

Mayor's Update

Racism, Policing, Newton's Budget: Our Way Forward

I will be speaking to our community on Monday night, June 15 at 6 p.m. Join me on your computer, your smart phone or via NewTV cable television.

I will speak to some of the critical issues facing our community: racism, public safety and the role of our police, our priorities as evidenced in our City budget, the pandemic and the economic recession. Together we are facing enormous challenges; together we will move forward.



You can join me by tuning in to NewTV's Government Channel (Comcast 9, RCN 13, 614 (HD), and Verizon 33) or on your computer or cell phone through Vimeo by clicking on <https://vimeo.com/428638008>.

Current Cases

There are 771 Newton residents who have tested positive for COVID-19 through Thursday, June 11, according to preliminary data. This is an increase of four people since Tuesday, and 12 during the last week. (There were 759 cases through Thursday, June 4.)

Newton Youth – Let's Get to Work

Are you in Grades 9 to 12? Interested in key work skills - resume writing, interviewing skills, workplace communication and financial literacy? There's a free online course, *Newton Youth – Let's Get to Work*, created by the City of Newton's Youth Services Department, in partnership with Newton Public Schools. It's a self-directed workshop. It also includes a space for mindfulness, community building, and sharing experiences of our altered world.

Students will choose the level of engagement that works best for them. To learn more and to register, visit www.newtonma.gov/gettowork. Sign up by Friday, July 10.

Property Tax Bills Due Monday, June 29

Remember that fourth quarter real estate and personal property tax bills need to be paid by Monday, June 29 to avoid interest or other penalties.

The usual May 1 due date was pushed back until June 1, and I waived all late fees until June 29 (the latest date possible) because of the COVID-19 crisis.

The June 29th due date also applies to Motor Vehicle Excise Taxes, Betterment Assessments and Water/Sewer bills due after March 10, 2020.

Please pay by Monday, June 29 to be eligible for the waiver of interest or late fees. If you pay on June 30th or later, please be forewarned that you will be responsible for

the interest/late payment fees effective from the due date for the bill.

Still have questions? (You might!) The State has issued an FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) to provide answers regarding the extension of these due dates. The FAQs can be found [here](#).

You can also call the City of Newton Treasury Department and speak to someone at 617-796-1330.

You can pay online or send a check through the mail. While City Hall is only open by appointment right now, at the front steps you can put your check in the WHITE mailbox.

Three Major Projects Under Consideration

Riverside

Can you picture the current MBTA Riverside parking lot and the adjacent Hotel Indigo on Grove Street right near I-95? The City Council Land Use Committee public hearing on a Special Permit request for this site began on January 28, 2020.

The proposal from Mark Development includes a mix of uses: office space, a hotel, apartments, retail and parking. The 13.05 acre site would have ten buildings. They have proposed 582 apartments (103 of which would be permanently affordable); 253,827 square feet of office space; a new 150 room hotel; 38,895 square feet of ground floor commercial/retail space; and a 1,971-space parking garage (to serve the MBTA as well as the other uses).

The developer has proposed \$7.2 million of community benefits. These include \$1.5 million toward improvements to Williams School, \$3 million for improvements to the Riverside/Charles River trail network, \$1.3 million for neighborhood improvements, and a \$1.4 million payment to the city's sewer upgrade efforts.

Want to weigh in? The next City Council Land Use Committee public hearing on the project will be on Tuesday, June 30th. More information on the project status is [here](#).

Dunstan East

Mark Development is also proposing a mix of uses for a block on Washington Street just outside of West Newton Square. The block is between Dunstan Street and Kempton Place (across from Sullivan Tire) and is approximately 3 acres. The parcel stretches back to Cheese Cake Brook and includes the land where The Barn sits. (fyi: The Barn is moving to Trio, the new building at the intersection of Washington Street and Walnut Street in Newtonville.)

Newton's Zoning Board of Appeals public hearing on this "40B" Comprehensive Permit request began on January 22, 2020. The proposal from Mark Development consists of three buildings providing 234 apartments (59 of which would be permanently affordable), 8,318 square feet of ground floor commercial/retail space, and a 290-space underground parking garage.

The developer has proposed \$3 million of community benefits. These include \$1.2 million toward providing a deeper affordability subsidy (at the 50% median income level for 8 of the 59 affordable units), \$400,000 for improvements to Cheese Cake Brook, \$805,000 toward energy efficiency sustainability efforts, \$145,000 toward transportation improvements in the area, and a \$515,000 payment to the city's

sewer upgrade efforts.

The next Zoning Board of Appeals public hearing on this project is scheduled for Tuesday, June 23rd. More information on the project can be found [here](#).

Riverdale

Close to the Watertown line in Nonantum and next to Newton's Forte Park, there is an approximately 3 acre parcel north off California Street at the end Riverdale Avenue that backs up to the Charles River. Newton's Zoning Board of Appeals hearing on this "40B" Comprehensive Permit request began on February 5, 2020. The proposal from Criterion Development includes apartments, commercial and community space, and parking. More specifically, the proposal consists of three buildings providing 204 apartments (51 of which would be permanently affordable), 4,463 square feet of ground floor commercial and community space, and 236 parking spaces.

The developer has proposed \$1.94 million of community benefits. These include \$270,000 toward providing a deeper affordability subsidy (for 2 of 51 affordable units), \$410,000 toward energy efficiency sustainability efforts, \$278,000 for improvements to nearby Forte Park, \$530,000 toward transportation improvements in the area, and a \$445,000 payment to the city's sewer upgrade efforts.

The next Zoning Board of Appeals public hearing on this project is scheduled for Wednesday, June 17th. More information on the project can be found [here](#).



Newton Al Fresco

Enjoy an al fresco meal from one of Newton's restaurants. Bring your take-out and sit at one of the 20 picnic tables and benches in 11 locations in 7 Villages around the City, with another 2 locations planned. The Licensing Commission has also allowed more than a dozen restaurants to expand dining service to sidewalks and patio areas.



This is just our first step. We know many restaurants want more outdoor space. We're figuring out where we can safely locate dining spots on some streets or parking spaces. We know time is critical to our restaurants and we hope to roll this out as soon as possible.

(Click the image to see an enlarged map.)

Emergency Assistance with Utility Bills

Do you need assistance paying your utility bills because of COVID-19? The Cousens Fund can help low-to-moderate income Newton residents. You can apply online [here](#), or call 617-796-1324 and an application will be mailed to you.

Warmly,

Ruthanne

P.S. Newton City Hall will be open by appointment only starting Monday, June 15. Almost everything that needs to be done at City Hall can be done online and at least for now, that's preferred. We are still safer at home.

P.P.S. We may be apart, but we're in the fight against COVID-19 together. Share this sentiment while helping a Newton non-profit by purchasing a mask at the website *sense and humor* [here](#). All the profits from the sales will be donated to Newton/Needham charities helping with COVID-19 relief efforts, including the Centre Street Food Pantry, the Newton Food Pantry, Welcome Home and the Newton Needham Chamber.



P.P.P.S. Do you know your bicycling ABCs? Join a Zoom session sponsored by the Newton Free Library with Safe Routes to School on Tuesday, June 16 from 4:30 to 5:15 p.m. The program is geared toward youngsters in grades 3 to 5. Pre-registration at newtonfreelibrary.net is required.

