

Thursday, May 6, 2021

Mayor's Update



COVID-19 Update

The COVID-19 numbers continue moving in the right direction. We had only 38 additional confirmed cases of COVID-19 between April 29 and yesterday, May 5, compared to 53 new cases over the previous six-day period and 84 new cases prior to that. (Newton experienced its highest number of new cases in one week, 253, between Jan. 6 – 13, 2021.) These new cases bring our cumulative total of Newtonians who have had confirmed cases of COVID-19 to 4,330.

Most importantly, this week, for the fourth week in a row, no one in Newton died with COVID-19. This is the first time since we began reporting about deaths more than a year ago that we've gone this long without losing one of our neighbors. I am filled with hope.

But, there is a huge caveat.

Dr. Rochelle Walensky, Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, said we can be hopeful if:

(1) Everyone who can does their part and gets vaccinated.

(2) We continue to slow the spread by wearing masks indoors in public places and outdoors when 6 feet of physical distancing isn't possible, washing hands, and staying away from large crowds ... until more people are vaccinated.

Find updated daily and weekly COVID-19 data at mass.gov/info. Vaccine availability can be found at vaxfinder.mass.gov.

The dashboard with week by week school data from the pooled testing program is available [here](#) and the overall school data is [here](#).

The City of Newton also sometimes has extra vaccine doses available from our homebound vaccination program that need to be used within a short timeframe. Anyone 18 years or older can sign up [here](#) to be on our waitlist. The doses will be given at City Hall and you will have to arrange your own transportation and come relatively quickly.

Introducing Chief Carmichael

COVID-19 in Newton
Total Cases 4,330
Total Deaths 214
*As of 5/5/21

I am introducing John Carmichael, my selection to be the next Chief of the Newton Police Department, to the City Council for their approval tonight at 7:00 p.m. Join us.

Watch the meeting at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87088709852>. You can also watch a live broadcast on NewTV's government channel (Comcast 9, RCN 13, 614(HD), Verizon 33), or view a livestream on NewTV's Vimeo channel [here](#).

Chief Carmichael comes to Newton having served for the past five years as Chief of the Walpole Police Department. He began his career as a dispatcher and served as a patrol officer, patrol sergeant, detective sergeant and deputy chief.

Here are his qualities that give me confidence that he is the right person at this moment for our City and our Department: Integrity. Experience. Compassion. Leadership. Listening and communicating. Transparent and open. Committed to fair and impartial policing. Knowledgeable. Forward thinking. Engaged. Warm.

Next Year's City Budget

Next Wednesday night, May 12, I will present the City of Newton's Fiscal Year 2022 Budget to the City Council during a virtual Zoom meeting.

This budget reflects our values. While we're still feeling the economic effects of the pandemic on our revenue, this budget helps those that are hurting, provides excellent services, supports the Newton Public Schools, and makes long-lasting investments to make Newton a better City.

I will also include preliminary plans for targeted investments of our first allocation of the \$65.2 million in American Rescue Plan Act funding coming to Newton. Helping the vulnerable, recovering and rebuilding, and investing in a better Newton will be our focus.

Watch the budget presentation to the City Council starting at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, May 12. Zoom in at: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89711021647> (meeting ID: 897 1102 1647), or watch a live broadcast on NewTV's government channel (Comcast 9, RCN 13, 614(HD), Verizon 33), or view a livestream on NewTV's Vimeo channel [here](#).



Draft of the West Newton Armory Request for Proposals (RFP)

On Friday, Newton's Planning Department released a draft of the Request for Proposal (RFP) to solicit proposals from housing developers to transform the Armory into 100% affordable housing. Read the draft [here](#).

The Planning Department welcomes comments on the draft, which can be submitted to newtonarmoryrfp@newtonma.gov by June 1, 2021. Our plan is to release the final

RFP in mid-June with a submission deadline by affordable housing developers in mid-September.

Newton Free Library's Doors Spring (More) Open

With the State's reopening plan moving forward, the Newton Free Library is opening its doors a bit wider.

Newton's Library is now open for 45-minute visits (extended from the 15 previously allowed), and physically distanced computers are available for public use by appointment or walk-in use. To reserve a computer in advance: [Schedule an Appointment](#) or call the Library at 617-796-1360.



