

Mayor's Update



After listening, reflecting and working together with Fire Chief Bruce Proia, Assistant Chief Gino Lucchetti, and Fire Fighter Marc Rizza, the President of the Newton Firefighters Association, we came up with an excellent plan for ensuring the continued strength of Newton's Fire Department and Emergency Operations.

While Fire Chief Bruce Proia will retire in April at his 65th birthday as required by state law, I am talking to him about staying on to assist in emergency management operations for the City of Newton. Over my past year as Mayor, I have come to value Chief Proia's sound judgement and deep experience. His expertise will be invaluable as we move forward with our critical work in all areas of emergency preparedness: prevention, protection, mitigation, response and recovery.

We will begin the process immediately to find the best person to replace Chief Proia, including an assessment process.

Marc Rizza said, "The Newton Firefighters Association IAFF Local 863 is pleased with the plan going forward and wants to thank Mayor Fuller and the City Council. We will continue working on this positive, strong and transparent relationship as we move forward together to make this great City even better. We would like to thank Mayor Fuller again for not only meeting with the Association multiple times, but for showing us the utmost respect."

I am grateful for the skilled work and dedication of the 199 people in our Newton Fire Department. I am proud that we are one of very few municipalities in Massachusetts with a Class 1 insurance rating for fire safety and services. I am pleased that we can continue to benefit from Chief Proia's expertise as we move forward with new leadership.

Solar Phase 3: Improving Our Plans

We have been considering 20 locations across Newton for new solar panels on City owned properties, including roofs of buildings and parking lots.

After a listening tour, reading comments, and more analysis, we've removed three proposed locations from the solar panel site list and revised the plans for three other locations.

The three sites removed from the Solar Phase 3 list were at the Countryside Elementary School and the Bigelow Middle School where solar canopies were proposed for the parking lots, and along the parking adjacent to the fields and Gath Pool facility on Albemarle Road. Substantial changes were also made to the solar designs at Brown and Oak Hill Middle School parking lots and the Auburndale Cove parking lot.

The revised plan reduces the number of trees that need to be cut or moved from the original 94 down to 28. Of those 28, 13 will be cut and 15 will be moved. 140 new replacement trees will be planted to make up for the 13 that have to be cut down.

A public hearing on the revised plan is on Wednesday, Jan. 16, at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers at City Hall.

The Auburndale Cove solar canopy layout has been revised so that one rather than six trees needs to be removed. In addition, 18 new trees will be planted in the area beyond the right field of the baseball field.

The Brown Middle School revised proposal removes a canopy originally planned close to the trees at the edge of the parking lot, placing it instead at the front of the entrance to the school. This change means only one tree rather than 20 will be removed.

At the Newton Free Library, revised plans would create approximately 32 new parking spaces and improve drainage in the parking lot. Newton's Director of Urban Forestry Marc Welch estimates that seven of the 12 trees in the parking lot are small enough to be moved to accommodate the solar canopies. While seven trees would be cut, over 60 new replacement trees will be planted.

The Library Board of Trustees has conditionally approved the new plans. The Trustees are excited that the solar canopies proposed for the library parking lot would generate 39 percent of the library's electricity use.

The City already has solar arrays on 12 City owned sites that generate the equivalent of 21 percent of our municipal electricity use. The proposed additional sites would bring the total of solar energy in our municipal electricity usage to 41 percent, helping to reduce the City's carbon footprint, a key component of the City's Climate Action Plan.

These projects not only reduce the City's carbon footprint. They save money. Newton saved more than \$650,000 in fiscal year 2018 from the current solar panels.

The solar energy companies Ameresco and Macquarie will design, finance, own, maintain and operate the solar panels. The City of Newton will purchase the energy created at a reduced cost.

Newton Community MLK Day Celebration

Join me to celebrate, reflect on and be inspired by the life and work of Dr. Martin Luther King. The 51st annual Martin Luther King Jr. Newton Community Celebration will be on Monday, Jan. 21 at 9:30 a.m. at the First Baptist Church of Newton, 848 Beacon Street, Newton Centre.



Park in the three nearby municipal parking lots – it's a holiday so City meters are free.

A highlight of the program will be a performance by Newton high school students from the Monologue Project.

The Rotary Club of Newton will be collecting donations of toiletries for Newton's four food pantries. Bring something if you can.

Following the program stay for the "Community Coffee – Engagement & Activism," a resource fair and opportunity for us to get together and talk about ways to move Dr. King's legacy forward in Newton.

Read more [here](#).

Christmas Tree Pick-Up Starts Today

Curbside Christmas tree pick-up begins today, Monday, Jan. 7 and runs through Friday, Jan. 18. 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.

Questions about

Newton Power Choice?

