



Programs & Services Committee Report

City of Newton In City Council

Wednesday, December 6, 2023

Present: Councilors Krintzman (Chair), Noel, Humphrey, Wright, Albright, Baker, and Greenberg

Absent: Councilor Ryan

Also Present: Councilors Leary, Kelley, Laredo, Kalis, and Danberg

City Staff: Meghan Kennedy, Director of Social Services; Alissa Giuliani, City Solicitor; Michelle Pizzi O'Brien, Human Resources Director; and Jaclyn Norton, Committee Clerk

For more information regarding this meeting, a video recording can be found at the following link: [Programs & Services Committee - December 6, 2023 - YouTube](#)

#345-23 **Appointment of Emma Zhang as a member of the Youth Commission**
HER HONOR THE MAYOR appointing Emma Zhang of Newton South High School as a member of the Youth Commission for a term of office set to expire on November 30, 2026. (60 Days: 01/05/23)

Action: **Programs & Services Approved 7-0**

Note: Emma Zhang joined the Committee and noted that she is a senior at Newton South High School. She has previously served on the Youth Commission Advisory Board and stated how the Youth Commission provides a platform to collaborate and advocate regarding issues facing the community.

Zack Gusenoff is a junior at Newton South High School and also previously served on the Advisory Board. He sees the Youth Commission as a way to promote voices from within the Community and noted a focus on mental health.

Sarina Chand is a junior at Newton South High School and noted how the Youth Commission and the Youth Commission Advisory Board are ways to elevate youth voices within Newton.

Phoebe Anthony is a senior at Newton South High School and stated that a goal of hers is to help make Newton a safe space for individuals of diverse backgrounds. She also noted efforts to promote the Youth Commission while advocating for bike lanes at a recent event.

Nick Makura is a junior at The Roxbury Latin School and described how becoming a member of the Youth Commission will help him be a voice for all youth.

Chloe Lee is a sophomore at Newton North High School and noted her desire to help the community. She also is looking to focus on mental health during her time on the Youth Commission.

Councilors noted appreciation towards the appointees for being involved in the Community. A Councilor asked the appointees if 16 and 17-year-olds should be able to vote in municipal elections. Multiple appointees agreed with allowing 16 and 17-year-olds to vote noting the need for voting to become a habit and 16 and 17-year-olds having to pay taxes if they have a job. Another Councilor asked the appointees how they chose their initiatives. Mr. Gusenoff noted that he looked at what worked and didn't work the previous year to inform his decision along with wanting to create an event that people can look forward to.

Committee members voted 7-0 on a motion to approve items #345-23, #346-23, #347-23, #348-23, #349-23, and #350-23 from Councilor Humphrey.

#346-23 **Appointment of Zach Gusenoff as a member of the Youth Commission**
HER HONOR THE MAYOR appointing Zach Gusenoff of Newton South High School as a member of the Youth Commission for a term of office set to expire on November 30, 2026. (60 Days: 01/05/23)

Action: **Programs & Services Approved 7-0**

Note: This item was discussed jointly with item #345-23. A written report can be found with item #345-23.

#347-23 **Appointment of Sarina Chand as a member of the Youth Commission**
HER HONOR THE MAYOR appointing Sarina Chand of Newton South High School as a member of the Youth Commission for a term of office set to expire on November 30, 2026. (60 Days: 01/05/23)

Action: **Programs & Services Approved 7-0**

Note: This item was discussed jointly with item #345-23. A written report can be found with item #345-23.

#348-23 **Appointment of Phoebe Anthony as a member of the Youth Commission**
HER HONOR THE MAYOR appointing Phoebe Anthony of Newton South High School as a member of the Youth Commission for a term of office set to expire on November 30, 2026. (60 Days: 01/05/23)

Action: **Programs & Services Approved 7-0**

Note: This item was discussed jointly with item #345-23. A written report can be found with item #345-23.

#349-23 **Appointment of Nick Makura as a member of the Youth Commission**

HER HONOR THE MAYOR appointing Nick Makura of The Roxbury Latin School as a member of the Youth Commission for a term of office set to expire on November 30, 2026. (60 Days: 01/05/23)

Action: Programs & Services Approved 7-0

Note: This item was discussed jointly with item #345-23. A written report can be found with item #345-23.

