

Mayor's Update



I have chosen Assistant Chief Gino P. Lucchetti for the position of Chief of the Fire Department in the City of Newton.

My decision to promote Assistant Chief Lucchetti comes after having had the opportunity to see first-hand over the past 16 months how effectively he serves the department and the City of Newton. In addition, the City's multistage selection process, which included both interviews and an

assessment of competencies by a skilled panel of independent experts, confirmed that Assistant Chief Lucchetti has a uniquely deep understanding of and commitment to the Newton Fire Department.

Assistant Chief Lucchetti will take over the department as Acting Fire Chief effective tomorrow, Wednesday, May 1. His appointment will become permanent pending a vote of the City Council.

In part from Assistant Chief Lucchetti's long years of service in the Department and from being a lifelong resident of the City, his commitment extends to all members of the Fire Department as well as to the people who live and work in the City of Newton. He has earned the respect and affection of our firefighters.

He is a "firefighter's firefighter." As Assistant Chief, he has spent many hours with fellow leaders across the City, forging close working relationships that will prove valuable as he becomes Chief of the Department.

He has displayed his ability to be a leader and a listener simultaneously, intertwined traits that I admire.

(Photo: With Assistant Chief Gino Lucchetti, my choice to be the next Fire Chief, retiring Fire Chief Bruce Proia who is staying on as Director of Emergency Operations, and retired Fire Chief Joseph LeCroix.)

He is a good person who has the judgment, the ethical standards, and the strength to lead. For all these reasons, he is my clear choice. I am confident that the safety of our City and the excellence of our Fire Department

are in good hands with our new Chief, Gino Lucchetti.

“I want to thank Mayor Fuller for having confidence in my ability to lead this department. Chief Proia and I have built a strong foundation over the past five years and I look forward to keeping the department progressing forward as one of the best fire departments in the United States,” Assistant Chief Lucchetti said.

Gino Lucchetti has deep experience within the Newton Fire Department. He joined the Newton Fire Department in January 1986 and served at Station 1, Ladder 3. He is a certified Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) and has been through numerous trainings at the Massachusetts Fire Academy in arson awareness, terrorism response, explosives and bomb threat procedures, vehicle extrication and first responder operations. He was promoted to Lieutenant and served as Company Officer of Station 2, Ladder 1 for twelve and a half years from January 1991 to July 2003. He then served as a Captain from July 2003 to 2011. He was promoted to Deputy Chief/Shift Commander in 2011 and served in that role for four years. Since 2015, he has been the Assistant Chief/Chief of Operations, second-in-command to Chief Proia and a true partner in the management of the Department. He has managed fires and emergencies, and been responsible for daily scheduling of department personnel, coordinating the activities of the bureaus, participating in union negotiations and budget preparations and overseeing departmental office functions.



I am deeply grateful to retiring Chief Bruce Proia for his 41 years of exceptional service to the Newton Fire Department, and am pleased to retain Chief Proia’s wise counsel and exceptional experience as he continues to work alongside the new chief as Director of Emergency Operations.

(Photo: Fire personnel at the Oxford Road fire scene.)

A Fire Tragedy

This past Saturday at close to 4:00 a.m., 911 calls came in about a home on fire on Oxford Road. The Newton Fire Department responded quickly to find the home fully engulfed in fire. Their efforts saved the life of the 92-year old woman on the second floor but they couldn’t reach her 63-year-old son in time.



My heart aches for the family and friends of our Newton resident who died and for his mother who is still hospitalized.

My deepest gratitude goes to our Newton Fire Chief Bruce Proia and the firefighters who fought the blaze and worked valiantly to try and save both lives.

With a heavy heart, here are a few reminders of ways to stay safe:

Smoke Detectors: Smoke detectors save lives. Every home needs to have working smoke detectors on every floor. Interconnected smoke detectors are the most effective. Check all smoke detectors, preferably at least once each month. The City of Newton and the American Red Cross are working together to install free smoke detectors in any home that needs one on Tuesday, May 23. Do you need smoke detectors tested, replaced or installed? Call the Red Cross at **1-800-746-3511** or e-mail FireSafety4MA@redcross.org. Find more information [here](#).

Cigarettes: Cigarettes and smoking materials are the leading cause of fire deaths in the United States. Make sure that any smoking materials, indoors or outdoors, are fully extinguished.

Clutter: Excess clutter can make getting out of a burning home difficult or impossible. Clutter also makes a fire spread more quickly and makes rescue more difficult. If you or someone you care about is struggling with excess clutter, consider getting help to understand the problem and develop strategies for addressing it. More information and resources can be found [here](#).

More general safety and fire prevention tips can be found [here](#).

Retail Marijuana Update

The following is an update I sent to the City Council yesterday on the status of recreational marijuana retailers in the City of Newton:

Host Community Agreement Process

On December 3, 2018, the City of Newton (City) adopted amendments to its Zoning Ordinance to govern all marijuana establishments and registered marijuana dispensaries (RMDs). The Newton Zoning Ordinance requires a Special Permit from the City Council for all marijuana establishments. Marijuana uses are restricted to certain commercial and manufacturing zones and numerous standards and criteria are placed on the different types of marijuana uses, including a limitation of eight (8) marijuana retailers in total and a requirement for a half-mile buffer between all marijuana retailers and RMDs.

