



# Programs & Services Committee Agenda

## Special Meeting

### City of Newton

### In City Council

**Monday, November 5, 2018**

**7:00PM**

**Room 205 – Note new location**

#### **Items Scheduled for Discussion:**

- #525-18      Appointment of Brianna Spiegel to the Youth Commission**  
HER HONOR THE MAYOR appointing BRIANNA SPIEGEL, 427 Crafts Street, West Newton, as a member of the YOUTH COMMISSION for a term to expire September 1, 2020. (60 days: 12/14/18)
- #526-18      Appointment of Madison Branagan to the Youth Commission**  
HER HONOR THE MAYOR appointing MADISON BRANAGAN, 91 Greenlawn Avenue, Newton Centre, as a member of the YOUTH COMMISSION for a term to expire September 1, 2019. (60 days: 12/14/18)
- #527-18      Appointment of Veer Sawhney to the Youth Commission**  
HER HONOR THE MAYOR appointing VEER SAWHNEY, 52 Forest Avenue, Auburndale, as a member of the YOUTH COMMISSION for a term to expire September 1, 2019. (60 days: 12/14/18)
- #528-18      Appointment of Christina Bednarzh to the Youth Commission**  
HER HONOR THE MAYOR appointing CHRISTINA BEDNARZH, 91 Osborne Path, Newton Centre, as a member of the YOUTH COMMISSION for a term to expire September 1, 2020. (60 days: 12/14/18)
- #529-18      Appointment of Coral Lin to the Youth Commission**  
HER HONOR THE MAYOR appointing CORAL LIN, 100 Exeter Street, West Newton, as a member of the YOUTH COMMISSION for a term to expire September 1, 2021. (60 days: 12/14/18)

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The location of this meeting is accessible and reasonable accommodations will be provided to persons with disabilities who require assistance. If you need a reasonable accommodation, please contact the City of Newton's ADA Coordinator, Jini Fairley, at least two business days in advance of the meeting: [jfairley@newtonma.gov](mailto:jfairley@newtonma.gov) or (617) 796-1253. The city's TTY/TDD direct line is: 617-796-1089. For the Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS), please dial 711.

- #530-18**      **Appointment of Reethika Digumarthy to the Youth Commission**  
HER HONOR THE MAYOR appointing REETHIKA DIGUMARTHY, 4 Frances Street, Newton Highlands, as a member of the YOUTH COMMISSION for a term to expire September 1, 2021. (60 days: 12/14/18)
- #500-18**      **Appointment of Rabbi Eric Gurvis to the Human Rights Commission**  
HER HONOR THE MAYOR appointing RABBI ERIC GURVIS, 64 Putnam Street, West Newton, as a member of the HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION for a term to expire September 30, 2021. (60 days: 11/31/18)
- #317-18**      **Appointment of Rabbi Eric Gurvis to the Human Rights Commission**  
HER HONOR THE MAYOR appointing RABBI ERIC GURVIS, 64 Putnam Street, West Newton, as a member of the HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION for a term to expire May 15, 2021. *Clerk's Note: NAN vote required. Item was withdrawn and new appointment submitted.*

Respectfully Submitted,

John B. Rice, Chair



Ruthanne Fuller  
Mayor

City of Newton, Massachusetts  
Office of the Mayor

#525-18  
Telephone  
(617) 796-1100  
Fax  
(617) 796-1113  
TDD/TTY  
(617) 796-1089  
Email  
rfuller@newtonma.gov

Honorable City Council  
Newton City Hall  
1000 Commonwealth Avenue  
Newton, MA 02459

RECEIVED  
Newton City Clerk  
October 2018  
2018 OCT -5 AM 9:22  
David A. Olson, CMO  
Newton, MA 02459

To the Honorable City Councilors:

I am pleased to appoint Brianna Spiegel of 427 Crafts Street, Newton as a member of the Youth Commission. Her term of office shall expire on September 1, 2020 and her appointment is subject to your confirmation.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Warmly,

Ruthanne Fuller  
Mayor



Ruthanne Fuller  
Mayor

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Office of the Mayor

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October 5, 2018

Honorable City Council  
Newton City Hall  
1000 Commonwealth Avenue  
Newton, MA 02459

To the Honorable City Councilors:

