

Mayor's Update



Newton Vape Ban Starts Monday

Gov. Charlie Baker's ban on the sale of e-cigarette and vaping products across the state ended on Dec. 11, but sales of e-cigarettes will be prohibited at all locations in Newton except the two adult-only retail tobacco stores (Vape Daddy and Garden City Vape & Smoke) starting on Monday, Dec. 16.

With the leadership of Health and Human Services Director Deborah Youngblood, we started working in the spring to make it more difficult for youngsters to have access to vaping products in Newton. E-cigarette use – or vaping – is a growing epidemic with significant health repercussions in Newton and across the country. The most recent figures from the Centers for Disease Control

and Prevention from earlier this month report 49 deaths and 2,291 hospitalizations from e-cigarette/vaping use and associated lung injuries.

We held a public hearing on banning sales in convenience stores and gas stations in Newton in early October, and Health and Human Services has been reaching out to educate Newton businessowners about the new regulations. Coincidentally, Newton's announcement of tight regulations coincided with Gov. Baker's temporary ban on e-cigarettes which went into effect on Sept. 24.

The statewide law on tobacco and vaping is scheduled to change again on June 1, 2020. Gov. Baker signed a bill on Nov. 27 banning the sale of all flavored tobacco products including mint, menthol and wintergreen. The new state legislation restricts the sale of all tobacco and vape products that have a characterizing flavor (e.g., menthol cigarettes, mint chewing tobacco and flavored vape products) to smoking bars where they may be sold only for on-site consumption. Please note that the City of Newton prohibits smoking bars (a regulation enacted here in 2014) so these products will not be allowed to be sold anywhere in Newton (including at Newton's two 21+ retail vape stores).

Working Kinks Out of the Snow Shoveling Ordinance

We made it through the first storm under the City's new ordinance requiring home owners to shovel the sidewalk in front of their homes within 24 hours of when the snow stops falling. It was a first for residents, and a first for us here at City Hall. Things went well with only one glitch in our handheld computers. Anecdotally, more sidewalks were shoveled and many of us found it more walkable and safer.

We had 261 complaints into the City of Newton 311 system about sidewalks failing to be shoveled 24 hours after the snow stopped last week. City of Newton Engineers, the people who follow up on these complaints, went out to take a photo and issue warnings to the reported addresses. The glitch occurred when a few of those warnings, while entered by the Engineers, didn't get recorded properly in the software system. This matters because after the first warning, a \$50 fine is issued, and then the fine is repeated if the sidewalk remains unshoveled and subsequent complaints are made.



Because of the glitch, we're giving everyone a pass for the first storm. We've fixed the glitch so starting 24 hours after Wednesday's light snow (i.e., 11 a.m. on Thursday), everything starts from scratch; if a home owner gets a warning for not clearing the sidewalk, it will be considered that property's first. Fines are \$50 and will be repeated every 24 hours until the sidewalk is cleared. This ordinance applies only to sidewalks that are paved or cement. If the sidewalk in front of your property is grass or gravel, you don't need to shovel.

Thank you to everyone who shoveled and who helped a neighbor.

(The Newton North Climate Advocacy Club took part in last Friday's Climate Strike to focus attention on Climate Change. They walked over to City Hall and we met in my office where we discussed local efforts including Newton's recently passed Climate Action Plan, Newton Power Choice, recycling and Black Earth curbside composting. They then headed into Boston to join students from across the state. Keep your voices active and strong!)



(With Lily and Mason Diamondstein and Rohan Jha at the Cradles to Crayons drop-in "Giving Factory" at City Hall on Monday where we sorted donated clothing that will provide 91 children with essentials. Thanks to everyone involved.)

Horace Mann Moving Forward

Two new modular classrooms are being delivered next week to add space for teachers and students. Installation of acoustical tiles are going in at the same time at the new home of the Horace Mann Elementary School (the former Carr) at 225 Nevada Street.

Building Commissioner Josh Morse is working with Horace Mann educators on five water/sink stations along the second-floor hallway and ideas for interior work to add additional space to the existing classrooms.

A Playground Committee is also getting to work. Their first meeting is scheduled for Dec. 17.



Census Forms Coming Soon

The City of Newton Census will be mailed in January, as usual, to every household in Newton. This is required by state law. It's important, in part because it allows your voting status to remain active. More information on the City Census is [here](#).

Party	Name: (Last, First, Middle)	Gender (M/F)	Date of Birth (mm/dd/yyyy)	Occupation	(M) Moved	(D) Deceased	US Veteran	Nationality (of Not U.S. Citizen)	Voter's Signature Voter(s) making changes must sign below. Changes cannot be processed without a signature.
U	Doe, John J.	M	03/19/1954	Professor					
D	Doe, Jane F.	F	07/14/1955	Educator					
	Doe, Jake L.	M	08/26/2000	Student	M				
140 Commonwealth Avenue, Newton, MA									Jake Doe

The Federal Census, done every 10 years, is also coming in April. It, too, is important as the state population reapportions the U.S. House of Representatives and potentially the Commonwealth's Congressional delegation. It is also the basis for population, housing and demographic data that drives a lot of federal funding (Medicaid, Student Loans, SNAP, grants, loans, direct payments, etc.), for the Commonwealth and Newton.

We'll be getting out a lot more information on the federal census before the actual counting begins in April.

In the meantime, the Federal Census Bureau is hiring part-time temporary positions. You can learn more about the positions and apply [here](#).

City Financial System Upgrade

The City's financial system has been going through a multi-year upgrade. Please know that we will transition our Accounts Receivable system beginning on Monday, December 30. The City will continue to accept tax and utility bill payments at the City Hall teller windows, by mail and online via the City's website. But, for one week during the transition, the Accounts Receivable system will record your payments internally but the software will not be updated with those payments until 5:00 pm Monday, January 6, 2020.

In summary, from 5:00 pm Monday, December 30 until 5:00 pm on Monday, January 6, you can make your payments but an account query will reflect only payments posted through 12 noon on December 30. One week later, on Monday, January 6, the City's

updated software system will retroactively post all payments based on the actual date of receipt. All payment postings will be up to date by 5:00 pm on Monday, January 6, 2020.

Questions? Call our Treasury Department at 617-796-1330 and we thank you for your patience for that one week.

Warmly,

Ruthanne



P.S. Come enjoy a special candlelight holiday tour of the historic Durant-Kenrick House on Sunday, Dec. 15, from 4:30 to 6:00 p.m. Historic Newton staff will guide the tour and tell tales of how different families who lived in the historic 1734 home at 286 Waverley Avenue observed winter holidays. Register in advance [here](#), or come on the day of the tour. Questions? Call 617-641-9142.

P.P.S. Want some holiday musical cheer filled with singing, dancing and cheer? The New Philharmonia Orchestra's Holiday Concert is this Sunday, Dec. 15, starting at 3:00 p.m. at the First Baptist Church of Newton, 848 Beacon St., and the Youth pro Musica Holiday Concert starts at 4:00 p.m. this Sunday, Dec. 15, at the Second Church in Newton, 60 Highland Street, West Newton. Find more information and tickets for New Phil [here](#) and for Youth pro Musica [here](#).

