

In the fall of 2020, I convened an Ad Hoc City Seal Working Group to take a look at our City Seal. I asked the group to make recommendations about whether the image depicted is still relevant and meaningful and whether there are graphics and/or words that would better portray the values, identity, and spirit of Newton.

The Working Group met from September of 2020 to March of 2021 soliciting input through public meetings and written input from community members as well as from Indigenous leaders, local and regional.

In November of 2021, the group submitted its final report with several recommendations:

- ♦ **Retain** the circular shape, for its official and traditional feel.
- ♦ **Retain** much of the content of the outer rings, as a link to previous iterations of the seal.
- ♦ **Replace** the scene of John Eliot evangelizing Waban and other Indigenous people with a more suitable image.
- ♦ **Remove** the word “Nonantum,” chosen by John Eliot for the short-lived (five years) settlement of Native Christians, in part because it is easily confused with Newton’s village of Nonantum which is at another entirely different location.
- ♦ **Consolidate** the City’s founding dates to read “Founded in 1630 on Massachusetts land.” The Group feels that the years 1688 and 1873 are optional.
- ♦ **Retain or omit** the words “Liberty and Union,” depending on context of the final design.

Simplify the overall design to allow for accurate reproduction in many formats (on vehicles, documents, trash cans, etc.).

Click [here](#) for a summary and the full report.

The current City Seal is in our City Ordinance Section 1-8 ([here](#)). Updating the City Seal requires the City Council to vote to amend this Ordinance. I requested City Council authorization to move forward with the City Seal Working Group’s recommendation to update the City Seal on Feb. 14, 2022.

In April 2023, the City Council’s Programs and Services Committee took up this request, , and on April 18, 2023, the City Council unanimously approved proceeding with the process of updating the City Seal and submitting an RFP for a graphic design professional(s).

A Request for Proposal (RFP) for graphic design services was released in Oct. 2023. We received three proposals reviewed by the Evaluation Committee made up of Lisa Dady (Director Historic Newton), Shubee Sikka (Urban Designer in the Newton Planning Department), Bill Humphrey (City Council Ward 5) and Hattie Kerwin Derrick (Director of Community Engagement & Inclusion).

Chief Procurement Officer Nick Read awarded the contract to Sebastian Ellington Ebarb Design (SEED) last month based on the superior qualitative rankings.

The City Seal Team (the Evaluation Committee and two residents who were part of the Ad Hoc City Seal Working Group) will be meeting with Sebastian Ebarb to set up a schedule of meetings, including Community Forums to solicit additional input. We will keep everyone informed about the meetings through my Update (sign up [here](#)) and the City Seal webpage [here](#).

The potential new designs will be presented to the City Council, which will make the final decision on a new design. We anticipate that members of the community will provide feedback as well and that the ultimate design will be done in an iterative process.

By the way, when the City Council chooses a new design for the City Seal, we do not expect to change the City Seal on everything immediately. Rather, we expect to swap out, for the most part, the current one as new items are ordered. The City Seal is widely used including but not limited to:

- Official documents
- Letterhead, business cards, brochures, banners, and other print and sign materials.
- City material/collateral such as cars, trash cans, mugs, water bottles, and department clothing.
- Marketing, including but not limited to social media.

We do not intend to implement a change citywide at one time as this would be cost prohibitive.