New chairs are also out on the plaza out front on Homer Street, so bring a laptop (or borrow one of the Library's) and get some sunshine while using the expanded outdoor WIFI.

Returning books? Starting this Friday, May 7, patrons can once again return library items directly into the automated sorter (green conveyor belt) inside so they will be checked in and cleared instantly.

When visiting the Library, keep in mind that Homer Street is now one-way from Walnut Street to Commonwealth Avenue with new reverse-angled parking options. This change creates more parking near the Library in preparation for the City's upcoming Library parking lot solar canopy construction project. Learn about the project [here](#).

Live parking for [curbside pickup](#) and library returns is still reserved in front of the Homer Street plaza.



Let's Bike!

May is [National Bike Month](#) and [Bike Newton](#) encourages us to hop on our bikes. Consider a bike ride to a village center to dine at a [Newton Al Fresco](#) table. Celebrate #FreshAirFridays by biking, walking, rolling or taking the bus to school or work on Fridays this spring. Try a Bluebike (find a location [here](#)). Look for new bike lanes coming this year on Cypress and Parker Streets, Dedham Street, Beacon Street and Albemarle Road. Visit [NewtonSafeRoutes](#) for more tips.



(Photo: Newton's Parks, Recreation and Culture Department hosted a bike rodeo where MA Safe Routes to School provided skills and safety instruction to almost 90 youngsters. Newton Police Community Outreach Officers Justin Lau and Dawn Fleming also shared bike etiquette, bike safety and bike security tips.)

Want to Speak Up about Gun Shops?

People will have an opportunity to speak for two minutes each about this issue at the City Council Zoning and Planning Committee public hearing on proposed zoning regulations for firearm businesses this coming Monday, May 10 at 7:00 p.m. The zoom link for the meeting is [here](#). The Zoning and Planning meeting starts at 6:30 p.m. with other zoning and planning business and the firearm public comment hearing will begin at 7:00 p.m.

Information, including Newton's Planning Department's public hearing memo and an updated FAQ from the City's Law Department, can be found [here](#).

Senior Parking Stickers

Newton's Department of Senior Services offers Newton residents age 65 and older free parking in the City's municipal parking lots with a sticker (with some restrictions).

The current blue stickers expire on June 30. New stickers (red) are available for purchase at \$6 per vehicle, only by mail. Click [here](#) for instructions. The new stickers will be valid for two years to June 30, 2023.



Appreciating Our Teachers and Nurses

This week we shine a bright light on our teachers and nurses, two groups of professionals who, this year in particular, deserve our gratitude.

This week is Teacher Appreciation Week. When our schools closed last March, our Newton educators went home and went to work, adapting overnight to a new way of teaching. Day after day, we saw teachers on Zoom doing their best to engage and support students from kindergarten to grade 12. Whether online or in their classrooms wearing masks and physically distanced, our teachers were there for their students and our children.

Today, too, is Nurse Appreciation Day. Our Newton Public School nurses helped scared students, parents and guardians and guided our educators when we were fully remote and as we came back into the school buildings. Our nurses in our Health and Human Services Department did contact tracing, gave vaccines, explained constantly changing directives, and provided guidance. Nurses at Newton-Wellesley Hospital and beyond worked long shifts surrounded by a virus that could literally kill and comforted the patients who were otherwise alone.

To all our teachers and nurses who live and work in Newton, you are heroes.

Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month

Newton is a better, stronger community because of the wonderful generosity and engagement of the Asian American and Pacific Islander community who share their heritage and gifts so warmly.

Join the Chinese American Association of Newton, the Greater Boston Chinese Cultural Association, Newton Chinese Language School and Newton Education Support Network at 7:00 p.m. this Saturday, May 7, for a virtual celebration of Pan Asian heritage. Zoom ID: 822 6531371, Passcode 555555 or view on Youtube at: tinyurl.com/panasianfest.

Join the Newton Human Rights Commission, the Chinese American Association of Newton, and the Newton Education Support Network for a discussion of anti-Asian hate with Professor Lisong Liu of Mass College of Art and Wen-Ti Tsen, a Chinese American painter and public artist on Tuesday, May 18, at 7:00 p.m. Register [here](#).

