



Programs & Services Committee Report

City of Newton In City Council

Wednesday, July 22, 2020

Present: Councilors Krintzman (Chair), Albright, Wright, Humphrey, Greenberg, and Ryan

Absent: Councilors Noel and Baker

City Staff: David Olson, City Clerk/Clerk of the Council; Nathan Giacalone, Committee Clerk

Referred to Programs & Services and Finance Committees

#306-20

Request for salary increase for City Clerk/Clerk of the City Council

COUNCILORS ALBRIGHT AND LIPOF requesting an increase in the salary of the City Clerk/Clerk of the City Council to \$143,911 effective July 1, 2020 to match the percentage increase included in the FY21 budget for H-grade employees.

Action:

Programs & Services Approved 6-0

Notes: Councilor Albright introduced the item, explaining that it is needed because the City Clerk's salary is stipulated through the city ordinances. This means that the Mayor cannot raise it as can be done for other employees and any change must be voted on by the Council. The proposed increase will raise the Clerk's salary to be comparable to increases equivalent employees have earned.

Councilor Ryan moved approval which carried 6-0.

#307-20

Request to move the Ward 2 Precinct 2 polling location

CITY CLERK requesting that the polling location for Ward 2, Precinct 2, which is currently located at the Cabot Park Village Assisted Living Facility off of Newtonville Avenue be moved back to the Cabot School on Cabot Street. The polling location was moved out of the Cabot School during the school's renovations. This move is to protect the seniors that live at Cabot Park Village from Covid-19. The Cabot School will be unoccupied by students on Election Days in 2020.

Action:

Programs & Services Approved 6-0

#308-20 Request to move the Ward 2 Precinct 3 polling location

CITY CLERK requesting that the polling location for Ward 2, Precinct 3, which is currently located at the Newton Senior Center on Walnut Street be moved down the Street to the Newton North High School. This move is to protect the seniors that use the Senior Center from Covid-19. Newton North High School will be unoccupied by students on Election Days in 2020.

Action: Programs & Services No Action Necessary 6-0

Notes: Councilor Greenberg motioned No Action Necessary which carried 6-0.

#309-20 Request to move the Ward 6 Precinct 2 polling location

CITY CLERK requesting that the polling location for Ward 6, Precinct 2, which is currently located at the Weeks Housing Senior Apartment Facility on Hereward Road be moved to the Bowen School on Cypress Street. This move is to protect the seniors that live at Weeks House from Covid-19. The Bowen School will be unoccupied by students on Election Days in 2020.

Action: Programs & Services Approved 6-0

#310-20 Request to move the Ward 5 Precincts 3 & 4 polling location

CITY CLERK requesting that the polling location for Ward 5, Precincts 3 & 4, which is currently located at the Waban Library Center on Beacon Street be moved back down the street to the Zervas School. The polling location was moved out of the Zervas School during the school's renovations. This move is to allow for social distancing in the polling location during the Covid-19 Emergency. The Zervas School will be unoccupied by students on Election Days in 2020.

Action: Programs & Services Approved 6-0

Notes: Items #307-20, #308-20, #309-20, and #310-20 were discussed and voted on simultaneously.

Mr. Olson addressed the Committee on these items. He said that multiple polling locations will need to be changed for the September election in order to accommodate COVID-19 prevention measures. His presentation, attached to this report, summarized each location that needs to change and where it is being moved to:

Ward 2, Precinct 2

This polling location is currently located at the Cabot Park Village Assisted Living Facility. This facility was originally made a polling location while the Cabot School was undergoing renovations. This is to protect the seniors living there.

Ward 5, Precincts 3 & 4

This polling location, currently located at the Waban Library Center, needs to be changed because the tight quarters make it impossible to comply with social distancing. This location will move to the Zervas School to use the gym.

Ward 6, Precinct 2

This polling location currently located at the Weeks House Senior Housing Facility is also being moved in order to protect the seniors living there from COVID-19. It will be moved to the Bowen Elementary School.

No matter how schools are operating in the fall, it has been decided that schools will be closed on both the September and November election days so there will be no students present. Mr. Olson said that moving the Ward 2, Precinct 3 polling location out of the Senior Center (item #308-20) is no longer necessary. This is because the senior center is still not resuming operations so there will be no seniors to be put at risk. Mr. Olson then said that for outreach, cards would be mailed out to residents to inform them of the changed location and sandwich boards will be placed at prominent locations around the city. State legislation will also allow for an expansion to absentee voting and for increased mail-in voting options.