I am pleased to appoint Madison Branagan of 91 Greenlawn Avenue, Newton as a member of the Youth Commission. Her term of office shall expire on September 1, 2019 and her appointment is subject to your confirmation.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Warmly,

Ruthanne Fuller  
Mayor

RECEIVED  
NEWTON CITY CLERK  
2018 OCT 25 AM 9:22  
DAVID S. BRANAGAN, CND  
NEWTON, MA 02459



Ruthanne Fuller  
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To the Honorable City Councilors:

I am pleased to appoint Veer Sawhney of 52 Forest Avenue, Auburndale as a member of the Youth Commission. His term of office shall expire on September 1, 2019 and his appointment is subject to your confirmation.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Warmly,

Ruthanne Fuller  
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Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Warmly,

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To the Honorable City Councilors:

I am pleased to appoint Coral Lin of 100 Exeter, West Newton as a member of the Youth Commission. Her term of office shall expire on September 1, 2021 and her appointment is subject to your confirmation.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Warmly,

Ruthanne Fuller  
Mayor



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Newton, MA 02459

To the Honorable City Councilors:

I am pleased to appoint Reethika Digumarthy of 4 Frances Street, Newton Highlands as a member of the Youth Commission. Her term of office shall expire on September 1, 2021 and her appointment is subject to your confirmation.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Warmly,

Ruthanne Fuller  
Mayor



## **Summary of Proposed Appointments to Newton Youth Commission 10-5-18**

### **Brianna Spiegel – Newton North, Junior**

Brianna served last year as a Youth Advisor to the commission. She participated in the Mayor's Summer High School Internship Program in the summer of 2018 and explored her interests in the biomedical field at Channing Labs through Brigham and Women's Hospital. Brianna is thoughtful, kind, and is interested in honing her leadership skills.

She says "From what I have observed, this group is the best way for teens' voices to be heard. Every other commission or committee in Newton revolves around adults, but the youth is a major part of Newton as well. We have first-hand experience with what goes on in schools and thus have the best idea of what issues need to be focused on and resolved." She also goes on to discuss her passion for more education for teens around substance use: "I am passionate about the issues of teen substance abuse because I feel that it is a major problem that has been going on behind the scenes. Everyone in high school knows at least one person who uses harmful substances. What scares me is that the health curriculum does not adequately approach the topics of marijuana use, drinking, and vaping because students continue to pursue such behaviors anyway. I think we should work with the schools to bring in speakers to discuss their experiences with such substances. I believe that a tragic, real-life story could finally make many teens at our schools realize the dangers of substance use."

### **Christina Bednarzh – Newton South, Junior**

Christina is new to the Newton Youth Commission. She learned about the Commission through her involvement in the Mayor's Summer High School Internship Program and demonstrated a passion for leadership and working on youth issues, specifically youth stress in school.

In her own words she says "I would enjoy being on the Youth Commission because I love to problem-solve. I participated in a Youth Leadership Forum at the McKinsey company where I helped improve growth of a certain company by coming up with strategies to increase teen outreach. Working alongside many students around my age was very fun, especially since everyone was willing to do the work to create a better outcome. I loved this experience so much I began searching for more opportunities to work alongside my peers and help others around me."

### **Veer Sawhney – Newton South, Senior**

Veer joined the commission last year as a junior and served one year as a Youth Advisor. He is an athlete, a senior class officer, Team Manager of the South Debate team, and President of SASA (South Asian Student Association). Veer is level-headed, intelligent, and mindful of his peers and their backgrounds, interests, and cultures.

He told us "At South, I have taken an active role in order to help make my school a more spirited, welcoming environment which serves to make all students proud of their achievements and talents. I joined the Youth Commission as a junior at the recommendation of my guidance counselor. Since then, I have attended monthly meetings and have worked to help create a stronger sense of unity between both Newton North and South High Schools, as well as offering input to issues such as substance use and school safety. I hope to become a full commissioner this year so I can take a more active role on the

commission, and help further build on the projects started last year. This year on the Youth Commission, I would like to take action in terms of the cultural diversity of Newton. Especially with the current political environment and newfound hostility towards those of different backgrounds in our nation, I want the Youth Commission to help take action towards celebrating Newton's diversity. One idea I had put forth was doing some sort of cultural fair, working together with the high schools and other local cultural groups."

