

**Friday, Nov. 15, 2024**

## Mayor's Newton Update

---

### **Police Chief George McMains**

I am grateful to have the opportunity to appoint Acting Police Chief George R. McMains to be the next Chief of the Newton Police Department.

George McMains has just the right skills, experience, temperament, judgment and work ethic that our community and our police department need at this time ... and he is a man of integrity and a proven leader.

After serving as a United States Marine overseas during Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm, Acting Chief McMains returned to the United States, graduated from the Police Academy, and began his career stateside as a Newton Police Officer in 1997. He brought the Marine Corps core values to his work in our community – honor, courage and commitment. For the past 28 years, he served in many roles and at every rank in the Newton Police Department. Two years ago, I swore him in as Superintendent of Police, the department's second in command. When former Chief Carmichael needed a leave of absence both last year and again this year before stepping down, George McMains admirably led our department.

George is dedicated to fostering a community-oriented police department that prioritizes the quality of life for all residents. He believes in delivering policing that is fair, just, respectful, safe, and effective.

I know him well as a strong, quiet leader. I admire his listening skills, genuine curiosity, and ability to work well with community members from all walks of life. He is open and respectful of different viewpoints and opinions. I have seen firsthand that in times of crisis, confusion and controversy, he is calm, decisive and thoughtful. He has good judgment. He is mature. He is respected and liked by the officers and staff within the Newton Police Department. He cares deeply about his team and their wellness and effectiveness. He is not only a good leader but also a good person.

I am grateful for the help of so many as we did our due diligence in searching for a new permanent Chief of the Newton Police Department. I want to thank our Police Selection Committee for their careful consideration, which included City Councilor Tarik Lucas, Hon. Judge Nancy Holtz (Ret.), Chief Kevin O'Connell of the Waltham Police Department, former Police Reform Task Force member Attorney Derege Demissie, former member of the 2021 Police Chief Selection Committee Attorney Michelle Leung, a Newton resident and President and CEO of the May Institute Dr. Lauren Solotar, Rabbi Keith Stern of Temple Beth Avodah, Newton business owner of O'Hara's Food and Sprits and Paddy's Public House

Karl O'Hara, Officer John Panica of the Newton Patrol Association, and Sgt. John Claflin of the Newton Superior Officers Association. When the Committee met with me on Wednesday night, they made a "full throated and unanimous" recommendation that Acting Chief McMains be my choice.

In making their recommendation, the Committee members cited Acting Chief McMains' ability to command and to lead. They spoke of his ability, knowledge, talent, capability, trustworthiness, genuineness, dedication, reliability, institutional knowledge and collaborative nature. As one of the members of the Committee said, George even raises puppies to be service dogs.

I look forward to Acting Chief McMains speaking with the Newton City Council later this month as they undertake their approval process.

---

### **Heightened Fire Danger**

All of Massachusetts, including the City of Newton, is facing very difficult wildfire conditions.

Months without meaningful rainfall, abundant dead leaves and vegetation, bright sunshine, low humidity and gusty winds make our weather conditions ripe for wildfires.

Statewide, fires in October rose 1,200% above the historical average, and the 133 fires reported in the first week of November represent more than six times the average for the *entire* month.

In Newton, Fire Chief Greg Gentile reports that our firefighters have extinguished 22 brush fires in the past month with no reported injuries. Property damage was sustained in two of the fires where weather and the dry conditions may have been a factor; both these fires are still under investigation.

The cause of almost all of the fires in Massachusetts has been human activity. Fires can be prevented by not engaging in any outdoor activity that involves open flames, sparks and embers, and limiting hot engines, gasoline from power equipment and other ignition sources. This same advice is coming from Newton Fire Chief Gentile, the Massachusetts Department of Fire Services, and the Massachusetts Department of Conservation & Recreation's Bureau of Forest Fire Control & Forestry.

Newton Fire Chief Gentile urges all community members to follow these safety tips to prevent wildfires:

- Dispose of Cigarettes Responsibly– Avoid tossing cigarettes on the ground, especially in grassy or wooded areas. Dispose of them in designated containers and ensure they are completely extinguished before disposal.
- Do Not Do Any Open Burning– Open burning is strictly prohibited in Newton and surrounding cities and towns. This includes bonfires, brush burning, fire

pits and any kind of outdoor fire. These activities significantly increase the risk of uncontrolled fires in these dry conditions. (fyi: Fire pits are never allowed in Newton.)