Under state law, marijuana establishments and RMDs are required to execute Host Community Agreements (HCA) with the municipalities in which they operate. The agreement must set forth the responsibilities of the marijuana establishment or RMD and the community. The HCA may include a community impact fee of up to 3% of gross sales to be paid to the host community. The Cannabis Control Commission and state Attorney General have stated that executing an HCA is the sole authority of the municipality's contracting authority, which in the case of a city is the Mayor. The Mayor is not obligated to enter into an HCA with any particular applicant. The basis for this review and consideration is to protect the health, safety and welfare of Newton residents and the community as a whole, while determining which marijuana establishment and RMD operators best align with Newton's community values.

I have designed a process for reviewing applicants for HCAs. It considers criteria such as security, public health, community relations, experience, equity, economic value, sustainability and context. I have created a Marijuana Host Community Agreement Advisory Group (Advisory Group) consisting of representatives from Planning and Development, Law, Police, Health and Human Services, Transportation and the Mayor's office to meet with applicants and give me a recommendation on whether to grant a provisional Host Community Agreement. The HCA is provisional until the completion of the City Council's special permit process.

Decision on Four Applicants for Host Community Agreements

The Advisory Group has been meeting with applicants and has given me their recommendations on the first four applicants for marijuana retailers.

The Advisory Group has recommended moving forward with provisional host community agreements for two applications for marijuana retailers at 24-26 Elliot Street and 58 Cross Street (1089 Washington Street). The Advisory Group did not recommend moving forward with two other applications for marijuana retailers at 1081 Washington Street and 747 Beacon Street.

I agree with the recommendations of the Advisory Group.

Per the Advisory Group's recommendations, I will be signing a provisional HCA with Cypress Tree Management for 24-26 Elliot Street, just off Rt. 9 at the edge of Newton Highlands and Newton Upper Falls. Cypress Tree Management, the applicant for a marijuana retailer at 24-26 Elliot Street, was approved for a registered medical marijuana dispensary (RMD) by the City Council last year and is looking to co-locate an RMD and marijuana retailer. The management team has substantial experience in the marijuana industry and presented a thoughtful approach to security and operations. Cypress Tree also had appropriate public health, community relations, equity and sustainability philosophies and has identified numerous transportation and parking management proposals to address concerns regarding congestion and parking. The Advisory Group noted that the proposed site location presents some challenges as Elliot Street experiences congestion currently and the intersection with Rt. 9 backs up during peak periods; this is an issue the City Council may wish to further consider in more depth during the Special Permit process.

Per the Advisory Group's recommendations, I will also be signing a provisional HCA with Ascend Mass, LLC, the applicant for 58 Cross Street (also known as 1089 Washington Street, the former Beacon Hill Athletic Club) just outside of West Newton Square. Ascend Mass has a management team with experience in law enforcement, regulatory compliance, retail and cultivation. The applicant presented thorough plans for operations, security, equity and transportation management. The site has ample parking and safe access and circulation. Ascend also has appropriate public health, community relations, and sustainability philosophies.

I have chosen not to proceed with a provisional HCA for CNA Stores, Inc. at 747 Beacon Street in Newton Centre. The Advisory Group identified concerns regarding the suitability of the proposed site and the lack of a well-rounded management team. CNA Stores proposed a marijuana retailer at 747 Beacon Street, the former location of Murray's Liquors. The management team has experience in technology, security and government relations, but lacks experience in the marijuana and retail industries as well as community relations. The property does not have an adjacent parking lot. Rather, the

applicant has identified an off-site parking lot that would be leased in order to provide parking for customers; however, the parking area presents safety and security concerns due to the lack of visibility into the parking lot, difficult maneuverability for vehicles, and lack of safe pedestrian passage from the parking to the building.

I have also chosen not to proceed with a provisional HCA for Ikanik Farms at 1081 Washington Street, just outside of West Newton Square and adjacent to the Ascend Mass location. As with the Newton Centre location, the Advisory Group identified concerns regarding the suitability of the proposed site and the lack of well-rounded management team. The Ikanik Farms management team has extensive experience in the medical marijuana industry in California, and other western states. The team, however, lacks dedicated staff to oversee security and community relations. The proposed site, a former mattress store, has only six parking stalls in the rear with difficult maneuverability within the site. There is not dedicated pedestrian access from the parking area to the front door. While there are often available street parking spaces along the opposite side of Washington Street, there is not a safe pedestrian crossing for approximately a half mile in either direction.

Next Steps

The two applicants who have been granted a provisional HCA will now undergo a rigorous review by the City Council. The final decision as to whether and under what conditions a marijuana establishment may operate will be made by the City Council as part of the Special Permit process. The Special Permit process includes public input and allows for the City Council to consider concerns raised by the public, as well as how the proposal meets the goals of the City and criteria established by the Newton Zoning Ordinance.

Additional Requests for Host Community Agreements

The HCA Advisory Group continues to meet with applicants for marijuana retailers in other areas of the city and expects to bring forward the next group of recommendations in approximately four to six weeks.

Garden Remedies

Garden Remedies is currently operating at medical marijuana dispensary at 697 Washington Street, just outside of the village in Newtonville. It is awaiting its final inspection from the Cannabis Control Commission. Once it passes that inspection, it is likely to open three or four days later. As soon as we know the date of the final inspection, I will let you know.

Warmly,

Ruthanne

P.S. Reminder—Join us for the 45th Annual Theodore D. Mann Newton Mayor's Community Breakfast at the Boston Marriot Newton (2345 Commonwealth Avenue), on Friday, May 31. Breakfast begins at 7:00 a.m. and the program starts at 7:30 a.m. Order your ticket or reserve a table for 10 [here](#). Join us at this annual gathering that brings together residents, clergy, business leaders, public officials and community organization representatives.