**Madison Branagan – Newton South, Senior**

Madison is also a new addition to the Youth Commission. She is an incredibly motivated, hardworking, community oriented young woman. She is a valued part of the Southside program and is interested in helping students to become more comfortable and open when addressing mental health needs.

She says "I feel very strongly that teenagers should talk comfortably about the things that are bothering them: the deep stuff that is difficult to talk about and difficult to hear. I want them to know it's ok to talk to someone, even when it's very easy to feel like you're the only one who feels the way you do when you're down, or to feel like you are alone, or to feel shame because you acknowledge you need help but are too afraid to ask. I want my peers to understand that although we all may be different, we're all looking for acceptance. We want those around us to understand that it's ok to not feel ok.

It doesn't matter if your parents drive a Porsche or don't have a car at all, we all have difficulties that get in the way of our performance. Academics, social lives, balancing work and home are all important aspects of a teenager's mental health. I believe that the self-care portion of our mental health awareness needs more attention. There is a better lesson to be learned on how to take care of ourselves. It is a life-long skill that we all need for survival and is not something you go away to college to learn."

**Reethika Digumarthy – Winsor School, Junior**

Reethika joined the Youth Commission last year as a Youth Advisor. She is a very thoughtful member and uses her experience of living in Newton but attending school outside of Newton to help shed light on students in our community with those same experiences.

She tells us "Some problems that I would like to explore further and address this year include, one, adolescents' misuse of drugs, two, adolescents' mental health, and, three, the appreciation of aspects of the different cultures found within the greater Newton community. The first two issues were considerably discussed last year, and I hope that it might be possible to address further these issues this year. Both drug usage and mental health are contentious health issues for adolescents, particularly high schoolers, and I really want to contribute to the efforts that are being taken to address both issues.

The third problem that I am also interested in is the appreciation and acknowledgement of the cultural diversity within Newton. I have been a part of various smaller-scale cultural events in Newton and at school, but, after looking through the Newton town calendar during the summer, I realized that, as far as I know, there is no single event that brings together the entire Newton community to learn about

different cultures. I believe that, given the current political climate regarding individuals from different cultures around the world, an event that allows the Newton community to explore other cultures and to share aspects of their own culture would be both unifying and well-timed.”

**Coral Lin – Newton North, Sophomore**

Coral is a new addition to the commission this year and initially learned about our commission through her work in the schools to raise awareness around teen mental health.

She says “Last year, my friends and I decided to start a civic engagement club to teach others about ways to create meaningful change in the school, city, and state. In May, for Mental Health Month, we created a campaign to address and combat stigma associated with mental illness. This remains an important issue to me- I have seen both friends and family struggle with not only their own mental illnesses, but also how people around them spoke (or didn’t speak) about them. With the help of the Youth Commission, I want to help further this campaign, as well as possibly working it into the happiness curriculum, to gain the support of students, parents, educators, and Newton citizens.”



Ruthanne Fuller  
Mayor

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Fax  
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TDD/TTY  
(617) 796-1089  
Email  
rfuller@newtonma.gov

RECEIVED  
Newton City Clerk  
2018 AUG 24 AM 11:07  
David A. Olson, CMC  
Newton, MA 02459

August 24, 2018

Honorable City Council  
Newton City Hall  
1000 Commonwealth Avenue  
Newton, MA 02459

To the Honorable City Councilors:

I am pleased to appoint Rabbi Eric Gurvis of 64 Putnam Street, Newton as a member of the Human Rights Commission. His term of office shall expire on September 30, 2021 and his appointment is subject to your confirmation.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Warmly,

*Ruthanne Fuller*

Ruthanne Fuller  
Mayor

**Q7: Please tell us a little about yourself and why you are interested in serving on this committee.**

As a nearly 18 year resident of Newton I have long been involved in matters of the type the Human Rights Commission considers. I have served as Senior Rabbi of Temple Shalom since 1999 and served for four and a half years as chair of the Newton Interfaith Clergy Association

**Q8: If you have an updated resume, please paste a copy of the text here.**

Rabbi Eric S. Gurvis  
64 Putnam Street  
Newton, Massachusetts 02465

Dynamic Jewish Leader • Inspiring Teacher  
Innovator • Articulate Visionary • Builder of Jewish Life