- **Report Fire Hazards** – If you see any potential fire hazards or witness unsafe practices, please report them to us immediately.
- 

*We recently broke ground on the new Splash Park going in next to the Newton Upper Falls Greenway, providing this special village with another place for fun, family and community. Thanks to the folks at Northland for including this in their plans and working so collaboratively with our Parks, Recreation and Culture team who oversaw the park's design and will operate and manage this new City resource for decades to come. See you in June ready to splash.*

*(Photo: With, from Left, City Councilors Rena Getz and Bill Humphrey, Northland's VP Kent Gozales and Senior VP Peter Standish, City Councilor Pam Wright, Newton Upper Falls resident Jerry Reilly, City Councilor Martha Bixby, Newtonville Area Councilor Jay Werb, City Council President Marc Laredo, Parks, Recreation & Culture Commissioner Nicole Banks, former City Councilor John Rice, and Director of Parks and Open Space Luis Perez Demorizi.)*

---

## **Updates to Short-Term Rental Ordinance**

Short-term rental companies such as AirBnB and VRBO have expanded dramatically. Founded in 2008, AirBnB within five years had served 9 million guests in total and then within 10 years had 2 million people staying with them every night.

The Newton City Council passed our first ordinance in 2019 to regulate short-term rentals. Our goals were to make sure they did not negatively impact neighbors and neighborhoods and to make them safe for the guests.

The short-term rental ordinance went into effect in January 2020 and includes important requirements for property owners:

- Requires property owners to reside in the residence for at least 9 out of 12 months of year
- Limits property owners to rent out only one Newton property as a short-term rental
- Requires annual registration of short-term rental units with the City and the State
- Limits the number of bedrooms that the property owner can rent to 3, and limits the number of guests to 9

- Limits an operator to offering a dwelling unit or bedroom for only less than 30 days
- Requires a fire inspection (and smoke & carbon monoxide certification)
- Prohibits commercial events (including any “gatherings for direct or indirect compensation”)
- Requires House rules to be posted and distributed to rental clients that include topics such as trash/recycling, noise, odors/fumes, parking and occupancy limits

### 2024 Update

Newton’s City Council earlier this year revised the short-term rental ordinance to increase the ability of our Inspectional Services and Law Department staff to fully enforce the ordinance.

Specifically, the City Council changed the ordinance to require the operator of the short-term rentals to be the property owner of record. In other words, lessees may not operate short-term rentals in Newton. (Indirect ownership is allowed under specific and limited circumstances.)

There are currently four short-term rentals fully registered in Newton with six more properties very close to completing the requirements. Another three are also in the process of registering.

### Enforcement

We are working actively to enforce the ordinance. Our Inspectional Services team responds to complaints about short-term rentals and follows up with enforcement. If operators don’t comply, our Law staff can file complaints and, eventually, can collect fines.

What should you do if you suspect a neighbor is renting out their property without being registered, or is operating in violation of the Short-Term Rental Ordinance? You can fill out a Request for Zoning Enforcement found [here](#) or online under Inspectional Services at newtonma.gov. The request will go to our Zoning Enforcement Agent. Click [here](#) for a list of registered short-term rentals in Newton.

Click [here](#) to see the short-term rental ordinance, find out how to register a short-term rental, see the list of short-term rentals, and to review Frequently Asked Questions.

---

### **Newton Winter Parking Ban Begins Sunday, December 1**

The citywide Overnight Winter Parking Ban begins on Sunday, Dec. 1 and extends through March 31. During these four months, parking on City streets is

prohibited from 2:00 a.m. to 6:00 a.m.

Are you looking for a place to park your vehicles from 7:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. from Dec. 1 through March 31? Free Municipal Parking Lot stickers are available to residents from the Newton Police Department. You need a valid driver's license and vehicle registration. (Proof of residency is also required if your car is not registered in Newton.) Parking permits are given out on a first-come, first-serve basis. Find more information [here](#), and the application for a Municipal Lot Parking sticker is [here](#).

Where are our municipal parking lots? Lexington/Melrose Streets (same lot - two entrances); Cherry/Elm Streets (same lot - two entrances); Chapel Street; Adams Street; Austin Street; Cypress Street; Langley Road; Pearl Street; Richardson Street; Pelham Street; Hartford Street; and Chestnut Street (angled spots at end of Chestnut St in Pettee Square). Click [here](#) for map locations of municipal parking lots.

