

## Mayor's Update



### Taking the First Step in Acquiring Webster Woods

I'm partnering with Newton's Conservation Commission in our first concrete step to acquire Webster Woods. Together, we are applying to Newton's Community Preservation Committee for funding so we can preserve Newton's largest contiguous forest in perpetuity. When we acquire the woods, the Conservation Commission will care for the property and be its custodian.

Preserving Webster Woods for Newton in perpetuity is essential. We must protect this diverse eco-system and the habitat it provides for birds, mammals, amphibians and insects. We must ensure our residents have access to the trails, the woods, the rocky ledges and the vernal pool on these 17.4 acres and can

connect to the 88+ acres of protected woodland to either side cared for by the City of Newton and the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation. We must mitigate the impact of climate change, and by saving this forest we can reduce the impact of heat, storms, and carbon emissions.

Boston College bought the woods along with the former Temple Mishkan Tefila building and its parking lots in 2016. Boston College, unfortunately, isn't willing to commit to the permanent preservation of the woods so I'm moving forward with the purchase through an eminent domain process. (BC will retain ownership of approximately 8 acres including the former temple, existing parking lots, and access roads; the City of Newton will own the 17.4 acres of woods.)

*(Webster Woods Taking Map showing 17.4 acres of woods in green.)*



How does eminent domain work and how long does it take?

A City can take a piece of private property for a public purpose from an owner via eminent domain. The purchase price must be the property's fair market value. Thus, our process started with an appraisal of the fair market value of the woods. The City of Newton hired an experienced real estate appraiser who looked at comparable properties and at market values. The firm valued the 17.4 acres of woods at \$15.2 million.

Then, we go to Newton's Community Preservation Committee (CPC) to request funding for the acquisition price (\$15.2 million) and an additional \$740,000 for legal and associated costs, less donations from Newton residents towards the acquisition, currently estimated at \$200,000. (The legal and associated costs may ultimately be higher than \$740,000.) If the CPC votes favorably, then the City Council also needs to vote on the acquisition.

If both the CPC and the City Council vote yes, the City of Newton records the taking order at the registry of deeds and shortly thereafter writes Boston College a check for the \$15.2 million to compensate Boston College for the 17.4 acres and the City owns the land. Thus, the acquisition can happen in a matter of months.

Boston College, however, may go to court with a law suit saying the \$15.2 million is insufficient and that an appraiser they have hired has determined that the fair market value is more than \$15.2 million. (Notably, the valuation date is the date that the taking order is recorded at the registry of deeds.) Boston College has three years to file a law suit against the City of Newton after the taking order is recorded to protest the fair market value. This potential disagreement over the value of the woods would need to wind its way through the court system. Eventually (perhaps another two or three years later), either a judge or a jury will have the final say on the fair market value.

Where will the \$15.2 million and the additional legal and associated costs come from?

In 2001, the citizens of Newton voted to add 1% annually onto our City property taxes to fund affordable housing, historic resources, open space and recreation land as allowed under the Community Preservation Act. The state also matches some of Newton's funding. These funds are restricted to these specific needs. We anticipate that the CPC will choose to bond a significant portion of the \$15.2 million acquisition cost over a 30-year period. This will spread out the cost over time and allow Newton's CPA program to continue to have funding for other open space acquisitions as well as recreational, affordable housing and historic preservation projects.

While the cost of preserving Webster Woods is significant, I know we must keep the woods pristine for future generations of Newton residents (and Boston College students). This use is exactly one of the areas the Community Preservation Act was designed to fund – preserving open space.

Want to weigh in on acquiring Webster Woods? Both the Community Preservation Committee and the City Council will hold public meetings on the Webster Woods proposal. While I will address the CPC this coming Thursday, October 10<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm in the City Council Chambers, the public is welcome but it is not a public hearing. (Please know the CPC may also choose to go into a closed executive session later that night to talk about the legal process.) The CPC's official public hearing on the project is scheduled for Wednesday, Nov. 6 at 7:00 pm at Newton City Hall. The CPC will then deliberate on Webster Woods on Tuesday, Nov. 12 starting at 7:00 pm. While this meeting may also include a closed executive session, if the CPC chooses to vote on the proposal on Nov. 12, it will vote in a public portion of the session. The City Council is also expecting to conduct publicly announced meetings (which may also include some portions that are closed executive sessions), tentatively in November and December.

The application can be seen on the CPC's website at [www.newtonma.gov/cpa](http://www.newtonma.gov/cpa).

### **Will It Ever End?**

Thank goodness, yes. Neighbors in the area of Dedham and Nahanton Streets have endured a particularly long stretch of construction related to road improvements. The delay has been due in large part because of the NGRID lockout and its aftermath. DPW will complete the work by November.

