

Wednesday, June 26, 2024

## Mayor's Newton Update



### Leading Massachusetts in Electrification

Newly constructed buildings and upcoming Major Renovations in Newton will soon be required to use electricity (rather than gas and oil).

Why are we going all electric for new construction and Major Renovations?

More than 60% of our greenhouse gas emissions in Newton come from our buildings - our homes, apartments, and commercial buildings. As a result, the way we heat and cool our buildings, heat our water, cook our food, and keep the lights on matters a lot. By using cleaner and greener electricity generated with renewable sources (such as solar and wind), we can reduce greenhouse gas emissions caused by fossil fuels, the major contributor to climate change.

After years of leadership from Newton's Co-Directors of Sustainability Ann Berwick and Bill Ferguson, years of meetings with business community and residents, as well as a lot of thoughtful deliberation and compromise, the Newton City Council last week voted for an electrification ordinance that requires all new construction and Major Renovations to be all-electric effective January 1, 2025. The measure passed with a 20 to 1 vote. (Councilor Lenny Gentile opposed and three Councilors were absent.)

Newton along with 8 other communities (Brookline, Arlington, Lexington, Acton, Lincoln, Cambridge, Aquinnah and Concord) is thus joining the State's *Municipal Fossil Fuel Free Building Demonstration Program*, which sometimes is called the "10 Communities Pilot Program." (Northampton and Somerville are both vying to be the tenth and final community in the program.)

The new ordinance is focused on new construction and Major Renovations, which includes substantial additions.

As defined in the ordinance, Major Renovations are very substantial. For example, in low-rise residential homes, they are additions over 1,000 square feet, *or* greater than 100% of the conditioned floor area (the area that is typically heated) of the existing building; and alterations (i.e., renovations within the existing walls) covering over 50% of the existing conditioned floor area *and* more than 1,000 square feet.

An example of a major renovation might be helpful. Let's use a Newton homeowner with a 4,000-square-foot home. That homeowner can build an addition of up to 1,000-square-feet or 25% of the existing home before triggering the electrification requirements. Alternatively, the same homeowner could make alterations up to 1,000-square feet or 25% of the inside of the home without triggering the electrification requirements. Any addition or alterations more than these would require electrification. The ordinance requires that for an addition that qualifies as a Major Renovation, only that addition must be fully electrified. The building may keep an existing fossil-fuel fired system to serve the existing portions of the building. The building may not extend the existing fossil-fuel fired HVAC or domestic hot water distribution lines into the addition (e.g., if there is a bathroom and kitchen in the addition, they must have electrified hot water).

For alterations that qualify as Major Renovations, the renovated area, but only that area, must be fully electrified. The remaining portions of the building may continue to be served by an existing fossil fuel-fired system; in other words, an existing fossil fuel-fired HVAC or domestic hot water system may not be extended into the altered area.

Note that electrification is required only in new construction and Major Renovations. In other situations, electrification is not required. A new gas stove, for example, can be installed and attached to the existing piping in an existing kitchen if the kitchen is not part of a Major Renovation. Existing gas appliances are also not affected by the ordinance.

Click [here](#) for a link to the electrification ordinance.

The electrification ordinance has a number of exemptions. The exemptions include (1) research labs, hospitals, and medical offices (exemptions provided by State statute), as well as (2) freestanding outdoor cooking and heating appliances that are not connected to the building's natural gas or propane infrastructure, and (3) emergency generators.

We listened to our business community and added two waiver provisions. The first waiver is for circumstances in which electrification will increase the costs of the project by 50% percent or more, and the second is for instances in which sufficient electrical service is unavailable at the location.

After lengthy discussion, the City Council decided to include indoor gas cooking (ovens and stovetops) in the ordinance effective January 1, 2026 (i.e., one year after the ordinance goes into effect). In other words, after that date there is no exemption for indoor gas cooking. Buildings subject to a Major Renovation during that one year (2025) must install the infrastructure, like electrical outlets, that will accommodate an electric stove.

The State still needs to review Newton's ordinance for formal approval in the pilot program.

We have many people to thank for the City reaching this historic moment in our efforts to combat climate change. They include Newton's Co-Directors of

Sustainability, Ann Berwick and Bill Ferguson, and the City's Energy Coach Liora Silkes. They also include many City Councilors, especially Councilor Alison Leary and former Councilors Deb Crossley, Alicia Bowman, and Emily Norton, and many residents, especially Marcia Cooper, Halina Brown, Ellie Goldberg, and Peter Barrer. Organizations including the Newton Citizens Commission on Energy, Green Newton, and the Charles River Chamber were all extremely supportive and helpful.

