

Thursday, Sept. 29, 2022

## Mayor's Update



### State Election

Voters in Newton and across Massachusetts will be selecting our next governor and lieutenant governor, attorney general, secretary of state, state treasurer and auditor, members of the Governor's Council, state senators and representatives, and members of Congress as well as voting on four ballot questions.

Voting begins as early as next week.

Voters can vote early by mail, vote early in person, or vote on election day on Tuesday, Nov. 8.

### Voting by Mail

Applications for mail-in ballots were sent out by Sec. of State Bill Galvin's office earlier this month and arrived last week to voters who did not respond or checked off "general election" when the applications were sent in July prior to the September primary. Didn't get your application for a mail-in ballot? You can download one [here](#).

To vote early by mail, first, fill out the application and drop it off at one of the two secure ballot drop boxes outside the entrance to Newton City Hall, *or* mail it to the Newton City Clerk's Office, City Hall, 1000 Commonwealth Ave., 02459, *or* fax it to 617-796-1214, *or* scan the application and e-mail it to [elections@newtonma.gov](mailto:elections@newtonma.gov) using the subject line: 2022 Vote by Mail Ballot Application.

Applications for mail-in ballots *must* have a signature that is visible and signed "in substantially the same manner as a handwritten signature." (Applications with typed signatures will not be accepted.)

The City Clerk's office will be processing the applications and will mail out ballots for the State Election as early as next week.

The deadline to apply for a ballot to vote early in the Nov. 8 State Election is Tuesday, Nov. 1 at 5:00 p.m.

See more information about early voting by mail [here](#).

### Voting Early In Person

Early in-person voting begins about two weeks before the traditional election day on Saturday, Oct. 22 and continues every day through Friday, Nov. 4 at Newton City Hall. Polls are open for early in person voting on Saturdays from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., on Sundays from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and on weekdays Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

### Voting In Person on Election Day

Polls on election day, Tuesday, Nov. 8, are open across the City from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Find your polling location [here](#).

### Not Registered?

The registration deadline to vote in the Nov. 8 election is Saturday, Oct. 29 at 5:00 p.m.

### Four Ballot Questions

The following information is directly from Secretary of State Bill Galvin's website:

#### **Question 1: Additional Tax on Income Over One Million**

- A YES vote would amend the state Constitution to impose an additional 4% tax on that portion of incomes over one million dollars to be used, subject to appropriation by the state Legislature, on education and transportation.
- A NO vote would make no change in the state Constitution relative to income tax.
- Read more [here](#).

#### **Question 2: Regulation of Dental Insurance**

- A YES vote would regulate dental insurance rates, including by requiring companies to spend at least 83% of premiums on member dental expenses and quality improvements instead of administrative expenses, and by making other changes to dental insurance regulations.
- A NO vote would make no change in the law relative to the regulations that apply to dental insurance companies.
- Read more [here](#)

#### **Question 3: Expanded Availability of Licenses for the Sale of Alcoholic Beverages**

- A YES vote would increase the number of licenses a retailer could have for the sale of alcoholic beverages to be consumed off premises, limit the number of "all-alcoholic beverages" licenses that a retailer could acquire, restrict use of self-checkout, and require retailers to accept customers' out-of-state identification.

- A NO vote would make no change in the laws governing the retail sale of alcoholic beverages.
- Read more [here](#).

#### **Question 4: Eligibility for Driver's Licenses**

- A YES vote would keep in place the law, which would allow Massachusetts residents who cannot provide proof of lawful presence in the United States to obtain a driver's license or permit if they meet the other requirements for doing so.
- A NO vote would repeal this law.
- Read more [here](#).

Find a sample ballot [here](#).

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#### **COVID-19 Case Data**

We had 122 confirmed new cases of COVID-19 in Newton over the past 10 days between Sept. 18 and 28, and the latest MWRA wastewater data, a reliable predictor of COVID trends through the pandemic, shows the numbers increasing this past week. Find more information from the MWRA [here](#).

MWRA Wastewater Tracking from - July 31 to Sept. 25

*(Chart from the Boston Globe)*

This week we lost another Newtonian who died with COVID-19. Again, we pause; we reflect; we look to the well informed for advice and guidance; we mourn. We have now lost 208 members of our community.

The latest incidence rate in Newton over the State's two week tracking period from Sept. 11 through Sept. 24 is 14.2 cases per 100,000 population (up from 11.3 two weeks ago), and our positivity rate is currently 5.4% of 3,575 tests (slightly increased from 5.1% of 3,066 tests).

As colder weather arrives and more indoor activities are scheduled, let's follow the advice and stay home and get tested if we're having symptoms; wear a mask if exposed to COVID-19; get vaccinated and boosted.

#### **COVID-19 Booster Clinic**

The response to the six COVID-19 booster clinics was robust, so the Newton Health and Human Services Department and the Holtzman Medical Group added

more clinics in October to offer updated Pfizer and Moderna vaccines for ages 12 and up.