Councilor questions and comments:

Q: How will the residents at Cabot Park village continue to vote?

A: Cabot Park Village requested this change to protect the residents. They will be able to vote by mail.

Q: How many years has the Waban Library housed the polling location formerly located at the Zervas school?

A: Three or four years at this point.

Q: Will the Albemarle Field House still be able to be used as a polling location?

A: Yes. State legislation has eliminated the need for check-out tables which frees up enough space to accommodate social distancing. There are already many poll workers hired and efforts are underway to fill the remaining need.

Q: Will voters be turned away for not wearing masks?

A: No, mask wearing will be encouraged but not required. Proper Protective Equipment (PPE) will be given to poll workers and extra masks will be available as well for any who need them.

Q: Where will early voting take place?

A: There will only be early voting in the Drucker Auditorium at the Library as the space normally used in City Hall for this would be unable to accommodate social distancing.

Q: Are these elections changes permanent?

A: They are temporary for now, but it will be reassessed for the fall if they need to be renewed.

Q: Regardless of the pandemic, are these new polling locations better than the prior ones?

A: Yes, the closure of schools at least on election days has made it much easier to use these sites.

Q: Does the City run the vote-by-mail operation on its own?

A: Yes, the Elections Office sends out the mail-in applications to all registered residents. Ballots are sent out after the information is returned and the applications are entered into a database. This is the standard in Massachusetts as each community takes up the responsibility for designing its ballots and running elections. The State pays for postage and the cost of printing, but the time for processing this information must be covered by the City.

Q: Will the polling location at the Schuman Center be affected? This is a small location and may require instruction on how to accommodate social distancing.

A: This concern has arisen, but the decision has been made to not move it because the building can now easily accommodate social distancing without the checkout table. The Schuman Center is not the only polling location where the flow will have to be adjusted for social distancing.

Q: How are the mail-in ballots counted compared to the absentee ballots?

A: The State is allowing absentee and mail-ins to be treated the same with a central tabulation being done at City Hall to process all ballots without sending them to the polling locations first.

Q: What are the differences between mail-in and absentee ballots?

A: Normally absentee ballots are counted at their respective polling locations. Two state elections ago central tabulation was allowed, and early ballots have not been moved out from city hall. This year there is a single ballot to cover early voting and absentee.

Q: What happens if somebody mails out their ballot and it does not arrive until after election day?

A: As many ballots as possible are run through the AccuVote machines until those results must be reported. Ballots received after this point during the night are hand counted. For the September election, it is required that ballots be received before the close of polls on election day to be counted. For the November election, ballots must be postmarked on Election Day and have five days to arrive in order to count.

Councilor Humphrey moved approval of #307-20, #309-20, and #310-20 which carried 6-0.

#302-20 Reappointment of Elizabeth Wilkinson to the Urban Tree Commission

HER HONOR THE MAYOR reappointing Elizabeth Wilkinson, 14 Trowbridge Street, Newton Centre, as a member of the URBAN TREE COMMISSION for a term to expire on May 1, 2023. (60 Days: 09/11/20)

Action: Programs & Services Approved 6-0

Notes: The Committee invited Ms. Wilkinson to introduce herself to its new members. Ms. Wilkinson said that she has been on the Urban Tree Commission for three terms and has also been a member of the Open Space Plan Update. She said that it is currently a difficult time for tree management due to COVID-19 budget cuts but is hopeful that this trend will reverse in the next few years. Other objectives for the Urban Tree Commission are to eliminate the heat island

effect and to ensure more equitable tree coverage across the city. The Urban Tree Commission is still only a policy advising body but advocates for important tree-issues however it can.

Committee questions and comments

C: Despite the cuts made to the tree-planting budget this year, there was still an infusion of money into the tree fund from a large payment. The Urban Tree Commission should pay close attention to this and ensure that trees get planted from this fund.

A: Yes. The Commission does well at planting new trees, but it needs to improve its preservation of median age trees. One reason for this discrepancy is that most of the watering and pruning was done on overtime and all the overtime has been cut.

Q: Is there a way for people to adopt a tree in front of their house and water it?