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## Two Gath Pools Are Open

We opened two new Gath Pools on Monday with excitement, good cheer and about 500 revelers joining us for a first day dip into the terrific new 8 lane lap pool and the zero-entry recreation pool.

After nine months of construction that was on time and on budget, I am grateful to literally hundreds of people who made this possible. I'll start with a heartfelt thank you to two Commissioners: Josh Morse of Public Buildings and Nicole Banks of Parks, Recreation and Culture and their teams, the Friends of Albemarle and their amazing leaders – Cedar Pruitt, Jacqueline Freeman and Megan Anapolle, Mary and Scott Pohlman of the Newton Bluefish, State Rep. Kay Khan, members of Newton's Community Preservation Committee and the City Council, and so many residents who helped us design and bring this new complex to completion.

Mark your calendars – we're having a full day of free, fun community activities on Saturday, July 20 (including synchronized swimmers!).

Click below to watch some scenes from opening day. I even took a turn checking out a diving board and going down the new slide.



Click below to watch some scenes from the nine month construction process.




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*After a vehicle crashed into the McGrath Fountain in the heart of Auburndale, we had to install a new one. Check it out in the rotary by the Auburndale Community Library and give a tip of your hat for Dick McGrath's dedicated service to our community.*

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## **GoGo Newton**

Newton will transition to a new transportation service – GoGo Newton – starting on Monday, July 1.

GoGo Newton will offer rides to people living in our City who need the most support – older Newton residents (65+), people 18 and older with disabilities, and people living on low incomes.

What does the service offer?

- Rides 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year
- Trips to and from Newton to Waltham, Watertown, Wellesley, Weston, Needham, Brookline and Boston Area Medical Facilities
- Rides can be scheduled by phone or by website

Depending on your income level, the City of Newton is helping to defer the cost of rides. Click [here](#) and scroll down to “GoGo Newton Rates” to learn more.



Questions? Call us at 617-796-4646 or 617-796-GOGO. (If we're on another line, please leave a message and we'll get back to you.)

The Newton Planning Department has in-person open enrollment drop-in sessions on:

- Tomorrow, Thursday, June 27 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., Room B17, first floor of City Hall, 1000 Commonwealth Ave.
- Monday, July 8, 4:00 to 6:00 p.m., Newton Free Library, Druker Auditorium, 330 Homer St.
- Wednesday, July 10, noon to 2:00 p.m., Newton Free Library, Druker Auditorium, 330 Homer St.

The Newton Senior Services Department has a zoom virtual information session on:

- Wednesday, July 10, 2:00 p.m. [Register here](#).

We also offer 1 on 1 sessions with folks at Brigham House in Newton Highlands and at the Library. These need to be booked via our GoGo phone line (617-796-GOGO or 617-796-4646) to ensure City staff can be available to verify residents' documents.

Click [here](#) to see more information on the City's GoGo Newton webpage.

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## Say Hello to Newton Police Officers

*(Photo: Newton Police Officer David Calderon and Lt. Kenny D'Angelo walking through West Newton.)*

We'll be seeing more Newton police officers on foot and on bicycles in Village centers, along neighborhood streets, and in parks this summer as part of what the Newton Police Department is calling "Operation Safe Sidewalks."

The summer community policing initiative, funded with a Department of Justice COPS microgrant, allows officers to be more visible, come to know residents and shop owners better, and identify potential problems earlier.

If you see Officers this summer, please feel free to stop them and say hello.

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## Kudos

*Huge thanks for two wonderful projects that improved conditions for people walking over and along the Sudbury Aqueduct in Waban. Last year Cam McAllister constructed a stairway at Cragmore Road to get atop the aqueduct path. This year Harry Smith took up the baton and constructed a staircase on the other side of the aqueduct path connecting to Stanley Road. They completed these community service projects*

*as part of achieving the rank of Eagle Scout. During my visit to the construction site, neighbors and hikers stopped to express their enthusiasm and appreciation for the improvements. Thank you Cam and Harry and to their many volunteers who helped. Well done!*

*(Photo: With, from left, Chris Rivero with Friends of Cold Spring Park, Melanie Smith, Commissioner of Parks, Recreation & Culture Nicole Banks, David Smith, Tim McAllister, Mayor Fuller, Harry Smith, Cam McAllister, City Councilor Andrae Downs.)*

*Congratulations to the recipients of the Newton Community Development Foundation's Eloise K. Houghton award who were nominated by their neighbors as people who go above and beyond to make their community a better place.*

*(Photo – With, from left, Maryam Aljasem (Warren House), Jeanne Strickland of NCDF, Gloria Gagnon (Weeks House), Milagros Reyes (Casselmann House) and Adonay Efrem (Houghton Village).)*

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## Honoring Those Taking the Oath to Serve Our Country

This evening we gathered at the American Legion Nonantum Post 440 for the proud tradition of honoring our Newton High School graduates who are enlistees in our nation's armed services.

