

Mayor's Update

High Levels of Bacteria at Crystal Lake

Crystal Lake is closed until further notice.

Water test results obtained just a few minutes ago from a sample taken on Wednesday, July 1, 2020, indicate high levels of bacteria. Crystal Lake is not safe for swimming by people or pets.

The high levels of bacteria may be the result of the recent heavy rain. A number of water bodies in the State have been closed. Resampling will be conducted tomorrow, Friday, July 3, 2020; the resampling results are expected by Sunday, July 5, 2020.

We will post signs at the Lake first thing tomorrow.



Interim Police Chief Howard Mintz

I am pleased to announce my appointment of Newton Police Department Retired Police Chief Howard L. Mintz to the position of Interim Police Chief.

Chief Mintz will lead the Department during this period when we search for a successor to Chief David MacDonald who announced his retirement last month. Chief Mintz will begin work on July 13 and overlap with Chief MacDonald who will officially retire on July 17, 2020.

Chief Mintz grew up in Newton and graduated from the Newton Public Schools. In the 1960s, he was a member of the first Newton Police Explorer Post. Chief Mintz went on to earn an associate degree in liberal arts and a bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice, both from Northeastern University's College of Criminal Justice, and a Professional Certificate in Police Leadership from the Suffolk University Center for Public Management.

Chief Mintz began his criminal justice career as a Correction Counselor with the Massachusetts Department of Correction in 1979. In 1984, he joined the Newton Police Department as a patrol officer. After patrolling Newton neighborhoods for four and a half years, he was promoted to the rank of Sergeant and assigned to the Patrol Bureau as a patrol supervisor.

In addition to the duties of a patrol supervisor, Chief Mintz was tasked with training and education assignments. Consistent with this interest, he taught constitutional law to civilian students upon the establishment of the Newton Police Department's Citizens' Police Academy.

In 1997, Chief Mintz was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant. He continued his teaching roles and became a commander in the Patrol Bureau. After several more years, he was promoted to the rank of Captain and assigned as the Patrol Bureau Commander, the department's largest bureau with over 100 sworn and civilian personnel.

Chief Mintz also spent three years commanding the Support Services Bureau. A comprehensive in-service training program for police officers was developed under his command.

In 2009, Chief Mintz was placed in charge of the Traffic Bureau. Under his command, a commercial vehicle truck team was developed and the Traffic Bureau was presented the Massachusetts Law Enforcement Challenge Award.

On March 18, 2013, he was appointed Police Chief by Mayor Setti Warren. As Chief, he implemented for the first time a full-time clinical social worker within the Department to address social and mental health challenges of residents. In addition, Chief Mintz developed special training to protect schools and the community in case of homeland security or other threats. Due to the mandatory retirement of Police Officers in Massachusetts when they reach the age of 65, Chief Mintz officially retired in 2015 after more than three decades with the Newton Police Department.

I am grateful to have Chief Mintz's long police experience, deep understanding of our Department and our community, and his proven leadership at this time. A person of integrity, he brings a thoughtful, measured and calm presence to this leadership role.

Newton Police Reform Task Force Members

Just two weeks ago in the wake of George Floyd's murder, I wrote of the pain of generations of people of color suffering racism and bias. I urged us to seize this moment to create lasting change and I immediately called for the formation of a Newton Police Reform Task Force.

I'm grateful to the 104 people who responded, offering their personal and professional experiences, insights, and passion for social, racial and criminal justice to this critical effort.

The depth of qualified applicants made the selection process a difficult one.

I am deeply grateful to the following 12 members of the Newton Police Reform Task Force for undertaking this holistic assessment of the Newton Police Department. This advisory group will make recommendations to me that will impact the NPD's strategic direction for the coming years and decades.

Sonja Spears, Chair
Derege Demissie
Jadeque Douglas
Malick Ghachem
Brian Henderson
Bill Hoch
Randy Johnson
Hattie Kerwin Derrick
Josh Levy
Rob Lowe
Alison Tarmy
Achille Vann Ricca

I have intentionally brought together individuals with diverse backgrounds, professions and life experiences. They come with fresh eyes and new ideas. Each is committed to bringing their critical and independent perspective to this advisory

panel. For more information on the members, click [here](#).

I am pleased and grateful that Sonja Spears will serve as the Chair. An attorney and former elected judge in the First City Court of New Orleans, Sonja is currently the Chief Equity and Inclusion Officer at the Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program (BHCHP).



(Photo: Sonja Spears)

Prior to joining BHCHP, she was a Civil Rights Investigator in the Office of Diversity and Civil Rights at the MBTA. In this role, she evaluated and investigated system-wide civil rights complaints. In addition, she has more than fifteen years' experience as an educator and is an instructor at Tufts University and adjunct professor at Harvard Law School. At Tufts, she has developed a course entitled *Accused: The Gap Between Law and Justice* which in part gives an account of her personal experience as a judge when she experienced the abuses of the legal system. Over the course of her career, she has developed a deep expertise in negotiation, mediation and facilitation. She serves on several boards, including as Trustee Board Chair at Myrtle Baptist Church.

We are planning for the Newton Police Reform Task Force to meet for the first time next week, most likely on Wednesday, July 8. At this first meeting, the goals and objectives of the group will be discussed. We are in the process of creating a place on the City website with information on the Task Force and NPD, and I will keep residents informed of the activities of the Task Force, including ways that the Newton community can provide input. I know how vitally important voices of residents, businesspeople, and other members of the community are to successfully re-imagine policing in Newton.

We have important work ahead and I am once again so grateful to Task Force Chair Sonja Spears and the members who will be dedicating themselves to this endeavor. I am also deeply grateful to the members of the Newton Police Department who also care deeply about having a just and safe community.

Happy Independence Day!

Enjoy the 4th and show your patriotism by wearing a mask (and, please, no fireworks).

Warmly,

Ruthanne



P.S. Stop by the Newton Farmers' Market this Saturday, July 4, at its new location at Newton South High School from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Find information [here](#).

P.P.S. Contractors will begin fencing off portions of the parking lots at Newton North High School (both on Walnut Street and Lowell Avenue) on Tuesday to install solar canopies. Some parking spots will still be available. Two EV charging stations will be located in each lot and will be available to the community after school hours. Information on the project is [here](#).

P.P.P.S. The 3rd Annual Schultz Family Kids Triathlon which promotes good things including youth fitness, inclusion, and joy is being held virtually this year from July 27 through Aug. 1. Presented by Newton Athletes Unlimited, you can find out more by watching the video below.