Appointments are filling up quickly, but there are a few slots left on Monday, Oct. 17 and Thursday, Oct. 20. Clinics are by appointment only. They are held in the War Memorial Auditorium on the second floor of City Hall, 1000 Commonwealth Avenue. Find an appointment and register [here](#).

Prefer an appointment elsewhere? Check [vaxfinder.ma.gov](http://vaxfinder.ma.gov) for locations and to make an appointment. Massachusetts also offers in-home vaccinations. Find more information [here](#).

### Flu Clinics

Newton's Health and Human Services staff are hosting two (2) community flu clinics at City Hall (1000 Commonwealth Avenue on the second floor; follow the signs to the War Memorial Auditorium). Appointments are preferred, but we welcome walk-ins. Insurance information is requested, but not required.

#### Senior Flu Clinic

This clinic is intended for seniors but is open to anyone over 18.  
Regular and high-dose vaccines will be available.  
Friday, Oct. 7, 10:00 a.m. to noon. [Register here](#).

#### Community Flu Clinic

This clinic is open to anyone over 6 months.  
Regular and high-dose vaccines will be available.  
Tuesday, Oct 18, 4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. [Register here](#).

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Join us to celebrate Italian American Heritage in the City of Newton on Monday, Oct. 3. We'll raise the Italian flag and enjoy a treat from Uncle Joey's Cannoli (thanks to the Nonantum Neighborhood Association). Stop by at 5:30 p.m. at the ceremonial flagpole on the Homer Street side of City Hall, 1000 Commonwealth Ave.

*(Photo: Raising the Italian flag at City Hall's ceremonial flagpole at last year's Italian American Heritage celebration).*

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### **40B Update**

Last month we provided an update on the City's 40B "Safe Harbor" status. (Read the detailed memo [here](#)). This state law allows developers who include a particular amount of affordable housing in their proposal to bypass certain local zoning requirements and apply for "comprehensive permits" (known as 40B

projects) through the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) until the municipality has met a certain threshold for affordable housing. (In other words, the developers choose to bypass the City Council's special permit process and instead apply for a 40B comprehensive permit with Newton's Zoning Board of Appeals.)

Newton has not yet reached that safe harbor status. The recent calculation, however, showed we have made progress and are getting close.

Here's information on one that is accepting applications from seniors, two that have recently filed and another two under construction, and one more in the pre-application process.

### Haywood House Senior Housing

Great News: The Newton Housing Authority is now accepting applications from seniors for a lottery for its newly constructed Haywood House apartments located on John F. Kennedy Circle in Nonantum.

These newly constructed apartments are named in honor of the Reverend Howard Haywood, who was a beloved member of the Newton community and the Myrtle Baptist Church in West Newton, and a dedicated advocate for affordable housing.

Haywood House provides 55 units of affordable housing for seniors. The project offers deep and wide-ranging affordability with units ranging from 30% (a maximum income of \$29,450 for one person, \$33,650 for two) to 99% (maximum income of \$98,200 for one person, \$112,200 for two) of the area median income (AMI).

The Newton Housing Authority will be hosting a virtual information session on Tuesday, Oct. 4 at 5:30 p.m. Find Zoom meeting information [here](#).

Request an application by email at [HaywoodHouse@MaloneyProperties.com](mailto:HaywoodHouse@MaloneyProperties.com), by telephone at 617-209-5220, Relay 711, or at [HaywoodHouseApts.com](http://HaywoodHouseApts.com).

Completed applications are due on or before Tuesday, October 25. The lottery drawing will be held on Nov. 1.

Learn more at [HaywoodHouseApts.com](http://HaywoodHouseApts.com).

By the way, did you know that the Newton Housing Authority (NHA) is a separate entity from the City of Newton? Created in 1959, the NHA is the largest provider of affordable housing in Newton. The NHA offers housing assistance to over 1,000 low-income residents through the administration of federal and state-sponsored subsidized housing programs and the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program. The NHA also owns and operates a portfolio of 93 studio, one, two, and three-bedroom units throughout Newton. For questions about the availability of units, eligibility requirements, and how to apply for rental housing,

please contact the Newton Housing Authority office at 617-552-5501 or for more information click [here](#).

### Two Recent Applications

#### Northland Charlemont

Northland Investment Company has submitted a comprehensive permit application for a new development located on the 7-acre site of the former HC Starck property behind Needham Street between Charlemont and Christina Streets. (This is essentially across Needham Street from the Northland project that is underway.) The ZBA is expected to open a public hearing in October for the project with neighbors notified in advance. Northland is proposing to build a mixed-use building with various heights (ranging from three to nine stories) with 410 residential units and about 10,000 square feet of commercial space. Of the 410 apartments, 25% of them or 103 units will be reserved as affordable for households earning up to 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI). The proposal also includes public open space along the eastern side of the site, connecting Charlemont Street to the north and Christina Street to the south. The full application can be found [here](#).

#### West Newton Armory

The City purchased the former Armory building at 1135-1137 Washington Street (just outside of West Newton Square and across Armory Street from Trader Joes) in West Newton for \$1 from the Commonwealth for the sole purpose of transforming the building into 100% affordable housing.

