry of our City and create this wonderful community we call home. I am proud to be a part of it all.

Warmly,

Ruthanne

P.S. Join the fun during the first weekend in December when we're transforming City Hall into an 18-hole mini golf course complete with greens and holes winding through the entire building – including a secret staircase. Admission to the **Holiday Mini Golf Hole in Fun?** Bring a new and unwrapped gift for a child, newborn to age 10, to support the Holiday Gift Drive sponsored by The Village Bank, our Newton Health and Human Services Department, and the Rotary Club of Newton. Play on Friday, Dec. 1 from 5:00 to 9:00 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 2 from 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., or Sunday, Dec. 3 from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Click [here](#) to sign up.

P.P.S. Interested in the future of Washington Street between Chestnut Street and Lowell Avenue between West Newton Square and Newtonville? Join the Newton Planning Department for a virtual meeting on Thursday, Nov. 30 at 6:30 p.m. to learn more about the **Washington Street Pilot Project**. Alternative concepts for improving the mile long section for all who travel, live, work, shop and operate businesses along Washington Street will be presented. Click [here](#) for the meeting Zoom link and to learn more about the project.

P.P.P.S. The Newton Tree Conservancy is now accepting applications for the spring 2024 **Community Tree Plantings**. See an empty space along the grassy section of a sidewalk along your street? Work with your neighbors and apply to get a new tree to plant on “planting day” next April. Act fast – the deadline for applications is Friday, Dec. 1. Click [here](#) to find more information and apply.



P.P.P.P.S. Help Newton's nonprofit home good's pantry, [Welcome Home](#), spread the holiday spirit this season by donating items to help stock their shelves for people in need. Consider donating excess cookware, dishes, glasses, bedding, towels, decorations, small appliances and other gently used, unwanted items that can be redistributed to others free of charge. Click [here](#) to learn more.

P.P.P.P.P.S. The **Celebrate Newton Holiday Craft Fair 2023** with live music and more than 50 Newton or Newton connected artists and vendors selling unique gifts is Sunday, Dec. 3 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at Newton South High School, 1 Lion Drive (formerly 140 Brandeis Road). Click [here](#) for more info.



P.P.P.P.P.P.S. Join the Waban Improvement Society for hot chocolate and sweets at the annual **Waban Lights and Family Sing-Along** on Sunday, Dec. 3. Festivities begin at 4:45 p.m. in front of the Waban Library Center, 1608 Beacon Street. Click [here](#) for more info and holiday song lyrics.

P.P.P.P.P.P.P.S. The Nonantum Children's Christmas Party Association hosts the amazing **Park Lighting at Coletti-Magni Park**, 386-392 Watertown Street, with hot chocolate and caroling starting at 6:15 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 3. Santa will turn on the Park lights at 7:00 p.m. with help from his elves, Rudolph, Frosty the Snowman, and more.

P.P.P.P.P.P.P.P.S. **Giving Tuesday** is next week on Nov. 28. Consider giving back through acts of kindness, voice, time, talent or

treasure on this day where people around the world support the non-profits who support community throughout the year.

P.P.P.P.P.P.P.S. Dana Farber Cancer

Institute Volunteer Services is looking for in-person volunteers (three-hour weekly shifts) for its Chestnut Hill-Newton location at 300 Boylston Street. Volunteers provide comfort, support, and empathy to cancer patients and families, helping with wayfinding, sharing resources, distributing lunches or art supplies, and more. Click [here](#) to learn more.

Past P.S.s Happening Soon:

P.S. Community Resource Night: Overdose Prevention on Wednesday, Nov. 29 from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. at St. Mary’s Episcopal Church, 258 Concord Street in Newton Lower Falls. Learn more [here](#).



Mayor Ruthanne Fuller | 1000 Commonwealth Avenue, Newton, MA 02459

[Unsubscribe_jmulvey@newtonma.gov](mailto:jmulvey@newtonma.gov)

[Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)

Sent by rfuller@newtonma.gov powered by



Try email marketing for free today!