

Thursday, Feb. 15, 2024

## Mayor's Newton Update



### Update on Building Buildings

Huge thanks to Public Buildings Commissioner Josh Morse and his team who are incredibly busy on a wide range of fabulous projects.

#### Lincoln-Eliot Elementary School – Opening Sept. 2025

The Lincoln-Eliot School project includes a renovation of the former Aquinas Junior College, a new addition, and upgrades to a 410 seat auditorium which will be used jointly by students and the community.

Construction is well underway, with the site fencing up, trailers in place, and selective demolition in full swing. (The former convent building is now demolished.)

Last week, we had our first community construction update meeting and you can watch the meeting recording [here](#).

Our next community construction update meeting will be on Tuesday, Feb. 27 at 6:00 p.m. Join the meeting once it starts by clicking [here](#).

Stay up to date o by checking the project website at <http://lincolneliot-necp-projects.com/>.

You can also follow us on social media at <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100070249892653>, <https://www.instagram.com/newtonmapbd/>, or <https://twitter.com/NewtonMAPBD>.

Questions or comments about the new home for Lincoln-Eliot? Email us at [lincolneliot@newtonma.gov](mailto:lincolneliot@newtonma.gov).

*(Photo above: The auditorium will be an incredible asset for Lincoln-Eliot and the entire community. Photo below: The view is what staff, students and parents will see as they enter the school. The library has become the heart of the school, with great sight lines, ample natural light and a welcoming feel.)*

\*\*\*\*\*

#### New Countryside Elementary School – Opening Sept. 2027

Detailed design and construction documents for a new Countryside School will be complete by this time next year and we'll be ready to go out to bid so construction

can start in the summer of 2025. Students and teachers will be in the new building in September 2027.

This project is able to move forward because Newton voters approved a debt exclusion override last March and we have meaningful funding from the State. The Northland project at the end of Needham Street is also paying in \$1.5 million towards the construction.

The City Council reviewed and approved the site plans and total project budget (\$74.7 million) for the new Countryside School in November/December. Shortly thereafter, the MSBA voted unanimously to sign an agreement with the City of Newton, securing more than \$20 million in state grants for the school building.

This team decided on a brand new building, rather than a renovation. They sited it at the corner of Dedham Street and Walnut Street. The current plan is for students to stay in the current building on the other side of the site while construction of the new building is underway. We'll work closely with the neighbors to minimize disruption during construction.

We still have a tremendous amount of design work left to do. Click [here](#) to review all project information, presentations, and materials.

The next Countryside Project presentation to the Design Review Committee will be on Wednesday, Feb. 28 at 6:00 p.m. Join the meeting when it starts by clicking [here](#).

The last Countryside meeting was with the Design Review Committee on Jan.24, click [here](#) to watch a recording of that meeting.

Questions or comments about this project? Email us at [countryside@newtonma.gov](mailto:countryside@newtonma.gov).

*(Photo above: Schematic Design of the new media center at Countryside School.)*

\*\*\*\*\*

### Franklin Elementary School – Opening Sept. 2027

A brand new building sited on the field adjacent to the existing Franklin School building is being designed. We are currently evaluating several different concepts with respect to the size of the building, elevations, and the look. Simultaneously, we are refining floor plans which among other things, reduce the building height, and softens the massing.

This new building (\$61 million) is possible thanks to the funding provided by voters who approved the debt exclusion override last March.

The school community is still deciding whether to stay in the current building while the new one is constructed, or to utilize a swing school.

The next Franklin School Project meeting will be with the Design Review Committee on Wednesday, March 13 at 6:00 p.m. Once the meeting starts, you can click [here](#) to join.

The last Franklin School Project meeting was on Feb. 14 and the recording of that meeting can be seen [here](#).

We anticipate completing construction and opening the doors to the new Franklin School in time for the 2027 school year.

Review the presentation, project information, and materials on our project website [here](#). Questions or comments about this project? Email us at [franklin@newtonma.gov](mailto:franklin@newtonma.gov).