In a few months, you will likely have a new supplier for your home's electricity.



As you may have already heard, I signed an agreement in November to move forward with Newton Power Choice, a "municipal aggregation" program that allows cities and towns to choose the electricity supplier for electricity customers within its borders, rather than having the local utility — Eversource, in the case of Newton — buy the electricity.

With Newton Power Choice, Eversource will continue to deliver the electricity; customers will continue to contact Eversource if their power goes out; and Eversource will continue to bill them. The difference is that Newton now selects the supplier of the electricity for customers rather than leaving it up to the utility.

When this program goes into effect in March 2019, a typical Newton electricity customer (who uses 710 kwh/month) will get a total of 60 percent renewable energy and will pay \$165.89 per month. That same customer can choose 100 percent renewable energy by paying \$168.80 per month. By contrast, that same customer would pay \$182.37 on Eversource's Basic Service and would receive only the state mandated 14 percent renewable energy content.

Newton's contract price will remain stable for 22 months. Eversource's Basic Service rate for residential customers changes every six months. For that reason, it's not possible to say for sure that there will be cost savings under Newton Power Choice relative to Eversource Basic Service for the entire 22 months.

By state law, municipal aggregation programs must use an "opt-out model." That means customers who take no action will be enrolled automatically in the Newton Power Choice program at the 60 percent level of renewables. Customers can leave Newton Power Choice without a cancellation fee at any time. At any time, they can also join the program, opt up to 100 percent renewables, or opt down to remain at the 14 percent State-mandated level of renewables.

Come and learn more about Newton Power Choice at an informational session in my office at City Hall (1000 Commonwealth Avenue) next Wednesday, Jan. 16 at 6:00 p.m. I'll be there with Co-Director of Sustainability Ann Berwick to answer your questions.

This is the first of several scheduled presentations about Newton Power Choice.. A full schedule of presentations through the end of January is [here](#).

You can also expect to receive more information about the program in a letter arriving from the City of Newton around Jan. 14.

Read what Co-Sustainability Director Ann Berwick and I wrote about Newton Power Choice in Commonwealth Magazine [here](#).

(Mayor Fuller administering the oath of office to Middlesex County District Attorney Marian Ryan in a City Hall ceremony last week as her family looks on.)

Basic Self-Defense for Women

The Newton Police Department are offering a free, three-hour self-defense class to teach risk reduction strategies along with some physical techniques. During the final part of the class, the Instructors will put on protective suits and allow participants to practice what they just learned on a moving person.

This Intro to Women's Self-Defense course is free, but the Newton Police Department is asking participants to



bring an item for Cradles to Crayon for children in need. The class is for women 16-years and older on Wednesday, Jan. 16 from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. at Temple Emanuel, 385 Ward St.

Sign up online at [here](#). Need more information? Contact Captain William Spaulding at wspaulding@newtonma.gov, or call 617-796-2171.

Housing Projects Move Forward

Good news for two proposed senior housing projects in Newton. The Commonwealth has invited Haywood House and the Golda Meir House to apply for low-income housing tax credits. This is part of the highly competitive 2019 funding round, the next step in the long and complicated funding process.

The City of Newton voted to commit Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds to both projects in 2018.

Each project aims to leverage about \$9 million of state and other funding for every \$1 million of Newton CPA funds committed.

The Newton Housing Authority received a commitment of \$3 million in CPA funds for the proposed Haywood House at John F. Kennedy Circle in Newtonville. This project will provide 55 new one-bedroom apartments for low and moderate-income seniors, as well as a replacement community center to be shared with the existing Jackson Gardens housing development.

2Life Communities, formerly Jewish Community Housing for the Elderly, received a CPA commitment of \$3.5 million. This project will add 68 new rental apartments at the Golda Meir House on Stanton Avenue on the Auburndale/Waban line. Sixty will be permanently affordable to low- and moderate-income residents, of which nine would be set-aside for individuals who have experienced chronic homelessness.

Newton voters adopted the CPA in 2001, the first possible year. Since then, Newton has invested almost \$50 million of combined local and state CPA funds in the four eligible community assets: affordable housing, historic resources, open space and land for outdoor recreation. More information about the CPA program is [here](#).

City of Newton Camp Fair

Interested in finding the right summer camp for your son or daughter? Come to the City of Newton Camp Fair on Sunday, Jan. 27 from noon to 4:00 p.m. (Snow date Feb. 3)

Visit with Newton Parks and Recreation, Newton Public Schools, Historic Newton and the Newton Free Library to learn about what is being offered in Newton for the summer of 2019.

Warmly,

Ruthanne

P.S.- Please be aware that an unsolicited mailing you may receive from a company offering water and sewer line maintenance is not endorsed by the City of Newton.

