



City of Newton
Youth Commission Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, March 13, 2024 @ 6:30pm
Newton Free Library

Attendance:

Meri Haas, John Roop, Michelle Menken, Amanda Feiner, Ana Ciric, Andrew Feinberg, Andrey Sarkanich, Armine Freeman, Chloe Lee, Chloe Lyons, Dhruv Lal, Eitan Leshem, Grace Cai, Joshua Levitt-Horne, Julia Dunn Rappaport, Nick Makura, Pete Olhava, Phoebe Anthony, Priscilla Situ, Ryn Leffler, Sarina Chand, Qiqoroi herry Zhang, Simba Makura, Sivan Zaoulay, Zack Gusenhoff

1. Meeting called to order at 6:35pm.

2. General Commission Business

a. Read the Youth Commission description and goals found on [the City's website](#):

- i. The Newton Youth Commission is a volunteer body of Youth and Adults appointed by the Mayor to work on issues related to youth in the Newton community. We meet monthly - our work is determined by current events and community needs. The commission is comprised of nine students and an advisory board of both students and adults.

The Newton Youth Commission's goal is to implement programs and policies to meet the opportunities, challenges and issues of Newton youth. In addition, the purpose of this Commission is to:

- encourage youth to take leadership roles in the community;
- facilitate opportunities for and access to resources on local, state, and federal levels;
- coordinate programs and activities carried on by both public and private agencies;
- create and implement policies for the prevention of youth problems in a cooperative and professional effort;
- create a sense of permanency of action and continuity of purpose for all youth activities.

3. Introduction of New Individuals Present

- a. John Roop, new staff at the West Suburban YMCA. Runs the Teen Center there.
- b. Michelle Menken, this is her 4th year working with the Youth Commission. She has two children and works as a criminal defense attorney in Newton, mostly working with youth.

4. Subcommittee Breakout Groups

- a. Before committees broke out into groups, the meeting chair, Nick Makura reminded Advisory Board members and Commissioners that it is important for each group to revisit their goals, expectations and workload. There are only a few meetings left in the year and it is important that members are realistic about their expectations of themselves and set achievable goals.

5. Subcommittee Reports

- a. Each subcommittee presented updates to the larger group, including important dates, potential funding needs and support needed from general Youth Commission Advisory Board members (YCAB).
- b. Mental Health Subcommittee
 - i. Planning workshops/social event focused on the pressures facing students. Hopefully including speakers and therapy dogs.
 - ii. They are hoping to host the event on Thursday, April 25th at 6:30
 - iii. The location of the event is TBD. Perhaps, Newton North, Newton South, the West Suburban YMCA, or the library.
 - iv. Adults are welcome to attend the event to support students.
 - v. Plan to advertise using posters, printouts, etc.
 - vi. Funding needs possibly include food, snacks, and printouts. Perhaps include pizza. May ask for pizza donations.
 - vii. SUPPORT NEEDED FROM YCAB: Attend event
- c. Communications & Community Engagement Subcommittee
 - i. No funding needs, perhaps posters at some point.
 - ii. Discussed possibly including information from/about the Commission in Schoolology updates, ask advisors talk about commission and events.
 - iii. Discussed creating a short video to explain what the Youth Commission AB does and possibly invite new members to join the Advisory Board.
 - iv. Discussion of fundraising TBD.
 - v. Perhaps, administer a short survey on behalf of the YCAB and Commission regarding events.
 - vi. Create an events calendar? Use Instagram to communicate?
 - vii. Discussion about establishing a line of communication with City Counselors.
 - viii. SUPPORT NEEDED FROM YCAB: Subcommittees let them know about event dates, etc. Consider being in the YCAB videos.
- d. Bike Safety Subcommittee
 - i. No funding needed.
 - ii. Working on planning a Bike Day event. Pending date is June 3rd.
 - iii. Have been working with other organizations around Newton who are focused on biking and bike safety.
 - iv. In conversation with the Newton Food Pantry about possibly disseminating bike safety gear donations.
 - v. SUPPORT NEEDED FROM YCAB: Attend event
- e. Climate and Sustainability Subcommittee
 - i. Continuing to work on a climate calendar.
 - ii. Looking at hosting a launch event in June or late May.
 - iii. Currently trying to source materials. Event will be outdoors.

- iv. Possible funding needs include plants or pots or seeds. May look for a donation from Home Depot, other location or Facebook. May also need printing costs to advertise the event.
- v. SUPPORT NEEDED FROM YCAB: Attend event

6. Youth Commissioners Update to Advisory Board

- a. The Youth Commissioners are currently reviewing the City Ordinances that oversee the Youth Commission. Looking to put chairs and other positions in place.
- b. A lot of what happens next in regard to the organization of the Youth Commission Advisory Board will be dependent on the next Youth Commission meeting, taking place on March 25th at 7:30pm. All are welcome to attend as it is a public meeting.
- c. The Youth Commission and YCAB Ordinances can be found online (and are also available at the end of these notes).
- d. If YCAB members have any questions they are welcome to reach out to individual Youth Commissioners. City staff member, Meri Haas, will email AB members with Commissioner contacts. Since commissioners are youth, they must first agree to be contacted by AB members.