**EDUCATION AND WORSHIP**

- Partnered with Temple educators to create innovative education programming to engage a diverse range of learners, at different levels and with different interests.
- Introduced the learning programs of the Shalom Hartman and Mussar Institutes, broadening the number of adult learners across our congregational community.
- Reconceived annual Scholar-in-Residence weekend as a year-long engagement with a scholar, thereby enabling more points of contact over the course of a program year.
- Led strategic expansions of offerings in Adult Learning with programs for beginners, seekers and advanced students as a mainstay of congregational life.
- Expanded intensive weekend retreat offerings for students in grade 6 through high school as well as adults.
- Transformed bar/bat mitzvah preparation to expand the experience beyond rote learning through engagement in mitzvot.
- Inspired others to engage in Jewish learning by continually pursuing my own studies. Recent graduate of the three-year Rabbinic Leadership Initiative of the Shalom Hartman Institute in Jerusalem and training programs of The Mussar Institute.
- Forged strong relationships with clergy partners to craft meaningful, spiritual worship and learning experiences that appeal to our diverse congregation across generational lines.
- Led experimentation with and implementation of a variety of worship experiences that have consistently increased congregational attendance and participation by appealing to diverse needs and constituencies within the communities served.
- Effective, dynamic teacher, preacher, and writer.

**COMMUNITY**

- Led programs of Interfaith Dialogue and relationship building in MS, NJ and MA. Served as President of the Mississippi Religious Leadership Conference; founding chairperson of the Jackson Clergy Network; President of the Massachusetts Board of Rabbis; President of the Boston Association of Reform Rabbis; President of the Newton Interfaith Clergy association.
- Brought congregation into Congregational-Based Community Organizing, and into partnership with the Greater Boston Interfaith Organization.
- Helped create and lead a Congregation-Based Community Organizing training series for rabbis across the Boston area.
- Introduced and expanded Outreach programs in each congregation. Co-author of A Taste of Judaism, and taught Introduction to Judaism classes semi-annually.
- Expanded resources for Adult Jewish learning by helping to found the Bergen Jewish Learning Collaborative which was a partnership of 24 congregations, HUC-JIR, JTS, and our local YM-YWHA and Federation. Taught in this program in its first four years.
- Active in UJA-Federation of Bergen/Hudson Counties and Combined Jewish Philanthropies of Greater Boston. Includes leadership roles on various strategy teams, committees and task forces in Social Action, Adult Learning, Youth and Israel programming.
- Active member of the CCAR. Served on numerous committees and commissions, including the Youth Committee (chair 1986-94); Israel Committee; Liturgy Committee; Committee on Reform Jewish Practice; Nominating Committee, and the Convention Planning Committee.
- Served as a member and co-chair of the URJ Joint Commission on Lifelong Learning.
- Passionate lover of Israel and activist - served on National Board of ARZA

- Passionate Social Action/Social Justice leader – including service on the Commission on Social Action of the Reform Movement (1988-1996)
- Active leader in Jewish Community Relations Councils of Bergen/Hudson and Greater Boston.
- Active leader in Greater Boston Interfaith Organization (an IAF-affiliate)
- Presenter at Shalom Hartman Institute-North America Conference: Jews and Muslims in America Today, New York City, January 2017 - Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Theologies of Identity

## LEADERSHIP

- Established strong and effective partnerships with lay leadership.
- Built high-performing professional teams that have developed cutting-edge programming.
- Created leadership training and developments programs for identifying future leaders as well as strengthening current leadership (at the Executive Committee, Board of Trustees and committee levels.) These programs included ATID, Project Joshua, and the Honi Initiative. I also led three teams of lay-leaders through programming and workshops with the Leadership Development Initiative of Combined Jewish Philanthropies of Greater Boston.
- Served successfully as a leader in numerous arenas of the Reform movement at local and national levels.
- Served as CRaFTY and SoFTY Rabbinic Advisor, Dean of Conclaves, and Rabbinic Faculty at URJ Camp Eisner, Jacobs and Harlam. Served as Dean of Faculty for Eisner and Crane Lake Camps 2003-10. Recognized with NFTY Life Membership.
- Mentored and taught rabbinical students at HUC-JIR as interns and continue strong ongoing relationships. Served on HUC-JIR Clinical Faculty as Summer Internship Mentor
- Led 8 congregational Israel missions that ignited in the participants a passion for Israel, a deeper connection with their Judaism, and a stronger bond with our congregation.
- Partnered with colleagues to establish a beit din for conversion in NJ that has performed hundreds of conversions.
- Co-founded the first Reform chavurah at SUNY Albany in the mid-1970s.