A: The Newton Tree Conservancy handles tree planting on the neighborhood level. Individual trees can be planted if residents sign onto the program and agree to water them, though the status of this initiative is uncertain this year. Other collaborations have planted individual trees, but this initiative is uncertain this year. Outreach to residents asking them to water trees in front of their houses is another great idea that can be helpful.

Councilor Albright moved approval which carried 6-0.

The meeting adjourned at 7:50 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Josh Krintzman, Chair

Cabot Park Village to Cabot School

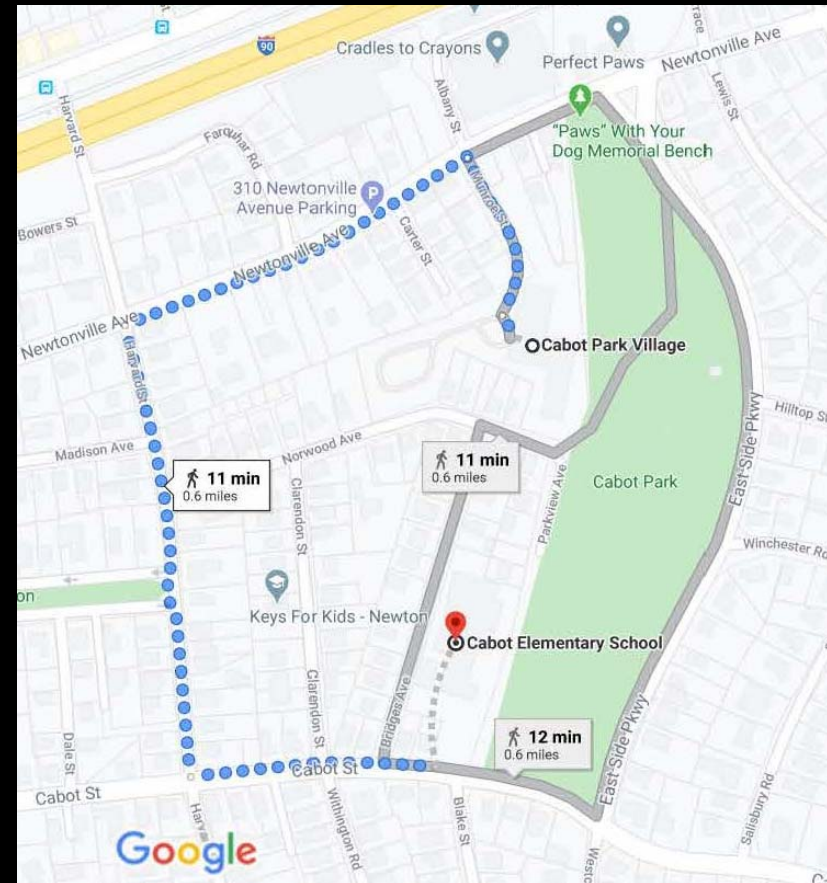
Ward 2, Precinct 2

Cabot Park Village – Assisted Living Facility
Off Newtonville Avenue

To

Cabot School - School Closed
Cabot Street

Voting in the Cafeteria.



