

Thursday, June 30, 2022

Mayor's Update



More Green Space for NewCAL

I am excited to submit a request to the City Council for approval to purchase the property at 47 Walnut Place, land directly adjacent to the current Newton Senior Center, to create open space to support and benefit the Newton Center for Active Living (NewCAL) and Newtonville.

This purchase is the result of a partnership with the Germani family who have owned the property for more than 52 years. Working with the Germanis, terms of this acquisition are structured as a life estate which means Giosina Germani will remain in her home for the rest of her life.

We began speaking to the Germanis about this acquisition in late 2020. At the request of the current owner, we kept these negotiations private until the agreement was finalized.

We have been confident for a few years now that we would reach an amicable solution and, as such, the land at 47 Walnut Place has been part of creating an optimal site plan, and a solution to providing meaningful open space, for the new Senior Center.

This land will result in the creation of more than twice the open space that exists on the current Senior Center site today.

I will use American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds for the acquisition. While the use of ARPA funds has been delegated to the Mayor, the City Council must approve the purchase.

We are excited to move forward with the design and construction of NewCAL which our older residents very much need as soon as possible. Once the Germanis are no longer living in the home, the two-family home which was built in 1960 will be removed to allow for additional wonderful green space for Newtonville and NewCAL.

Moving Forward with New Zoning Framework for Village Centers

The City Councilors on the Zoning and Planning Committee (ZAP) have been working for the past six months on an updated zoning framework for our village centers.

Earlier this week, the Councilors gave our Planning staff and our urban design consulting team from Utile the green light to move into the next phase of zoning redesign.

The goal is to make sure what is built in the future in these commercial centers supports what we want:

- Economic vitality
- Housing availability
- Good design
- Sustainable buildings
- Appropriate amount of parking
- Varied zoning, designed for different types and sizes of village centers
- Greater clarity for businesses and property owners

The ideas of residents, architects and builders have intentionally informed the work.

We also got insights from economic development experts at Landwise to better understand the economic feasibility of building what we want. Our current zoning encourages larger scale projects allowed through the Special Permit and 40B process, rather than smaller scale, incremental projects that residents indicated they prefer and that work within the village center fabric.

Interested in learning more of the details about the zoning framework? Click [here](#). For more information on upcoming opportunities to weigh in, which will include an exhibition at the Newton Free Library, click [here](#).

We anticipate that the complete zoning language for village center commercial districts along with accompanying zoning maps will be presented to the ZAP committee for consideration later this fall



Congratulations to Officers Brandon Baia, Elvis Aaron Brito, Peterson Gilbert and Christopher Matthews as new members of the Newton Police Department. (Read their biographies [here](#).) As I swore them in on Monday, I spoke of how wearing the uniform of the Newton Police Department is an honor and a privilege – and comes with enormous responsibility. The badge pinned to their uniform is a symbol of integrity, leadership, and an understanding of and respect for the law and our diverse community. (Photo, from left, Officers Baia, Brito, Gilbert and Matthews)

\$340K for the Marty Sender Greenway

I'm so pleased that the City of Newton received this week a \$340,298 MassTrails Grant from the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) to complete the second phase of the Marty Sender Greenway Restoration, a 3,700-foot section of the Blue Heron Trail along the Charles River in Auburndale, aptly referred to as the "Riverwalk."

(Photo: Director of Parks and Open Space Luis Perez Demorizi and Commissioner Nicole Banks receiving the grant award Tuesday from Lt. Gov. Karen Polito who is in the middle.)

Our project was among the 81 chosen from 167 submitted to DCR.

The grant will help us with accessibility, safety and environmental improvements along the Marty Sender Greenway. Named after the beloved Auburndale resident and television journalist who died in 2000, the Marty Sender Greenway is the section of the Blue Heron Trail that passes through Lyons Park and "The Cove."



The first phase of the project improved the first 1,000-feet of existing, degraded path and made four wooded outlooks wheelchair accessible. We are completing Phase 1 of the Restoration in the next few weeks, weather permitting. Phase 2 will allow this heavily used section of the Blue Heron Trail to better withstand increasingly frequent flooding and provide universal access so all Newtonians can enjoy multi-seasonal recreational opportunities and beautiful views.