For those wondering about the bumpy surface on Chestnut Street near Route 9, we had expected to pave tonight; however, plans have been thwarted by the forecast for rain. Neighbors will receive a telephone notification from DPW when the paving will be done in the next few weeks. (To sign up for these types of neighborhood-based notifications, click [HERE](#).)

### **Free Flu Vaccines**

*(City of Newton Public Health Nurse Educator Shin-Yi Lao gives Mayor Fuller her flu shot.)*

Have you gotten your flu shot? Free flu vaccines for Newton residents are available at City Hall, 1000 Commonwealth Ave. No appointment



is needed, and while health insurance information is requested, it is not required.

Clinics are being held on:

- Wednesday, Oct. 23, 3:00 - 5:00 p.m., Room B15 (basement level), for residents age 18 and older.
- Tuesday, Nov. 12, 5:00 - 7:00 p.m. Room 107B (HHS office, first floor), for residents age 6 months and older.
- Tuesday, Dec. 10, 5:00 - 7:00 p.m., Room 107B (HHS office, first floor), for residents age 6 months and older.



### Visit NPD Blue at City Hall and Pick Up Your Pink

*(Newton Police are "Going Pink" once again with the Verma Foundation--NPD pink patches on sale for \$10 for the month of October)*

Starting this Thursday, you'll be able to discuss neighborhood issues, report crimes or get your questions answered by Newton Police Officers stationed in City Hall.



Police Chief David MacDonald is piloting a substation program in a City Hall office by the front door at City Hall, 1000 Commonwealth Ave. The substation will be open every Thursday from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and every Tuesday evening, from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m.

While you are visiting the new substation, you can help support the Newton Police's partnership with the national Pink Patch Project to raise funds for cancer research and to help people dealing with the disease.

All proceeds from sales of the \$10 Pink Newton Police patches will go directly to the [Verma Foundation](#), a non-profit organization that creates custom high-quality cap wigs at no cost for women and children fighting cancer and dealing with the emotional side effect of hair loss.

Purchase your patch online at [Vermafoundation.org/store](https://vermafoundation.org/store). When you get your patch, take photos with it, and tag the Newton Police, using @NewtonMAPoliceDepartment (Facebook), #PinkPatchProject (Twitter), and #VFPinkPatch (Twitter). Your photo may end up being shared on the Newton Police Department's social media accounts.

Questions? Call Officers Justin Lau or Brett Ferolito at 617-796-2103 or email them at



## Sign Up For Paddy's Road Race

Join the fun at the 18<sup>th</sup> annual Paddy's Road Race – The Shillelagh Shuffle 2019, on Sunday, October 20 and help raise money for Newton Athletes Unlimited.

Join more than 2,000 athletes who will run or walk to support Newton Athletes Unlimited, our community-based

recreation program providing summer camps and year-round activities for over 300 children and adults with disabilities.

In addition to the 3-mile road race, there's a 1K (about .6 of a mile) Youth and All Abilities Race. This race caters to kids age 14 and younger and athletes with disabilities of all ages, making this a truly inclusive and unique event.

The youth races and children's festival kicks-off at 9:00a.m.; the Shillelagh Shuffle starts at 10:15 a.m.; the 3-mile race starts at 11:30am. The post-race BlocktoberFest includes more than 40 vendors, great food, an outdoor beer garden, Irish music, Irish Step Dancers, raffle prizes, silent auction and awards. Many of the businesses in West Newton Square will be vendors at the event. A huge thank you to Paddy's Restaurant and the O'Haras for sponsoring this great day.

To register or for more information go to [www.paddysroadrace.com](http://www.paddysroadrace.com) or call the Newton Parks, Recreation & Culture Department at (617) 796-1527.

Warmly,

Ruthanne

P.S. Did you know that over 7% of residential accounts have "opted up" to 100% renewable energy under the city's Newton Power Choice program? To join your neighbors who have already opted to 100% you may [click here](#) or call 1-866-968-8065.

P.P.S. The annual [Harvest Fair](#) on the Newton Centre Green at Langley Road and Centre Street is on Sunday, Oct. 20, 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Children's amusement rides will also open the day before, Saturday, Oct. 19, from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Enjoy live entertainment all day, pumpkin decorating, crafts, food trucks, a Green Expo sponsored by Green Newton and crafts. More information and a list of performers is available at [www.newtoncommunitypride.org](http://www.newtoncommunitypride.org).

Join us!

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100% Green

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**POWERCHOICE**

[newtonpowerchoice.com](http://newtonpowerchoice.com)



