

Mayor's Update



Webster Woods Saved

The City of Newton has permanently saved Webster Woods. A conservation restriction is already in place so it will remain forest forever.

We officially acquired the land on Dec. 24 when we recorded the Order of Taking with the South Middlesex Registry of Deeds. The check for the appraised value will be delivered to Boston College by mid-February.

Boston College may challenge this value. We are prepared and will let you know if we hear from them.

Emergency Training

Learn how to “be the help” until help arrives during an emergency. This free training is offered by the Newton Police, Fire and Health and Human Services Departments.

You need to commit to coming to two classes that meet on Tuesday Jan. 21 and Tuesday Jan. 28, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at Newton Fire Headquarters in Newton Centre. Sign up online [here](#).

Session 1: Call 9-1-1, Stay Safe, Stop the Bleed, Position the Injured

Session 2: Make a Plan, Build a Kit, Be Prepared, Fire Extinguishers, Narcan, Perform CPR

Questions? Call Health & Human Services at 617-796-1420.

Next Step in Siting NewCAL

To recap, we spent much of the fall of 2019 on the challenging task of finding site options for our community center focused on older residents, currently known as the Newton Center for Active Living, or NewCAL. We heard loud and clear that placing the building on park/recreation land made many, many people uncomfortable.

CITY OF NEWTON
YOU ARE THE HELP
A two-part program to teach lay people the skills to be the help until help arrives during an emergency.



NEWTON EMERGENCY OPERATION CENTER AT FIRE HEADQUARTERS
1164 Centre St, Newton, MA

Session 1: Tuesday, January 21
Session 2: Tuesday, January 28
6:30 - 8:30 pm

Register at:
NewtonYATH.eventbrite.com

This morning the NewCAL Working Group recommended to me that Albemarle and all parks/green space be taken off the list of locations being considered for NewCAL. I agree; they're off the list.

Over the holidays our staff took another look at the list of possible sites with a fresh perspective.

Join us at our next NewCAL community meeting on Thursday, Jan. 16, 7:00 p.m. in Room 111 at the Ed Center, 100 Walnut St. We look forward to hearing from you next Thursday at this charette style meeting where we'll be reviewing the Newton Centre triangle parking lot and a number of other potential sites. We'll be asking for input from everyone who attends to help us determine the pros and cons, challenges, and opportunities at each location.

(With Bob DeRubeis, Paula Gannon, City Councilors Alicia Bowman and Brenda Noel, Nancy Scammon, and Rick Paglia at the Open House on Sunday at The Centre at 1294.)



Update on Chapter 40B Safe Harbors

Chapter 40B is the state law enacted in 1969 that allows developers who include a specified percentage of affordable housing units to bypass local zoning requirements and apply for “comprehensive permits” with Newton’s Zoning Board of Appeals. If Newton already has enough affordable housing, we would be exempt. However, the City’s most recent “safe harbor” calculations show Newton is still subject to the provisions of Chapter 40B, and developers can continue to apply for a “comprehensive permit.”

Communities qualify for a “safe harbor” from Chapter 40B by meeting affordable housing levels. There are two ways to do this. Communities with at least 10 percent of their total housing units considered affordable *or* with at least 1.5 percent of developable land area containing affordable housing qualify as “safe harbors.” If a community meets either of the safe harbors, it can enforce local zoning requirements for affordable housing projects proposed under 40B guidelines. (Any local zoning requirements may be waived, including site, building design and open space requirements.)

Communities need to update their safe harbor calculations each time a comprehensive permit application is filed, and two new projects were recently filed in Newton. “Dunston East” proposes 243 units of housing (61 of which would be permanently affordable) and retail space on Washington Street at Dunstan Street; the property is on the edge of West Newton Square and includes The Barn. “Riverdale” proposes 204 units of housing, office/innovation space and retail space between Los Angeles Street and Riverdale Avenue, just off California Street in Nonantum along the Charles River next to Forte Park.

The City’s updated Chapter 40B calculations show that Newton still has not met either

safe harbor threshold. As of Dec. 16, 2019, the City's 1.5% calculation is at 1.33% and the 10% calculation increased to 8.58%.

Both the state Department of Housing and Community Development and the City are operating under the 2010 Census for the number of total housing units in making the 10% calculation. The total number of units will change when the 2020 Census, which will soon be underway, is completed. An updated 10% calculation will be reported once the City receives the results of the 2020 Census, likely in the second half of 2021. It is anticipated that the 2020 Census will report an increase in the City's total number of housing units and thus may make it mathematically more difficult to meet the 40B thresholds.

Curious about the potential impact of Northland on the calculation, or want more details?

Read the complete Update of Chapter 40B Safe Harbor memo [here](#).

Northland

The City Council is meeting tomorrow night (Wednesday, Jan. 8) to decide (or begin to decide) whether to rescind its vote to rezone the 22.6-acre Northland property at the end of Needham Street at Oak Street to allow housing, restaurants, shops and offices, or whether to send the decision to voters.