In addition, the Phase 2 work will enhance the circulation of water between the Charles Rivers and wetlands, expand wildlife habitat, and reestablish the natural ebb and flow within the flood plain behind Lyons field. The design and permitting process for this phase will begin this summer and go out to bid by the Spring of 2023.

A big thank you to Parks, Recreation and Culture Commissioner Nicole Banks, Director of Parks and Open Space Luis Perez Demorizi, and Chief Environmental Planner Jennifer Steel. Their expertise helped secure this grant and bring this project to fruition.

Another big thanks goes to the Newton Conservators and the Solomon Foundation for pledging \$10,000 each toward the design and engineering costs, and to Ted Chapman of the Riverside Greenway Working Group who helped write the grant application, and Ward 4 Councilors Chris Markiewicz, Lenny Gentile and Josh Krintzman.

Want to go for a walk along the Marty Sender Greenway? Park along the Commonwealth Avenue carriageway near Lyons Field (across from 2202 Comm Ave) and you will see an entrance to the Blue Heron Trail at the corner of Comm Ave and Islington Road. Another option is to park in the parking lot of the Auburndale Cove at 104 W Pine Street (Auburndale). Walk over to the riverbank and you will see the trail.

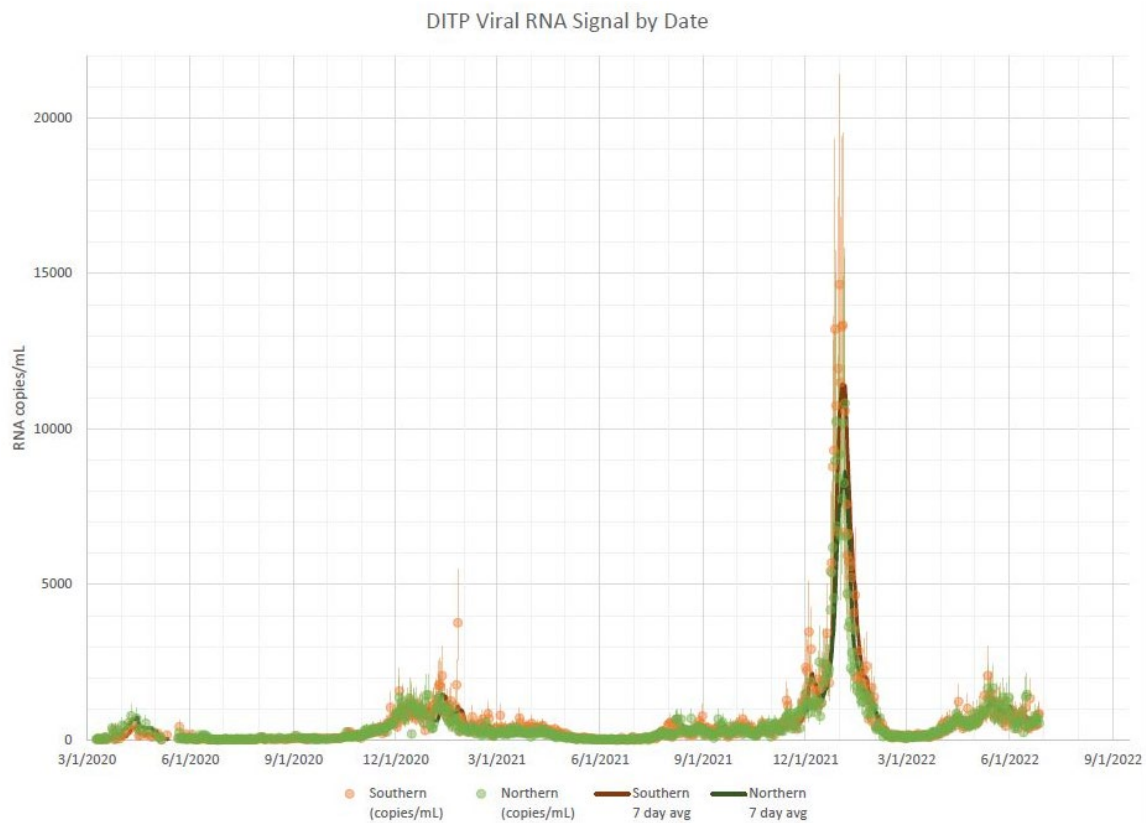
COVID-19 Case Data

Newton had 280 new confirmed cases of COVID-19 over the past 13 days since we last reported data through June 15. Over the 7 days prior to that, we had 198 new cases. (A reminder that these numbers are directionally correct, but don't reflect most of the new cases found through home rapid antigen tests.)

