

City Council

2024-2025

City of Newton



To: City Council
From: President Marc C. Laredo and Vice President David Kalis
Cc: City Clerk Carol Moore, Mayor Ruthanne Fuller, School Committee Members
Re: Administrative Matters
Date: February 28, 2024

We have had a busy first two months of the term as our committee chairs are planning their agendas for the remainder of the term, many of the returning Councilors are taking on new roles within the Council, and we are welcoming our new colleagues to our team! There are a number of items that we want to bring to your attention:

1. Due to the ongoing zoom-bombing incidents, starting on March 1 we will transition to the Zoom webinar format for all committee meetings for a trial period of 90 days. To ensure public participation remains simple and easy to use, the Clerk's office will provide guidance to all Committee Chairs on how to inform attendees about raising their hand to comment. Additionally, detailed instruction will be made available on the City Council's webpage. We are aware that a number of Councilors are uncomfortable with this switch but, working closely with City Clerk Moore, we collectively have concluded that this approach is necessary for the proper conduct of our meetings.

2. The Community Dialogue Working Group is holding a public comment session on Thursday, February 29. It will be reporting back to the full City Council by no later than March 15 with its recommendations. We expect that after, it delivers its report, we will meet as a Committee of the Whole, tentatively scheduled for March 27, to discuss the recommendations, including whether we should adopt them, how they should be implemented, and how to measure success.

3. We have a number of openings for Councilors on committees and working groups. Please let us know by Wednesday, March 6 if you are interested in serving on one or more of the following:

- Anthony Salvucci City Council Scholarship Fund. One Councilor from Wards 1-4 and one Councilor from Wards 5-8 plus the President. This group selects the recipients of the annual City Council scholarships that are awarded to two graduating seniors, one from Newton North and the other from Newton South.
- Boston College Neighborhood Council. One Councilor from Ward 2 and one Councilor from Ward 7. The Council serves as the liaison committee with Boston College and includes representatives of the college and members of the immediate neighborhood.

- Investment Advisory Committee. We need two Councilors to serve on this committee which helps advise the city as to how to invest its money.
- Lasell Neighborhood Council. We need a Councilor to serve on this Council which serves as the liaison committee to the Lasell neighborhood.
- Newton-Wellesley Hospital Neighborhood Council. One Councilor from Ward 4 (Councilor Humphrey is serving as the Ward 5 representative). The Committee is the liaison committee with Newton-Wellsley Hospital.

As a reminder, Councilors are serving in the following roles:

- Chamber of Commerce's N-Squared Innovation District group. Councilors Farrell and Getz
- Community Dialog Working Group. Councilors Oliver (chair) Bixby, Krintzman, Lobovits, and Micley
- Double Poles Working Group. Councilor Laredo
- Financial Audit Advisory Committee. Councilors Malakie (chair), Micley, and Oliver
- Newton Affordable Housing Trust. Councilor Albright
- Newton Coalition for Community Wellness. Councilor Lucas
- Northland Liaison Committee. Councilors Getz and Lipof
- Other Post-Employment Benefits Trust. Councilor Grossman
- Riverside Liaison Committee. Councilors Gentile (chair), Krintzman, and Block
- School Transportation Steering Group. Councilors Downs and Bixby
- Traffic Council. Councilor Downs
- UMass Amherst at Mount Ida Neighborhood Council. Councilor Kalis
- Water, Sewer, and Stormwater Working Group. Councilors Farrell, Leary, and Malakie

4. We have a number of open positions for residents that are filled by direct appointment by the City Council President or nominated by the President and voted on by the City Council. Please encourage residents who may be interested in serving to apply. More

information can be found at <https://www.newtonma.gov/government/boards-commissions>. Here are the current City Council openings:

- Biosafety Committee. One opening.
- Boston College Neighborhood Council. Three openings: one representative from the Boston College Chestnut Hill campus neighborhood; one representative from the Boston College Law School campus neighborhood; and one representative from Newton Centre neighborhood east of Centre Street.
- Citizens Commission on Energy. One opening.
- Countryside School Project. One opening to serve as the community representative to the Design Review Committee for the life of the project.
- Designer Selection Committee. One opening.
- Franklin School Project. One opening to serve as the community representative to the Design Review Committee for the life of the project.
- Lasell Neighborhood Council.
- Newton-Wellesley Hospital Neighborhood Council. One resident/property owner from each of the following streets: Longfellow Road, Bonaire Circle, Beacon Street, across Washington Street or Walsingham Street, and Dorset Road.

5. Our next chairs meeting will be held on Monday, April 1 at 6:30 pm in Room 204. We will be discussing the Best Practices guide on how to run meetings and how Committee reports are written. *All Councilors are encouraged to attend this and all other chairs meetings!*

6. On Thursday, March 7 we will have an evening meeting of the full City Council, acting as a Committee of the Whole, at which the Mayor and her team will provide a brief overview of the city's finances and allow us to give our input before the Administration completes its detailed budget planning. This meeting will be at Allen House. Dinner will be served at 6 pm, with the meeting starting at 7pm.

7. Our school buildings tour is scheduled for the morning of Friday, March 22.

8. Our municipal buildings tour is in the planning stage, hopefully for the end of March or the first part of April.

9. CAN-DO is helping eligible families get Earned Income Tax Credits and Child Tax Credits. Information about the program can be found at <https://figcitynews.com/2024/02/can-do-and-the-village-bank-partner-to-provide-free-tax-assistance-to-filers-with-low-moderate-incomes>.

10. Spring is a busy time for community events. Of particular note are the Newton Schools Foundation event on Thursday, March 14 and the Newton Free Library fundraiser on Saturday, May 4. Please try to attend as many as possible – our residents and businesses greatly appreciate it!

Thanks for your attention to these matters.