#350-23 Appointment of Chloe Lee as a member of the Youth Commission

HER HONOR THE MAYOR appointing Chloe Lee of Newton North High School as a member of the Youth Commission for a term of office set to expire on November 30, 2026. (60 Days: 01/05/23)

Action: Programs & Services Approved 7-0

Note: This item was discussed jointly with item #345-23. A written report can be found with item #345-23.

#420-23 Discussion and possible amendment to the City Council Rules to add an Ethics Commission or Committee

COUNCILORS NOEL, HUMPHREY, BOWMAN, GREENBERG, ALBRIGHT, LIPOF, LUCAS, KALIS, AND WRIGHT requesting a discussion and possible amendment to the City Council Rules to add an Ethics Commission or Committee for the purpose of creating and enforcing a City Council Code of Ethics.

Action: Programs & Services Held 7-0

Note: The Chair noted that this discussion was not to litigate the situation that led to this conversation but on whether the Council should amend the City Council Rules to create a process for when these situations do happen. The docketing Councilor described the need for having a way for individuals to be held accountable if they engage in behavior not fitting of a City Councilor. She also referenced a list of examples of codes of conduct from other municipalities that was sent out by the Clerk in advance of the meeting.

Michelle Pizzi O'Brien, Director of Human Resources, stated that the City has a code of conduct and anti-harassment policy that applies to municipal employees. These policies do not apply to City Councilors and Director O'Brien noted that the code of conduct as written may not fully apply to Councilors. Alissa Giuliani, City Solicitor, also noted that the current policies have the employer be the one to make determinations regarding the behavior and that any policy would need to be aware of the differences between a regular employee and a City Councilor.

During the discussion, a Councilor described a provision in the current City Council Rules that specifies that members must address each other with respect. Other Councilors noted that this provision does not go far enough, and work needs to be done so that Councilors can be held accountable. Councilors also discussed the difference in having ethics complaints reviewed by an outside entity versus a committee of Councilors. Director O'Brien and Attorney Giuliani also

advised the Councilors that going forward they should first look at what behavior they want to discourage and then focus on the enforcement.

Councilors agreed to continue this discussion with a new item.

Committee members voted 7-0 on a motion to hold from Councilor Noel.

#402-23 Reappointment of Rakashi Chand as a Jackson Homestead Trustee
HER HONOR THE MAYOR reappointing Rakashi Chand, 65 Stony Brae Road, Newton as a Trustee of Jackson Homestead for a term of office set to expire on December 15, 2026. (60 Days: 02/02/2024)

Action: Programs & Services Approved 6-0 (Councilor Baker Not Voting)

Note: The Chair read the item into the record. Committee members citing no issue with the reappointment voted 6-0 (Councilor Baker Not Voting) on a motion to approve from Councilor Humphrey.

#403-23 Reappointment of Russel Feldman as a Jackson Homestead Trustee
HER HONOR THE MAYOR reappointing Russel Feldman, 85 Langley Road, Newton as a Trustee of Jackson Homestead for a term of office set to expire on November 1, 2026. (60 Days: 02/02/2024)

Action: Programs & Services Approved 6-0 (Councilor Baker Not Voting)

Note: The Chair read the item into the record. Committee members citing no issue with the reappointment voted 6-0 (Councilor Baker Not Voting) on a motion to approve from Councilor Humphrey.

#404-23 Reappointment of Rabbi Keith Stern to the Human Rights Commission
HER HONOR THE MAYOR reappointing Rabbi Keith Stern, 115 Hunnewell Avenue, Newton as a member of the Human Rights Commission for a term of office set to expire on November 30, 2026. (60 Days: 02/02/2024)

Action: Programs & Services Approved 6-0 (Councilor Baker Not Voting)

Note: The Chair read the item into the record. Committee members citing no issue with the reappointment voted 6-0 (Councilor Baker Not Voting) on a motion to approve from Councilor Greenberg.

The meeting adjourned at 8:28 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Josh Krintzman, Chair