Newton-Wellesley Hospital is caring for a total of 12 patients who are hospitalized with COVID-19, one of whom is in the ICU, as of Tuesday, June 28.

Newton's incidence rate over the two-week State tracking period from June 12 to 25 which measures the number of cases per 100,000 is now 23.4, down slightly from 24.8 two weeks ago. Our positivity rate is now 6.4% of the 5,429 tests reported compared to 6.3% of 5,611 tests reported two weeks ago.

The latest MWRA wastewater data from Tuesday, June 28 shows a slight increase in the amount of COVID-19 detected. Click [here](#) to see the data.



We lost no one in Newton over the past two weeks who died with COVID-19, news that's always a relief to report.

I took a look at national COVID data since the start of the pandemic, and the statistics are staggering:

- 86.9 million confirmed cases of COVID-19
- 915.8 million tests reported
- 4.9 million hospital admissions
- 1,011,013 deaths
- 593.7 million vaccine doses administered

New subvariants of Omicron, BA.4 and BA.5, have spread in Massachusetts and could continue to pose challenges in the weeks and months ahead. Medical experts are saying that while having had COVID or being vaccinated and boosted may not prevent us from getting these incredibly contagious variants, most people who have immunity from getting the vaccine or having had COVID-19 have substantial protection from severe illness.



At Tuesday's Newton Farmers' Market at the Joyberry Farms booth, City Council Vice President Rick Lipof and I enjoyed the gorgeous sunshine, fresh produce and so much more at the first market of the season. (Check out those mushrooms!)

The Farmers' Market runs from 1:30 to 6 p.m. on Tuesdays at Cold Spring

Park and 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on Saturdays at Newton North High School.

Call Endless Energy

Good news: The City of Newton has entered into an agreement with Endless Energy, a home performance contractor.

The City's sustainability team chose Endless Energy from several companies that responded to a request for proposals to serve as our fully vetted Home Performance Contractor to work with City residents and provide no-cost Mass Save energy assessments, as well as heavily discounted insulation and air sealing work.

Endless Energy will also provide guidance to residents on the City's other "4 Our Future" programs: air source heat pumps, solar power, and electric vehicles.

The partnership is part of our "4 Our Future" campaign. The City is focusing on four key actions that make an enormous impact on the climate, save money, and make homes more comfortable. Learn more on our [website](#).

Sign up for an assessment today [here](#).

*SafeWise, a home security company, recently ranked **Newton as 2nd safest city in America to raise a family**. Newton had the third lowest property crime rate (5.51 per 100,000 residents) among the cities Safewise analyzed, and our violent crime rate was fourth lowest. Somerville, at number 40, was the only other city in Massachusetts in the top 50. Which city was #1? Johns Creek, Georgia, a northeast suburb of Atlanta. Thank you NPD for helping us be safe.*



New Economic Development Director

I'm pleased to announce John Sisson is the City of Newton's new Economic Development Director.



John comes to Newton after serving as the Community Development Director and the Economic Development Director for the Town of Dedham since 2015 and as the Greater Boston Regional Director for the Massachusetts Office of Business Development and the Operations Director for the Massachusetts Smart Growth Alliance prior to that.

He will be joining City's Planning Department and working in concert with the City's Economic Development Commission to support our businesses and non-profits across the city, including serving as a liaison to Newton's small business community.

John will have a short commute as he is a Newton resident. He is succeeding Devra Bailin who retired in May. Welcome John!

Dogs: Leashed and Unleashed

Our four-legged friends love to get outside to run and we're proud to be a dog-friendly community. Newton has seven off-leash dog parks where dogs are allowed to run free and our Conservation areas are places where dogs are always welcome but only on leash.

(With one of our dogs, Callie)

Newton's Conservation areas all have green trailhead signs. They are a fabulous resource. Check them out and find maps and information [here](#). We protect our Conservation land to preserve them as healthy natural areas and promote biodiversity. Unfortunately, off-leash dogs can harm natural ecosystems and wildlife by trampling habitat, scaring wildlife, and muddying clear water. Thus, only leashed dogs are welcome on our conservation parcels.

Find the complete list of our off-leash dog areas and more [here](#). To apply for an off-leash permit, visit the City Clerk's office at City Hall or apply online [here](#).