Waban Library Center to Zervas School

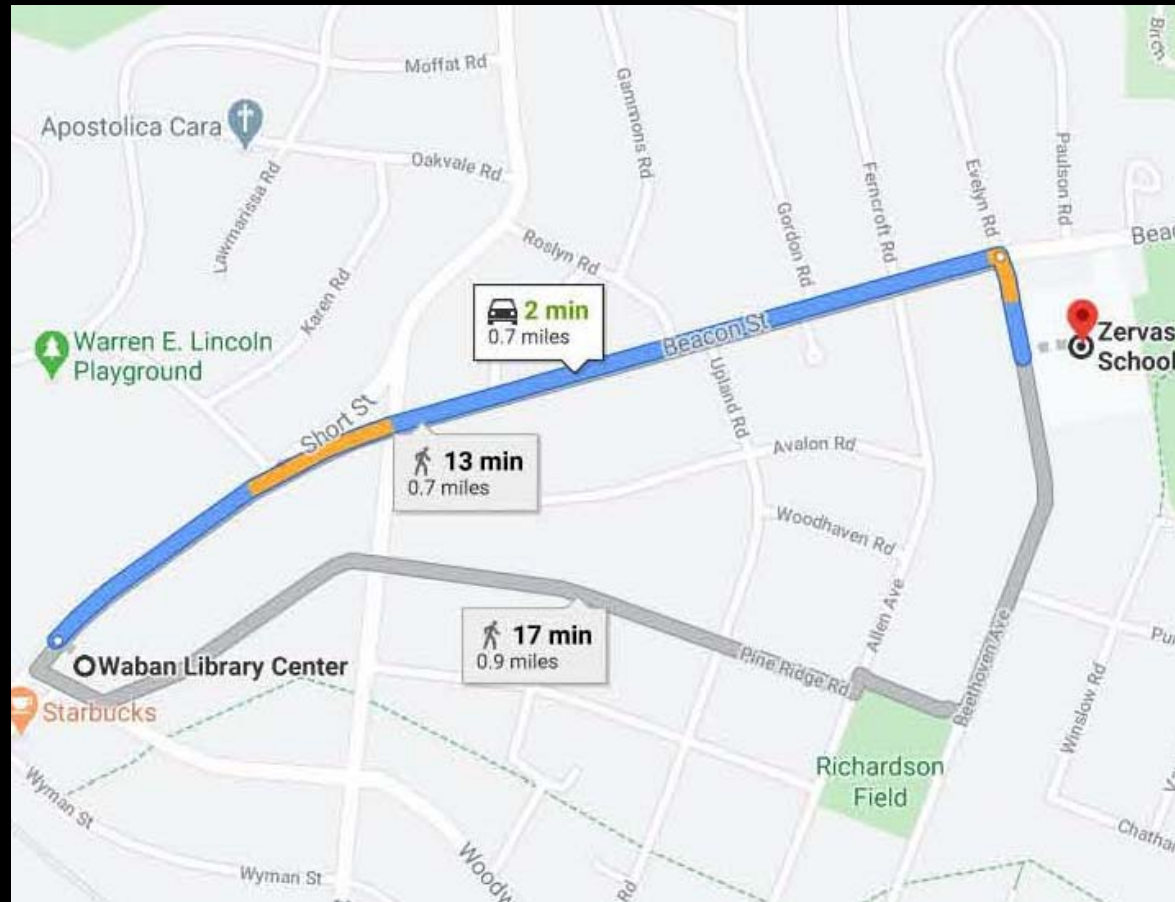
Ward 5, Precincts 3 & 4

Waban Library Center – Dual precinct too tight
1608 Beacon Street

To

Zervas Elementary School - School Closed
Beacon Street and Beethoven Avenue

Both precincts in the new gym.