*(Photo above: One of many different exterior design concepts being considered for the new Franklin Elementary School.)*

\*\*\*\*\*

### Horace Mann Elementary School Project

The Horace Mann Project calls for a new addition to house a new cafeteria, classrooms, and support spaces and for upgrades to classrooms in the main building. The team is moving through the end of the feasibility and into the beginning of the schematic design period with the exterior designs and interior floor plans becoming more refined.

We are simultaneously working with our design team and owner’s project manager to develop our construction phasing schedule and logistics plan.

Our next step is to work with the Design Review Committee and City Council in the coming months to start the review and approve the site plan and schematic design package.

The next Horace Mann School Project meeting will be with the Design Review Committee on Wednesday, March 13 at approximately 7:30 p.m. Once the meeting starts you can click [here](#) to join.

The last Horace Mann School Project meeting was on Feb. 14 and the recording of that meeting can be seen [here](#).

To learn more about this project check out our website [here](#). Questions or comments about this project? Email us at [horacemann@newtonma.gov](mailto:horacemann@newtonma.gov).

*(Photo above: Rendering of the new accessible and stair entrance at Horace Mann.)*

\*\*\*\*\*

### NewCAL / Newton Center for Active Living – Opening Fall 2025

Join us for the official groundbreaking for construction of the new senior center on Thursday, March 7 at 10:00 a.m. when we’ll also be opening the time capsule that had been buried at the site in 1938.

Our construction team has mobilized, the construction fencing is up, the trailers are placed, and demolition has finished. Our crews carefully removed historically significant elements for restoration and incorporation into our new facility.

Monthly community construction meetings are held on the first Tuesday of every month starting at 6:00 p.m. Register for the Zoom meetings at: <https://newtonma.gov.zoom.us/j/87604182709>.

We'll be monitoring the construction carefully, including parking for construction crews, and adjusting as needed to cause as little disruption as possible.

Additional project info, meeting recordings, and presentations can be found at [newcal.projects.nv5.com](http://newcal.projects.nv5.com). Questions or comments about this project? Email us at [newcal@newtonma.gov](mailto:newcal@newtonma.gov).

*(Photos: Above: Rendering of the new Center for Active Living. Left: Public Buildings Project Manager Tommy Rooney with the time capsule buried at site in 1938. It was successfully removed and transported to Jackson Homestead for safekeeping until the groundbreaking event when it will be opened. Should be interesting!)*

\*\*\*\*\*

Gath Pool – Opening June 2025

We are on schedule to complete construction of the two new pools (one for recreation and the other for laps / swim team), a big splash pad, a diving board and a slide, and significantly improved accessibility in time for the 2024 summer swim season.

The new pool design and all previous project materials can be viewed at [newtonma.gov/gathpoolproject](http://newtonma.gov/gathpoolproject).

The funding for this project (\$9.3 million) to replace the 58-year-old pool includes ARPA funds that I applied to this project, state funds secured by State Rep. Kay Khan, and, the largest share, from the Newton Community Preservation Act Fund which in part specifically supports recreation.

Questions or comments about this project? Email us at [gathpool@newtonma.gov](mailto:gathpool@newtonma.gov).

*(Photo above: Framing crews forming the zero-entry recreational pool.)*

\*\*\*\*\*

Newton Police Facilities

I authorized the use of ARPA funds to begin conceptual design on a comprehensive project to improve the physical conditions of Police Headquarters, the Police Annex and Police Garage.

We are still very early in the process and we know that this project will result in significant improvements for our officers to do their work.

Complementing the replacement of the HVAC system, repaving the parking lot and installing new fencing and gates, and upgrading the information technology and communications system in the last few years, the Police Facility Project includes (but is not limited to) upgrades to the following building systems and areas:

- Security
- Accessibility
- Electrical
- Lighting
- Plumbing
- Roof
- Masonry
- Finishes

The project will evaluate how best to utilize the spaces throughout the existing buildings. An important goal is to create a new, appropriately sized dispatch center, with the adjacent support spaces needed to train new dispatchers and to ensure that the Dispatch Division has what they need to support Newton Police, Newton Fire, Ambulance Services, and all of us in the Newton community.