Also, please remember to clean up after your dog, whether leashed in a Conservation area, walking in a neighborhood, or running in an off-leash park.



The Franklin Elementary School recently had a charity fun run to raise money for the Refugee & Immigrant Assistance Center (RIAC) Boston. Principal Mark Chitty promised the students he'd take a pie in the face if they raised \$2,000. They raised \$10,001.27, and Principal Chitty made good on his promise. Fourth grader Sylvie Adams is the lucky student who got to throw the pie!



Finding Information on Newton City Government

Interested in what's happening?

[Meetings](#)

You can find upcoming meeting information on the [electronic posting board](#). It includes almost all the City government meetings.

City Council

Want to find information about what the City Council or one of its standing committees is discussing or voting on? Click on the [City Council icon](#) on the opening page at newtonma.gov, and then click on [Friday Packet](#). The Friday packet is updated weekly late in the day on Friday and details what's currently before the Council and includes communications, committee agendas and reports and memos to and from the City Council. Click on the [Friday Packet Archives](#) for packets dating back to 2016.

Within the City Council website, click on [Standing Committees](#) on the City Council page, and find out more about specific issues before the City Council's [Finance](#), [Land Use](#), [Programs & Services](#), [Public Facilities](#), [Public Safety & Transportation](#) and [Zoning & Planning](#) committees.

You can also sign up for the City Council newsletter [here](#).

Boards and Commissions

Interested in finding out about one of the City's approximately 60 [Boards and Commissions](#)? There's information available on each, along with information about vacancies if you're interested in getting involved.

City Departments

Many of our City Departments also provide an incredible amount on information on their [webpages](#). For example, the [Assessor's Database](#) provides information on every property in Newton. The Planning Department provides information out about high interest projects [here](#).

Newsletters

Want even more information? Sign up for a weekly or monthly newsletter:

[Arts & Culture](#)

[Health & Human Services](#)

[Sustainable Materials Management's Green Cart Chronicles](#)

[Newton Free Library](#)

Planning Department's [Friday Report](#) and [Newsletter](#)

[Senior Services and Senior Center](#)

[Athletes Unlimited \(Newton Therapeutic Recreation\)](#)

Stay tuned for a newsletter from our [Climate and Sustainability](#) team coming soon.

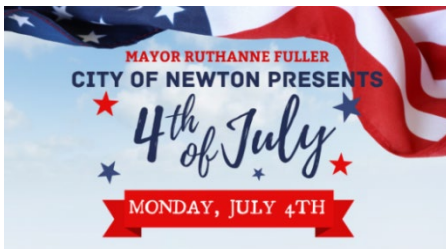
Congratulations Jayne

Newton Director of Senior Services Jayne Colino's peers recognized her extraordinary leadership as she received the David P. Stevens Lifetime Achievement Award from the Massachusetts Councils on Aging and Senior Center Directors.

We always knew Jayne is extraordinary; now everyone knows.

Warmly,

Ruthanne



P.S. The **July 4th fireworks** start at 9 p.m. at Albemarle Field/Halloran Field, and there's a whole day of activities to enjoy before the grand finale. Join us at *Kids Morning* at 10:00 a.m. to noon at the Newton Centre playground "bowl" off Tyler Terrace, and then head over to Albemarle Field at 250 Albemarle Road where

carnival rides and an open-air market start at 1:00 p.m. [East Coast Soul](#) will begin playing at 6:30 p.m. until the fireworks begin.

P.P.S. Free **Summer concerts** are back at the Newton Centre playground “bowl” starting with the [The DayBreakers](#) on Sunday, July 10 from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. Bring a blanket or lawn chair to the open space below the hut off Tyler Terrace, sit back and enjoy. Consider picking up some take-out from one of our terrific Newton restaurants to eat at the show. Find the summer concert line up for 6 Sundays in a row [here](#).



P.P.P.S. Wondering about other arts and culture happenings this summer? Click [here](#) for the **Newton Arts Calendar** and find out what's happening around the City.

P.P.P.P.S. We are aware of issues with the Newton Police Department website. We are working on it. In the meantime, if you need a copy of a police or accident report, please email PoliceRecords@newtonma.gov or call 617-796-2105. Thanks for understanding.
(Photo: NPD Community Resource Officer Leo. (I loved the Newton Fire Department Response, "That's ruff."))