7. Upcoming dates/announcements from YCAB Members

- a. March 12-17 is March Madness at the West Suburban YMCA Teen Center
- b. June 15th will be the second annual Celebration of Queer Culture. It is being planned and run by Newton High School Students. This free event is open to all and will take place at Newton City Hall. You can learn more by following the event on Instagram, @cqc_newton
- c. Holi – an Indian Holiday – will be celebrated at City Hall on Saturday, March 30th from 1:00-2:00pm. The event includes rice powder dyed different colors and one of the Youth Commissioners will be dancing at the event. All are welcome to join the celebration. Be sure to bring goggles for eye protection!
- d. There is a Career Pathways Event being held at Newton South for all Newton youth on Wednesday, March 27th from 6:30-8:00pm. The event is free and enables students to explore careers and possible pathways beyond high school.

8. Closing

- a. The next Youth Commission meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 25th via Zoom. Details will be emailed directly to YCAB members.
- b. The next Youth Commission Advisory Board Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 10th at 6:30pm at the Newton Free Library.

City of Newton



Ruthanne Fuller
Mayor

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Linda Walsh, Commissioner

1000 Commonwealth Avenue

Newton, MA 02459-1544

Telephone
(617) 796-1420

Fax

(617) 552-7063

TTY/TTD 617-796-1089

TTY/TRS 711

City of Newton
Youth Commission & Youth Commission Advisory Board
Copy of Current City Ordinances
(March 2024)

(6) Real estate.

Appointments to unexpired terms shall not be counted as a term for the person appointed. The advisory council shall meet at least four (4) times a year and shall be given notice of all commission meetings. The commissioner of health and human services shall be given notice of advisory council meetings and he/she or his/her designee shall have the right to be present.

(b) *Functions and duties.* It shall be the function of the council to assist and advise the commission in the carrying out of its powers and duties, to serve on such subcommittees as may be created from time to time by the commission, and to aid the commission in obtaining the support of the citizens of Newton in effectuating the policy of this article. The advisory council shall annually elect one of its members as chairperson and may elect other officers as it deems necessary, with the approval of the mayor. (Rev. Ords. 1973, § 2-286; Rev. Ords. 2001, § 14-38; Ord. No. 55, 2-18-75; Ord. No. 70, 7-28-75; Ord. No. S-140, 12-16-85; Ord. No. V-290, 3-20-00; Ord. No. X-175, 05-26-05)

Editor's note—As amended in 1975, this section provided for members of the then community relations advisory board to continue as members of the new human rights commission advisory council for the remainder of their terms.

Sec. 12-55. Construction of article.

The provisions of this article shall be construed liberally for the accomplishment of the purposes thereof, and any ordinance inconsistent with any provision hereof shall not apply, but nothing contained in this article shall be interpreted to contravene the General Laws of the Commonwealth. (Rev. Ords. 1973, § 2-287; Rev. Ords. 2001, § 14-39; Ord. No. 55, 2-18-75; Ord. No. 70, 7-28-75; Ord. No. X-175, 05-26-05)

Secs. 12-56—12-59. Reserved.

**ARTICLE VI.
YOUTH COMMISSION**

Sec. 12-60. Created; membership; terms; removal; chairperson; officers.

There is hereby established within the city a youth commission, consisting of nine (9) members to be appointed by the mayor with the approval of the city council, who will serve without compensation. Such members must be residents of the city or enrolled in a secondary or middle school within the City and will serve for terms not exceeding three (3) years, or until such members are rendered ineligible to serve. All new members will be appointed for a term of a maximum of three (3) years, but no member may serve for more than two (2) consecutive terms. Each member will continue to serve after the expiration of the term until a successor has been appointed and has qualified, unless such member has been rendered ineligible to serve. Vacancies will be filled for the period of the unexpired term in the same manner as original appointments. Any member of the commission may, after a public hearing, if requested, be removed for cause by the appointing authority. Appointments to unexpired terms will not be counted as a term for the person appointed. The commission will annually elect one of its members as chairperson and may elect other officers as it deems necessary. Executive or administrative officers of the city government are not eligible to serve on the commission, but may advise it upon request of the commission. (Rev. Ords. 1973, § 2-315; Rev. Ords. 2001, § 14-57; Ord. No. 81, 7-28-75; Ord. No. X-175, 05-26-05; Ord. No. A-89, 11-21-16)

Editor's note—As amended in 1970 this section provided for the original members to be appointed or staggered terms of one (1), two (2) and three (3) years."

Sec. 12-61. Purposes.

The purpose of this commission is to implement programs and policies to meet the opportunities, challenges and issues of Newton youth, pursuant to chapter 40, section 8E, of the Massachusetts General Laws. In addition, the purpose of this commission is to:

- (a) encourage youth to take leadership roles in the community;
- (b) facilitate opportunities for and access to resources on local, state and federal levels;
- (c) coordinate programs and activities carried on by both public and private agencies;
- (d) create and implement policies for the prevention of youth problems in a cooperative and professional effort;
- (e) create a sense of permanency of action and continuity of purpose for all youth activities.