Weeks House to Bowen School

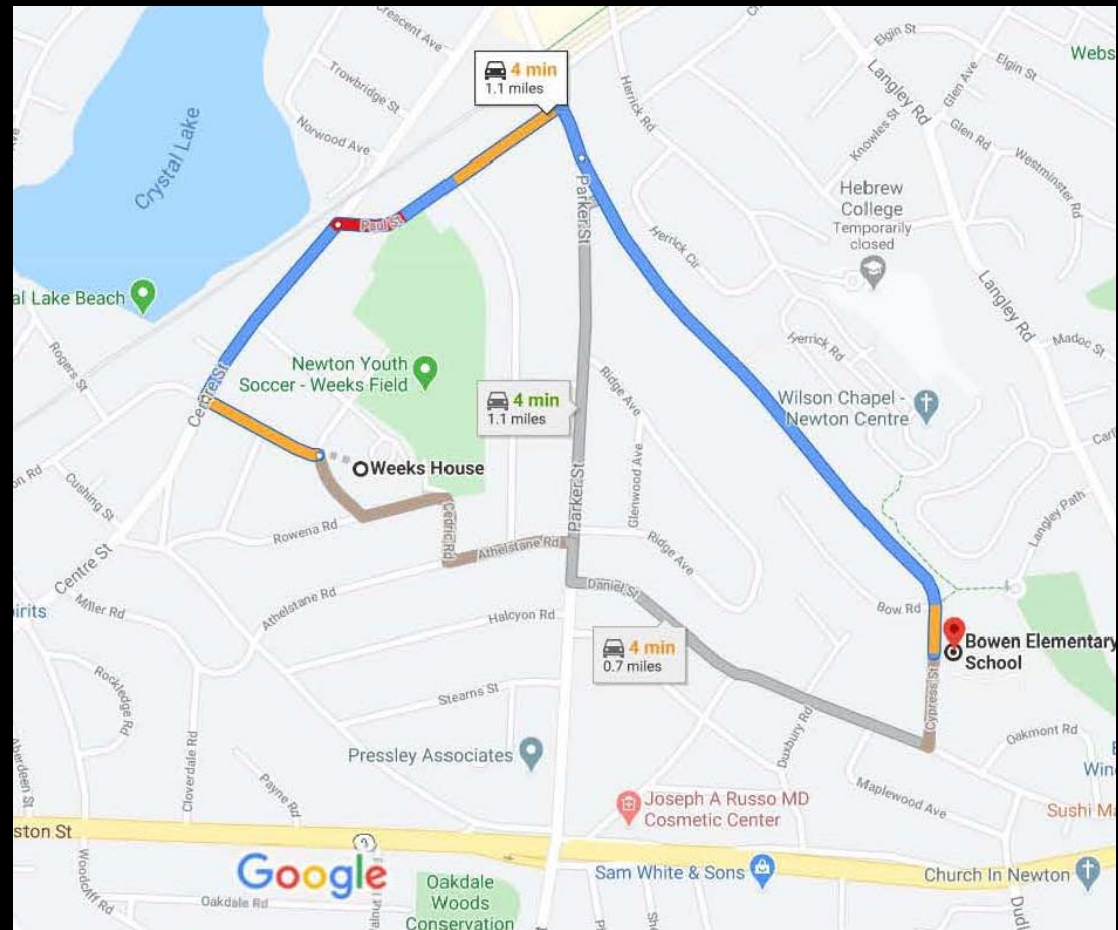
Ward 6, Precinct 2

Weeks House – Senior Housing Facility
7 Hereward Road

To

Bowen Elementary School - School Closed
Cypress Street

Will be Dual Precinct for 2020 6/2 and 6/1



Voter Notification



**Your Polling Place
has Moved.**

The Newton City Seal features a central figure holding a scale and a sword, surrounded by the text "NEWTON LIBERTY AND UNION 1811" and "INCORPORATED A TOWN 1688 A CITY 1830".



Newton City Clerk's Office
1000 Commonwealth Avenue
Newton, MA 02459

The polling location for Ward 2, Precinct 1 (formerly housed at the Old Horace Mann School on Watertown Street) has moved down the street to the Albemarle Fieldhouse at 250 Albemarle Road.

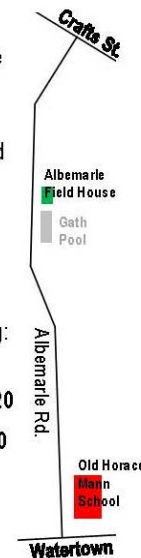
Please vote at the Albemarle Fieldhouse for all future elections including:

**Presidential Primaries &
Special City Election - March 3, 2020**

State Primaries - September 1, 2020

State Election - November 3, 2020

Sincerely,
David Olson, City Clerk



Vote By Mail



Official
2020 Vote by
Application



I WANT TO VOTE!

Massachusetts Official Vote by Mail Application

Voter Information:

JOHN Q VOTER
1 MAIN STREET
Party: NO PARTY
Year of Birth: 1950



0-1

Mail ballot to (if different):

Phone Number:

Ballot Requested For:

- September 1, 2020 Primary*
- November 3, 2020 Election
- All 2020 Elections*

*Independents – Choose Your Primary Ballot:

- Democratic
- Republican
- Green-Rainbow
- Libertarian

 Signed: _____ Date: _____

I swear (or affirm) under penalty of perjury that I am a qualified voter at the above listed legal voting residence.