*(Photo: With Newton Public School Superintendent Anna Nolin and graduates Reeve Derby who is entering the U.S. Naval Academy, Michael Golden entering West Point and Steven Magazu entering the U.S. Army.)*

Daniel Huang, Nathan Auguello, Steven Magazu and Isaiah Santospago are entering the United States Army, Reeve Derby is entering the United States Air Force Academy and Michael Golden is entering West Point. They have chosen to put themselves on the front lines to protect our democracy, to protect our freedom, to help shape our future, and to represent to the world all that is good and strong and honorable about America.

I commend each of them for answering our nation's call.

Warmly,

Ruthanne

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P.S. Enjoy **live Blues and Moldovan food** on Sundays through July at Moldova Restaurant, 344 Watertown Street, in Nonantum. The Blues trio of Christ Stovall Brown, Bob Vabulas and Bob Dallas (with special guests every week) begins playing at 5:00 p.m. No cover, no tickets and no reservations required – just arrive early. Click [here](#) for more information.

P.P.S. **Sunday Night Concerts** in the Newton Centre Bowl start on July 14 and continue through Aug. 18. For six weeks the open space adjacent to the Newton Centre playground and just down the hill from the hut on Tyler Terrace comes alive with music and dancing. Bring a lawn chair or blanket, perhaps a picnic dinner as well and join the fun. Click [here](#) for more information and a schedule of performers.

P.P.P.S. The **89<sup>th</sup> Annual Italian Festival in**

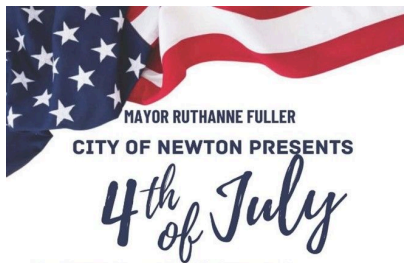
**Nonantum** – affectionately known as “Festa” – is Wednesday, July 17 through Sunday, July 21 at Pellegrini Park on Hawthorn Street. With live music every night, great food, carnival rides, community and so much more, the St. Mary of Carmen Society festival brings generations of tradition to life every summer. Click [here](#) for more information.

P.P.P.P.S. The [Centre Street Food Pantry](#) received a grant from the Greater Boston Food Bank to help feed kids this summer. Clients with children will receive an additional bag of fresh food suitable for children’s lunches each time they visit the pantry. Click [here](#) for more information about resources in Newton available to help with food insecurity.

P.P.P.P.P.S. **Congratulations** to the Newton North Boys’ Volleyball State Champions!

*(Photo: Captain Joaquin Cuevas-Torres and teammates with the championship trophy won in a hard-fought, five game match over Needham earlier this month. Photo Credit: Ken McGagh for the Boston Globe.)*

**Past P.S.s happening soon:**



P.S. **Celebrate July 4th in Newton** next Thursday with a day full of festivities. **Kids Morning** begins Independence Day festivities from 10:00 a.m. to noon at the Newton Centre playground “bowl” off Tyler Terrace. Join in the patriotic costume promenade, the decorated bicycle parade, or bring your loyal companion to the grand pet parade. Enjoy music, crafts and free ice cream courtesy of

Cabot’s. Then **head over to Albemarle Field/Halloran Field where the fun starts at 1:00 p.m.** with carnival rides and an open-air market. The band East Coast Soul will start playing at 6:30 p.m. until it’s time for the **spectacular fireworks starting at 9:00 p.m.** over Albemarle Field/Halloran Field (250 Albemarle Road) in Newtonville.

Also, a reminder that there is **no trash or recycling collection on Thursday, July 4** next week. The Thursday route will be collected on Friday, and the Friday route will be collected on Saturday.



P.P.S. The **Sumner Tunnel will close** for five weeks starting on Friday, July 5 through Friday, Aug. 31 so crews can continue addressing safety, ceiling, lighting & security systems, cell phone, GPS and radio service in the century old tunnel. Click [here](#) for more information about the Sumner Tunnel project and use [MassDOT 511](#) to see travel conditions before making a trip.

P.P.P.S. Register now to join the fun at the **7<sup>th</sup> Annual Schultz Family Kids Triathlon** on Thursday, July 11 at Newton North High School. Online registration closes next Friday, July 5. The triathlon which begins at 6:00 p.m. is for youngsters ages 6 to 12 and thanks to Newton Athletes Unlimited includes an adaptive division for children and adults with disabilities. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.



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