Please know that if we have to declare a Snow Emergency, the municipal parking lots become unavailable (since we need to plow them). For most nights in the winter, though, they are an option.

---

### *The Newton*

*North High School Girls Volleyball team is heading to their fourth straight Division 1 State Championship game this Saturday night, Nov. 16, against rival Brookline. The top seeded Tigers are looking for their third title in a row playing for Head Coach Nile Fox.*

*The game starts at 6:30 p.m. at Billerica Memorial High School, 33 River Street in Billerica. Go Tigers!*

*(Photo: Newton Tigers celebrate after winning the first set against Needham during the semi-final game Tuesday night. Credit: Photographer Ken McGagh for the Boston Globe.)*

---

### **New Phil to Perform Aaron Copland's *Lincoln Portrait***

I have the honor of narrating New Philharmonia's performance of Aaron Copland's *Lincoln Portrait* at Grace Episcopal Church, 76 Eldredge St., on Saturday and Sunday, Nov. 23 and 24.

The score includes the words of our 16<sup>th</sup> President, which are as powerful as they are timeless.

*"That from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion.*

*That we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain.*

*That this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, and for the people, shall not perish from this earth."*

Tickets for the Saturday performance at 7:30 p.m. and on Sunday at 3:00 p.m. are available by clicking [here](#).

Warmly,

Ruthanne

---

P.S. Register now to show off your gingerbread house and structure building skills in this year's **Gingerbread House Exhibit & Contest**. Bakers/builders can sign up in the youth (14 and under), adult, or team (family, friends, co-workers, etc.) categories. The works will be displayed on the second floor at City Hall, 1000 Commonwealth Ave., this December and we'll all have a chance to vote for our favorites. Click [here](#) for more information and to register through Friday, Nov. 22.

P.P.S. Looking for a job? Connect with local employers looking for talent at the **Veterans & Community Job Fair** on Wednesday, Nov. 20 from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Newton Free Library, Druker Auditorium, 330 Homer Street. Join MassHire Metro South/West to explore career opportunities and network. Click [here](#) for more information and to register to attend the free event.

P.P.P.S. Join more than 1,400 participants at the annual family friendly **Newton Turkey Trot 2024** on Sunday, Nov. 24. The race begins and ends at the Zervas Elementary School on Beacon Street in Waban and supports the Newton Food Pantry, the Centre Street Food Pantry, and Journey Forward, a non-profit organization dedicated to bettering the lives of people with spinal cord injuries or disability. Click [here](#) to register for the 1-mile family race starting at 8:30 a.m. or the 5K that follows at 9:00 a.m.

P.P.P.P.S. Pick up items for your Thanksgiving dinner from 14 local businesses at All Over Newton's **Thanksgiving Farmers' Market** on Tuesday, Nov. 26 from noon to 4:00 p.m. at the Allen Center, 35 Webster St., West Newton (parking and access to the Center is in the parking lot on Cherry Street). Vendors will be selling locally grown produce, appetizers, side dishes, fresh seafood, pies and pastry, charcuterie boards and cheeses, chocolates, and much more. Click [here](#) for more information, a full list of vendors, and ordering information.

P.P.P.P.P.S. The **Mayor's Holiday Mini Golf** at City Hall is Friday, Dec. 6 through Sunday, Dec. 8. City Hall will be transformed into an 18-hole mini-golf course with greens and holes winding through the Mayor's Office (including the secret passageway), City Council Chambers and the War Memorial. An unwrapped gift(s) for children ages 0 to 10 to bring holiday

cheer to a local family is your entry to play. Click [here](#) for more information and to sign up for a tee time.

P.P.P.P.P.S. Mark your calendar for the inaugural **Newton Children's Book Festival** on Saturday, Dec. 14 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the New Art Center in Newtonville. More than 60 children's book authors and illustrators will be signing books and enjoy a free bookmark art craft. Click [here](#) for more information.

P.P.P.P.P.P.S. Newton Parks, Recreation and Culture is offering American Red Cross **Lifeguard Training** courses during the February and April school vacation weeks. The classes will be held at the pool at Newton North High School. Click [here](#) for more information, including prerequisites for the course and to register.



Mayor Ruthanne Fuller | 1000 Commonwealth Avenue | Newton, MA 02459 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email marketing for free today!