

Mayor's Update



Dear Residents,

Weather has taken on a whole new meaning in my life since I was sworn-in as Mayor. One thing I've learned, winter weather is really expensive. Even mild sunshine in January causes problems for our Department of Public Works.

The warm temperatures have melted the snow, but the arctic freeze followed by sleet, rain, and a quick warm-up to temperatures above freezing just brought different problems for drivers and the DPW – Potholes.

Three hundred and thirty potholes have been reported to the DPW through the city's 311 system since Jan. 1, and more than 600 have been repaired since then by up to six crews working every weekday, and sometimes on Saturdays. Already, 30 tons of asphalt has been used on the repairs.

The work isn't done. We need everyone to be our eyes and ears out on the roads, and report potholes to 311 when you see them. The report will generate a service request that you can track. If a pothole appears to be an immediate danger, please call customer service at 796-1000.



I also want to share a note I received from a resident that sums up what our DPW and city government is all about.

On the night of Jan. 4, just as the blizzard was ending, a Cross Hill Road resident went out his garage door intending to start clearing the snow that had accumulated. Instead, he found water from a broken city main at the top of his steep driveway raging down toward his house, flooding his garage and lower level.

The resident's first call was to Police.

He wrote, "I spoke with them several times during the night, they responded and reassured me. I found them to be caring and totally dedicated to addressing my growing fears."

From there, the Department of Public Works took over, working through dangerously cold conditions over the next three days to divert the water, repair the main, and chop ice from his property.

"Throughout the experience, I felt that they were in control and truly were committed to mitigating the damage and our fears," he wrote of the 15 DPW employees who responded to the situation.

"Every single member of the DPW team who came to our home was professional, caring, and dedicated to making a difference. ...Rather than frustration and anger, we have the highest respect for the city."

I couldn't be prouder of our employees, with a particular shout-out to Kim Ritcey.

Here's some other information:

- The Summer Camp Fair is this Sunday, Jan. 28, from noon to 4 p.m. at Newton North High School. Meet with folks from the Parks and Recreation Department, Public Schools, Newton Free Library, and Historic Newton to find out about a variety of summer camps and

programs offered.

- I'm looking for volunteers from across the city to fill vacancies, expired and expiring terms on boards, committees, commissions, and advisory boards that play a critical role in the work being done in Newton. Among the panels with openings are: Designer Selection Committee, Design Review Committee, Newton Historical Commission, Economic Development Commission, Fair Housing Committee, Planning and Development Board, Urban Design Committee, and the Zoning Board of Appeals. Information about openings is available at newtonma.gov/boards.
- We'll be at the John M. Barry Boys & Girls Club of Newton this Friday morning, Jan. 26, for our next "Mayoral Meet-Up." Come at 8:30 a.m. and stay until 10:00 a.m., or just stop by for a few minutes to let me know what's on your mind.
- I'll also be available to speak individually with you at my City Hall office on Tuesday evening, Jan. 30, from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m.. People will be seen in order of arrival. Check www.newtonma.gov for a full schedule of public office hours at City Hall and Mayoral Meet-Ups throughout the city.
- One of the best ways to report an issue is our 311 system. By creating an account from our 311 link on the City of Newton home page or your smartphone, anyone can report an issue and track it to completion. You can even call from a landline! newtonma.gov/311.

Warmly,

Ruthanne