*(Photo above: A new training room modeled after one recently built for the Medford Police Department is included in our plans. We train officers almost weekly.)*

\*\*\*\*\*

### And There's More...

I'm grateful that a large package of projects that may be small compared to the ones above have been approved by the City Council. They are extremely important to the students, parents and caregivers, teachers, principals and PTOs in our schools, and to the staff in our Police and Fire Departments as well.

These projects represent a \$6.25 million investment of one-time money on one-time needs which will be completed in the next 12 to 24 months.

- North High School indoor pool air handling unit replacement
- Peirce Elementary School roof replacement
- Mason Rice Elementary School roof replacement
- Newton South High School chiller replacement
- Williams Elementary School auditorium ceiling, restroom, and playground improvements
- Bigelow and Brown Middle School Public Address system upgrades

- Restroom upgrades at Day, Mason Rice, Bowen, Memorial Spaulding, and Peirce Schools
- Parking lot repaving at Brown Middle School
- Parking lot repaving and fence installation at Police Headquarters
- Fire Station #2 heat pump and building electrification

## Takeout Going Green

Customers ordering takeout from restaurants in Newton will see some environmentally friendly changes beginning on Friday, March 1.

Restaurants will no longer automatically provide customers with single-use items, such as forks, spoons, knives, straws, chopsticks, stirrers, condiment packages, or napkins. We will still have the option to request these items when placing takeout orders or to pick them up at a restaurant self-service station.

The [City's new Sustainable Food and Beverage Serviceware, Packaging, and Single Use Ordinance](#) passed by the City Council last September (and spearheaded by Councilor Vicky Danberg) also requires restaurant takeout dishware and containers to be reusable, compostable, or recyclable.

Click [here](#) for additional information about the new ordinance geared at reducing plastics, including answers to Frequently Asked Questions which can be found at [newtonma.gov/plastic](https://newtonma.gov/plastic).

## Removing Sediment from the City Hall Ponds

Laundry Brook winds its way through Newton Centre and Newton Highlands, the Newton Cemetery, into the City Hall Ponds, on to Bulloughs Pond, under Newton North over to a culvert under the Cabot Elementary School and under the Mass Pike, ending eventually at the Charles River.

Work will begin in the coming days to remove accumulated sediment that Laundry Brook deposits in the ponds at City Hall (between the front of City Hall Drive and Walnut Street). All the removed sediment will be disposed of at an off-site disposal area.

The project, which has been permitted by the Conservation Commission, will help the ponds' capacity and maintain their aesthetic and passive recreational values.

City Hall Drive will be closed to vehicular traffic at the Commonwealth Avenue entrance during construction hours. Drivers should enter via the driveway on Homer Street. We'll continue to have parking at City Hall and additional parking may be found along Commonwealth Avenue, Homer Street and Walnut Street.

- The west side sidewalks from Comm Ave along City Hall Drive will remain open and access to City Hall will be available during construction.

- Work is expected to continue until the end of May.
- The hours of construction will be Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m.- 3:30 p.m. (Please know that some after hours work may be necessary.)

## State of the City

Join me next Tuesday evening,

Feb. 20 at 7:45 p.m. in the City Council Chambers on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of City Hall for the annual State of the City Address.

While I know the challenges of our time are manifest, so too is our community's resiliency.

Come in person or watch the Address live on NewTV (Comcast 9, RNC 13, Verizon 33) or later on [youtube.com/@newtvgovernment](https://www.youtube.com/@newtvgovernment).

*(Photo: City Council Chambers, credit Amy Sangiolo, Fig City News.)*

## Black History Month

Each February during Black History Month we celebrate the rich heritage and shared experiences of Black Americans, understanding that the history of Black America is the history of our country.