ILLEGAL VOTING PUNISHABLE UNDER STATE AND FEDERAL LAWS

William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth • Elections Division • One Ashburton Place, Room 1705, Boston, MA 02108

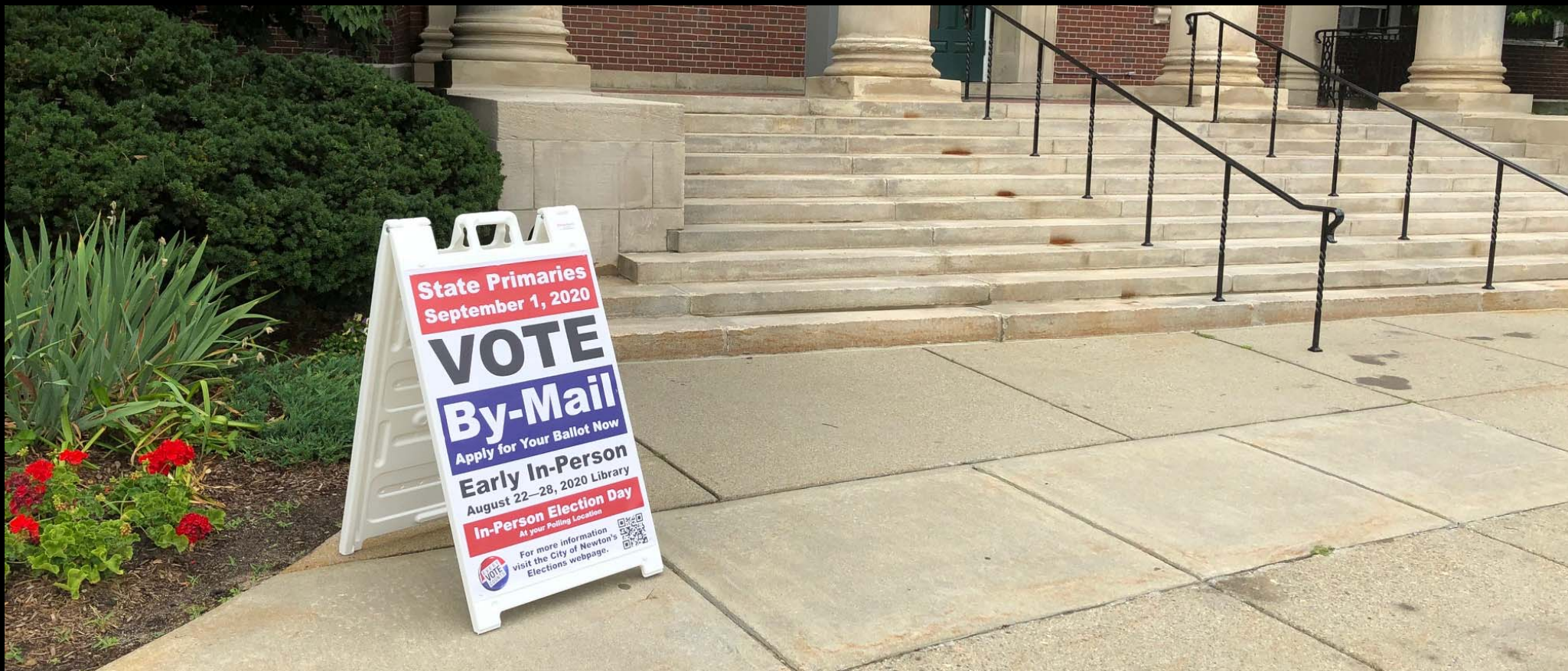
Vote By Mail



Tuesday's Applications



Vote – September Primaries



September Primaries

**State Primaries
September 1, 2020**

VOTE

By-Mail
Apply for Your Ballot Now

Early In-Person
August 22—28, 2020 Library

In-Person Election Day
At your Polling Location

 For more information
visit the City of Newton's
Elections webpage.



State Primary Elections - September 1, 2020

Three options to cast your ballot this September:

Vote by Mail

Your application is in the Mail. Return your application and a ballot will be mailed to you. Ballots must be received back in the City Clerk's Office by the close of polls on September 1, 2020.

Didn't get an application. Click [HERE](#).

In-person Early Voting at the Newton Free Library

Saturday, August 22, 2020	10:00 am to 4:00 pm
Sunday, August 23, 2020	10:00 am to 4:00 pm
Monday, August 24, 2020	8:30 am to 5:00 pm
Tuesday, August 25, 2020	8:30 am to 8:00 pm
Wednesday, August 26, 2020	8:30 am to 5:00 pm
Thursday, August 27, 2020	8:30 am to 5:00 pm
Friday, August 28, 2020	8:30 am to 5:00 pm

In-person Election Day - Tuesday, September 1, 2020

at your regular Polling Location 7:00 am to 8:00 pm

Sample Ballots