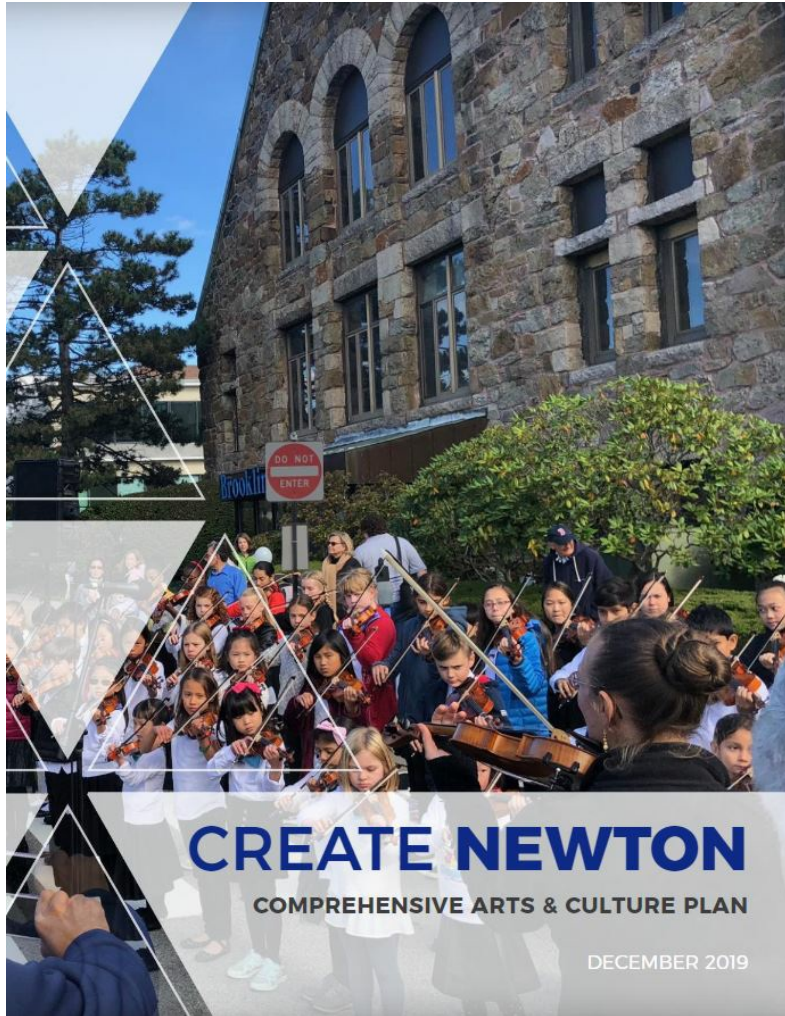
The meeting is a result of a group of residents successfully collecting the required number of signatures (4,258 were certified; 3,032 were necessary) under the referendum process provided in Newton's charter. The Northland project is halted pending the outcome of the City Council vote or a ballot referendum.

The meeting starts at 6:00 p.m. in the City Council Chamber on the second floor of City Hall, 1000 Commonwealth Ave.



Know Your Neighbor: A group of over 60 neighbors came together this past Sunday afternoon for the MLK Day Community Chorus. Here is a clip of us learning "Freedom Highway"--you'll see School Committee member Emily Prenner, Myrtle

Baptist Church member Katy Haywood, and me near the back. You can still join the chorus if you attend the second rehearsal this coming Sunday January 12 from 4-6 pm. For more information about the chorus and the city's annual celebration in honor of Dr. King (to be held on Monday, Jan 20th), click [here](#).



Help Us “Create Newton”

We as a community recognize the intrinsic value of arts and culture for creating joy and improving everyday quality of life for all of us, as well as bolstering economic development. Therefore, I'm happy to start 2020 by sharing the CREATE NEWTON Comprehensive Arts & Culture Plan. Read it here:

Print-friendly (and downloadable) [here](#)

'Page flip' style (online viewing only) [here](#)

One year ago, I put together the Community Design for Arts & Culture Committee to develop a comprehensive arts and cultural plan for Newton. The committee

includes ten arts, culture, and civic leaders from key organizations in addition to City Councilor Vicki Danberg and City staff. Over the past year, the committee worked with a planning firm, CivicMoxie, to:

- Develop an inventory of existing conditions of arts and culture in Newton.
- Solicit feedback from the community regarding goals, concerns, vision, and opportunities for arts and culture in Newton.
- Research best practices.
- Meet with City staff and me to understand relationships, initiatives and solicit ideas.
- Create a set of goals and recommendations and develop an implementation strategy for moving Newton forward.

The CREATE NEWTON Comprehensive Arts & Culture Plan represents the beginning of an exciting process of increasing support for arts and cultural organizations, activities, and initiatives in Newton. The next steps involve discussions about a new or re-imagined non-profit that serves as a full-service organization supporting arts, culture, and civic activities and initiatives in Newton. With this plan as a framework, we envision residents, artists and groups including Newton Community Pride, the Newton Cultural

Alliance, and the Newton Cultural Council continuing to come together to collaborate on the priority items and next steps.

Help us CREATE NEWTON together! Questions? Email ArtsCulture@newtonma.gov.

Warmly,

Ruthanne

P.S. Potholes: We can fix potholes when we know about them. Please be our eyes out on the roads, and report potholes on a computer to our 311 service [here](#), by smart phone (download the Newton MA 311 app) or call Customer Service at 617-796-1000.

P.P.S. Curbside Christmas tree pick-up runs through Thursday, Jan. 17. Collection occurs on your regular waste collection day. The tree must be out to the curb by 7:00 a.m. Please make sure all decorations and lights are removed, and, sorry, trees cannot be in a plastic bag.

P.P.P. S. Idling: The EPA has determined that idling for more than 30 seconds uses more fuel and emits more CO2 than restarting your engine. I know it's cold in the winter and hot in the summer to sit in a turned off car, but keep in mind the high environmental cost of idling. Turning off a vehicle for a few minutes can make a difference over time.

P.P.P.P.S. Newton ranked #1 on the list of best cities to live in Massachusetts in the [6th Annual HomeSnacks](#) study. I'm not sure how much weight to give to the analysis behind this particular study, but I do agree with the results!