To accomplish all of the foregoing, the commission will coordinate with the department of health and human services. (Rev. Ords. 1973, § 2-316; Rev. Ords. 2001, § 14-58; Ord. No. 81, 7-28-75; Ord. No. X-175, 05-26-05; Ord. No. A-89, 11-21-16)

Sec. 12-62. Authority to establish rules and regulations.

The commission may, with the approval of the mayor and the knowledge of the commissioner of health and human services, or designee, establish its own rules and regulations to carry out its goals. (Rev. Ords. 1973, § 2-317; Rev. Ords. 2001, § 14-59; Ord. No. 81, 7-28-75; Ord. No. X-175, 05-25-05; Ord. No. A-89, 11-21-16)

Sec. 12-63. Meetings; reports.

The commission will meet at least once each month, except for during July and August. The commission will keep accurate records as required by the open meeting law. The commission will submit an annual report to the city council. In addition to the annual report, the mayor may request written reports of the activities of the commission at any time. Five (5) members of the commission will constitute a quorum and a majority of commissioners present will be sufficient for the commission to take any action. (Rev. Ords. 1973, § 2-318; Rev. Ords. 2001, § 14-60; Ord. No. 81, 7-28-75; Ord. No. X-175, 05-26-05; Ord. No. A-89, 11-21-16)

Sec. 12-64. Gifts; grants.

The youth commission may receive gifts of property, both real and personal, in the name of the city, subject to the approval of the city council. Such gifts, if any, may be managed and controlled by the commission for the purpose of carrying out any program or policy for which the commission was established. The commission will keep informed and remain cognizant of all state and federal legislation concerning funding and program planning for youth commissions or related activities which may inure to the benefit of the community as a whole. Any federal or state grants and private gifts or donations received for these purposes will be included in its annual budget to be approved by the mayor and city council. The commission may expend, with the approval of the mayor, such funds as are appropriated for the purposes stated in section 12-61 of this article. The commission will prepare an annual operating budget, to be included in the overall department of health and human services budget. (Rev. Ords. 1973, § 2-319; Rev. Ords. 2001, § 14-61; Ord. No. 81, 7-28-75; Ord. No. X-175, 05-26-05; Ord. No. A-89, 11-21-16)

Sec. 12-65. Advisory Board to Youth Commission.

(a) The mayor shall appoint, with the advice of the youth commission, an unpaid advisory board to the youth commission consisting of not more than thirty (30) members, fifteen (15) of whom shall be secondary or middle school age. Membership of the advisory board, except the secondary and middle school members, shall include, so far as practicable, persons representative of existing youth agencies, social agencies, clergy, health, education, law and law enforcement, medical, school, recreation and other public or private organizations concerned with youth. the duty of the advisory board shall be to advise the youth commission and offer recommendations in respect to matters concerning Newton youth. This board shall meet at least six (6) times each year. It shall meet with the youth commission at least twice a year for the purpose of communicating to it the results of its deliberations and to present any recommendations.

(b) All members of the advisory board will be appointed for a term of two (2) years. the advisory board will annually elect one of its members as the chairperson and may elect other officers as it deems necessary. Members of the board will serve for not more than three (3) consecutive terms. (Rev. Ords. 1973, §2-320, Rev. Ords. 2001, § 14-62; Ord. No. 81, 7-28-75; Ord. No. X-175, 05-26-05; Ord. No. A-89, 11-21-16)

Editor's note—As amended in 1970, this section provided that the original members who were not high school youth were to be appointed for staggered terms of one (1) or two (2) years.

**ARTICLE VII.
HEALTH CARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Sec. 12-66 Establishment; purpose and scope

There is hereby established a health care advisory committee which shall be an independent advisory body charged with making recommendations to the mayor and city council regarding ways to control the cost of employee and retiree health insurance while improving or maintaining the quality of health care available to Newton employees and retirees. Specifically, the committee is charged with reviewing the cost and efficiency of Newton's health benefits plan or plans, examining possible alternative methods of securing health insurance for its participants, and investigating possible avenues of providing better medical care and treatment outside of the traditional model at a lower cost, including wellness, prevention and early detection regimens.

Sec. 12-67. Reports and recommendations

The committee shall issue reports to the mayor and the president of the city council on its findings. The first such report shall be issued by a date certain as set by the mayor and the president of the city council. Thereafter, the committee shall issue such reports upon request of the mayor and/or the city council. (Ord. No. A-7, 10-15-12)

Sec. 12-68 Composition

(a) The committee shall be comprised of ten (10) members, five (5) of whom shall be appointed by the mayor subject to the approval of the city council and five (5) of whom shall be appointed by the city council.

(b) Persons receiving health benefits from the City of Newton shall not be eligible for membership, nor shall any current City of Newton employees, including elected officials. The appointing authorities shall endeavor to select members based solely on their expertise in the fields of health care, finance, insurance and related disciplines and their willingness to serve. In particular, the Committee should include at least