A Tragic Morning in Newton

This morning reminded me once again why our Newton firefighters have my respect and gratitude.

They responded to the scene of a collapsed foundation at a home construction site on Winchester Street with a man trapped under the rubble. Fire Chief Gino Lucchetti and the Newton firefighters gave all they had in dangerous, tragic conditions to try and save the man, but the rescue attempt became a recovery. Our hearts go out to the family of the man who died.

Our thanks go to our firefighters, assisted by the Waltham Fire Department and Newton Police, who brought their years of experience, training, caring and professionalism to a terrible situation. They did everything possible to save his life. They shored up the slab. They dug out the rubble. They crawled in to help the man. They treated him with respect.

We are so fortunate to live in this City with this Fire Department.

Warmly,

Ruthanne

P.S. Lifeguards needed: Newton Parks, Recreation & Culture is recruiting Lifeguards for the Summer 2021 season at Gath Pool and Crystal Lake. Find more info [here](#). Questions? Contact Sean Nickerson, Newton's Aquatics Director, at snickerson@newtonma.gov.

P.P.S. Join author Gloria Browne-Marshall at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, May 13 for **Voting Rights: Where Do We Go from Here**. Browne-Marshall will explore challenges to voting, starting with historical issues of enslavement and woman's suffrage and going through current controversies over voter suppression. Interested in attending? Register [here](#).

Thursday, May 13 @ 7pm

A webinar with
Gloria J. Browne-Marshall

**Voting Rights:
Where Do We
Go From Here?**

Register at:
[https://tinyurl.com/
Gloria-J-Browne-Marshall](https://tinyurl.com/Gloria-J-Browne-Marshall)

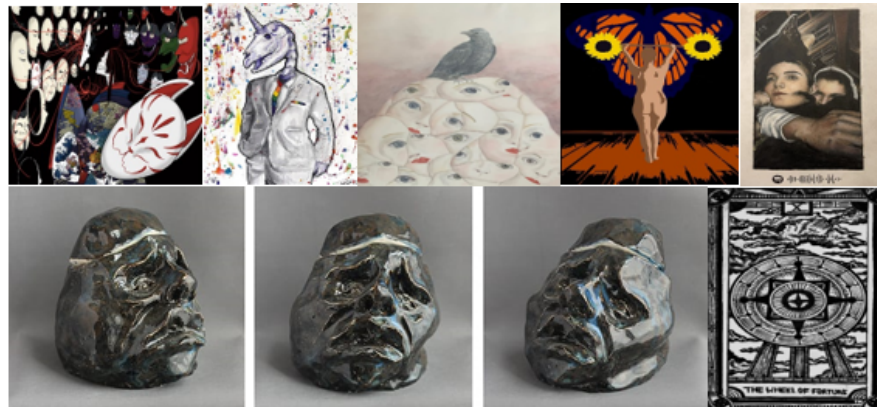
This program is part of
COVERSTORY
Confronting Race and
Racism in Newton

This program is funded in part by Mass Humanities,
an affiliate of the National Endowment for the
Humanities.
Presented by **HISTORIC
Newton**
Sponsored by the League of Women Voters/Newton



P.P.P.S. Jumpstart spring with **family fun**. Join us at [Newton Family Fun Day](#) on Saturday, May 15. Choose from a *Tanglewood Marionette* puppet show, a *Grooversity* drum circle, or a story time that can start conversations about race with kids aged 3 to 8 years old with Newton author Mia Wenjen. A drive-in movie concludes the festivities. Thank you Newton Community Pride for helping sponsor the day. Due to COVID-19 guidelines, tickets (which are free) and pre-registration are required. Register [here](#). The movie is *Spy Kids*; find more information [here](#).

P.P.P.P.S. For 30 years, the Newton Art Association has celebrated promising young artists, including this year awarding scholarships to seven **High School artists** from Newton. Congratulations Andi Dong, Elizabeth Donnellan, Calvin Mamis, Ashly Wong, Gabriella Ciccolo, Sergei Tourian, and Talia Raffel. See a sample of the art below, and more of their work [here](#).



Mayor Ruthanne Fuller | 1000 Commonwealth Avenue, Newton, MA 02459

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