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

1999 - present Temple Shalom of Newton, Newton, MA

Senior Rabbi

1992-99 Temple Emeth, Teaneck, NJ

Rabbi

1987-92 Beth Israel Congregation, Jackson, MS

Rabbi

1981-87 Temple Shaaray Tefila, New York, NY

1983-87 Assistant/Associate Rabbi

1981-83 Student Assistant Rabbi & Youth Director

1982, 1984 North American Federation of Temple Youth-NFTY in Israel

Senior leader of NFTY Israel Academy groups

1973-81 URJ Joseph Eisner Camp-Institute, Great Barrington, MA

Counselor and Song-leader – 1973-75

Supervisory staff member, 1977-81

1980-81 – Founding Unit Head of Olim program 10th graders

1980 High Holy Day Rabbi, University of Rochester, Rochester, NY

1977-78 State University of New York at Albany

Teaching assistant and instructor of Modern Hebrew

## UNIVERSITY TEACHING

1986-87 Marymount Manhattan College, New York, NY

Taught Introduction to Judaism – 2 semesters

1989 Tougaloo College, Jackson, MS

Taught Introductory Course in Judaism

1989-90 Millsaps College, Jackson, MS

Taught Introduction to Judaism (1 semester)

Taught Contemporary Jewish Thought (1 semester)

2007-08 Hebrew College, Rabbinic Studies Program, Newton, MA

Adjunct Instructor, Course on Reform Judaism

**EDUCATION**

2015-16 The Mussar Institute

Completed the Manchim leaders' training

2015-16 Kenyon College, Gambier Ohio

Beyond Walls: Spiritual Writing Institute

2010-13 Shalom Hartman Institute, Jerusalem, Israel

Three-Year Rabbinic Leadership Initiative. Named Senior Rabbinic Fellow in July 2013.

1985 Mount Sinai Medical Center, New York, NY

Certificate Program in Pastoral Bereavement Counseling

1978-83 Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion, New York, NY

Rabbinic Ordination, 1983; Master of Arts in Hebrew Letters, 1981; Doctor of Divinity, 2008.

Rabbinic Thesis: "Shemoneh Perakim: A Study in Maimonides' Ethics"

1974-78 State University of New York at Albany, Albany, NY

Bachelor of Arts, cum laude, with a double major in Sociology and Judaic Studies

1976-77 Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion/North American Federation of Temple Youth

College Academic Year (CAY) on a Kibbutz – Kibbutz Ma'ale haChamisha, Israel

**SELECTED PUBLICATIONS**

Monthly contributor to Fresh Day, a weekly e-zine, 2015-present

A Taste of Judaism – wrote one of three sets of curricular materials published by the UAHC Department of Outreach, 1997

Why Be Different: A Look Into Judaism – Teacher's Guide – published by Behrman House, 1990

**PERSONAL DATA**

Date of Birth: September 24, 1956

Birthplace: The Bronx, New York

Marital Status: Married to Laura Kizner Gurvis

Children: Benjamin (29); Sarah (27); Aaron (24); Jacob (19)

References available upon request.

**PAGE 5: Other Interests**

**Q9: If the openings have been filled on your first choice of Committee, would you be willing to serve on another Committee?** Yes

**PAGE 7: SurveyMonkey Audience**

**Q10: Gender** Respondent skipped this question



Ruthanne Fuller  
Mayor

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David Olson  
Newton City Hall  
1000 Commonwealth Avenue  
Newton, MA 02459

June 27, 2018

RECEIVED  
2018 JUN 29 PM 12:32  
David A. Olson, City  
Newton, MA 02459

Dear Mr. Olson,

Due to the unavailability of the applicant, I understand that the City Council has not been able to take up the appointment of Rabbi Eric Gurvis to be a member of the Human Rights Commission within the sixty-day period.

Therefore, I am asking to withdraw the previous appointment letter dated May 11, 2018 and we will refile his appointment prior to the Program and Services Committee meeting in September.

Warmly,

*Ruthanne Fuller*

Ruthanne Fuller  
Mayor