Check out Black History Month events in Newton:

- Fascinating tales from storyteller [Len Cabral](#) at the Newton Free Library, 330 Homer Street, on Sunday, March 2 from 3:00 to 4:00 p.m. The program for children ages 3 to 10 is in partnership with The Story Starters.
- Intercession, a photography exhibit featuring work of local African-Americans at Trio Art Corridor, 245 Walnut Street, hosted by the New Art Center through Sunday, March 3. Click [here](#) for more information and to register to attend a presentation.
- A panel discussion of the film *American Fiction* with Callie Crossley, Nerissa Williams Scott, and Dr. Keith Maddox, moderated by Sarah Vincent on Sunday, Feb. 18, from 2:15 to 3:15 p.m. at the West Newton Cinema, 1296 Washington St. Click [here](#) to reserve a seat at the free event.
- A community story time with children's authors Kaija Langley and Janet Costa Bates at Hummingbird Books at The Street, 55 Boylston St., on Sunday, Feb. 25 from 11:00 to 11:30 a.m. The authors will read aloud from their books, followed by a conversation moderated by Story Starters Director Ellie Axe.
- A book exchange at the two Little Free Libraries at The Street (outside of Legal Seafoods and Star Market) with books by Black authors curated by

Hummingbird Books. Pick up a new book or contribute a new one for the community to enjoy. Click [here](#) for more information and a sample of some of the books available.

- Displays throughout the Newton Free Library, honoring the contributions and achievements of Black Americans.
- Reading lists online highlighting Black voices for young readers ([Kids](#), [Twins](#), [Teens](#)) available at online at [newtonfreelibrary.net](http://newtonfreelibrary.net) thanks to Newton's Youth Services staff.

### We will miss you, Ruth Balsler

State Representative Ruth Balsler, who represents the south side of Newton and some of Brookline, announced that she is not running for re-election. She will step away from an outstanding career of public service on December 31, 2024 that includes 8 years on the Newton Board of Aldermen and 25 years at the State House. Before that, she helped so many as a mental health worker and a clinical psychologist.

Rep. Balsler's impact shows up all over Newton and well beyond. She was a leading advocate for mental health parity in insurance coverage with physical ailments, for women being charged the same insurance premiums as men, more expansive mental health coverage for women, improved fire safety via sprinklers in public buildings, and protecting and preserving open space.

With gratitude, respect and affection for Ruth,

Ruthanne

P.S. Interested in the way we think, act and talk about dementia? Join Emily Kuhl of the Newton Senior Center for a virtual program on Tuesday, Feb. 27 from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m. and learn how to **Become a Dementia Friend**. The program includes a discussion of what it's like to live with dementia so participants can learn practical actions. Register in advance [here](#). (Once registered participants will receive email confirmation and specific meeting information.)

P.P.S. It's not too early to start planning for homegrown tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, lettuce, green beans and more. Learn how to use **virtual tools to lay out and plan garden plots and beds** for the spring. Click [here](#) to register for the Newton Free Library zoom program on Thursday, Feb. 22 from 11:00 a.m. to noon.

P.P.P.S. A new **Newton North Alumni Newsletter** from Principal Henry Turner recently went to over 11,000 alumni. Click [here](#) to see the first edition.



P.P.P.P.S. A broken lamp? A cracked ceramic vase? A tuba with a stuck key? The repair coaches at the Sunday, Feb. 25 **Fix-It Clinic** at the Newton Free Library can help. Click [here](#) for more information and to reserve a slot between 1:15 and 4:15 p.m. to learn how to do repairs.

P.P.P.P.S. Singer/songwriters Reb Ariel Hendelman and Marni Loffman will take the stage at Temple Shalom, 175 Temple St., West Newton, on Sunday, Feb. 25 for **Prayers for the Path, a concert filled with “soulful melodies and heartfelt prayers.”** The two-hour concert begins at 1:00 p.m. Click [here](#) for more information and to purchase tickets.

P.P.P.P.S Join the City of Newton and the Charles River Watershed Association for an initial public meeting to learn more about a grant from the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management on keeping pollution out of **Cheesecake Brook**, evaluating fish and wildlife passage, and greening the Albemarle corridor. (Cheesecake Brook runs through Newton and is particularly noticeable along Albemarle.) Click [here](#) to register for the virtual meeting on Thursday, Feb. 22 from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m.



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!