The City Council approved the reuse of the site for affordable housing. After a request for proposals, the teams from Metro West Collaborative Development and Civico Development were chosen to turn the site into 43 units of affordable housing. An application for a comprehensive permit has been filed with the ZBA, with a public hearing anticipated in October.

The proposal is to preserve the existing headhouse (the “castle” portion of the building along Washington Street) and renovate it to include a community room and office space for Metro West. The rear of the building would be replaced with a four-story residential building. As the City purchased the building for just \$1, we have a unique opportunity to provide more deeply affordable housing. All 43 units will be affordable with 28 units available to households earning up to 60% AMI and 15 units available to households earning up to 30% AMI. The full application is available [here](#).

### Two 40B Projects Under Construction

Two projects approved in recent years under 40B are currently under construction, one in Nonantum and the other in West Newton. As these projects get closer to finishing construction, lotteries will be held for the affordable units.



## Residences on the Charles

Criterion Development is constructing a 204 unit residential building at 2-4 Los Angeles Street (formerly 15 Riverdale Avenue) in Nonantum, located north of California Street and next to the Charles River. (It's not far from the McDonald's on California Street and the apartments are adjacent to Forte Park.) Approved by the ZBA in July 2020, the two buildings (ranging from four to five stories) are under construction. The site plan includes public open space and improved access to the Charles River. Of the 204 units, 25% or 51 units will be reserved as affordable units. Most of these units will be affordable to households earning up to 80% of the area median income (AMI) and two units will be reserved at lower income thresholds – one will be set at 65% AMI and one at 50% AMI.

## Dunstan East

Mark Development has also started construction on Dunstan East, located on 3.5 acres along Washington Street between Dunstan Street and the Armory in West Newton. The ZBA first approved the project in July 2020, approved an amendment in September 2021, and then slightly reduced in size the final project in February 2022. Demolition and site preparation has begun and the building permit for the construction of the three proposed buildings has not yet been issued. The three buildings will range in size from three to six stories and will contain a total of 292 residential units. Of those, 73 (25%) will be reserved as affordable with 63 of these affordable to households earning up to 80% AMI and 10 affordable to households earning up to 50% AMI. The project includes about 8,000 square feet of retail space along Washington Street and a courtyard open to the public. The developer will also make improvements to Cheesecake Brook which runs along the rear of the site.

## A New 40B Pre-Application on Route 9

In addition to the four approved and pending comprehensive permit applications above, the City has received notice that the Toll Brothers are proposing to build an apartment building at 528 Boylston Street. Toll Brothers have a six-acre site on the south side of Route 9 between Olde Field Road and Dudley Road (and behind Hagen Road). The site currently contains vacant land, a landscaping laydown area (Sam White & Sons), and two two-family homes.

The proposal is for a six-story building with 244 units, 61 of which (25%) would be affordable at 80% AMI. Toll Brothers have taken the first step in the 40B process by submitting an application for project eligibility with MassHousing. Approval of project eligibility by MassHousing is required prior to applying for a Comprehensive Permit with the ZBA. The City has until Oct. 12 to provide comments to MassHousing and the developer has scheduled a community meeting (virtual) for Thursday, Oct. 13 at 7:00 p.m. Register for the zoom webinar at [https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_ftxUZU-zSeGzCDVnj0R59g](https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_ftxUZU-zSeGzCDVnj0R59g). If the application for project eligibility is approved by MassHousing, the developer

could then submit a Comprehensive Permit application to Newton and the ZBA would hold public hearings. Find the project eligibility application [here](#).

### Wellesley 40B About to Open

Just over the Newton border on Route 9 at the intersection of I-95 in Wellesley, there's a 40B development that is close to being fully constructed. This project, called The Nines, in Wellesley includes 350 studio, one, two and three bedroom apartments, 88 of which are affordable. The affordable units are now leasing. Find more information [here](#).

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Join us at Newton's second official Indigenous Peoples Day Ceremonial Celebration with music, dance, poetry, food and the visual arts of Native artists from across the northeast on Monday, Oct. 10 from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at Albemarle Park (250 Albemarle Road, Newtonville).

*(Photo from last year's Indigenous Peoples Day Ceremonial Celebration.)*

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### **Noisy (and Necessary) Work Begins at Auburndale Station**

There's good news and some noisy news as the MBTA moves forward with plans to rebuild all three Newton commuter rail stations in Auburndale, West Newton and Newtonville to improve frequency, accessibility and reliability of train service in Newton and beyond.

First, we have good news. The MBTA is continuing to advance the design from 30% to 75% complete to replace the current inaccessible and significantly flawed stations and platforms that limit the number and frequency of trains and are completely inaccessible.

Second, we have "noisy" news. To further the designs, the MBTA has to do borings (i.e., noisy drilling) to engineer the foundation for the stations and the new elevators. There's no way to sugarcoat it; drilling is noisy.

The drilling work has already been completed at the station in Newtonville and is currently being completed at West Newton Station. These two stations are far enough away from most homes that the noise wasn't much of a problem.

But, homes are in closer proximity to the Auburndale Station. The drilling will occur in the middle of the night (when the trains aren't running) on fifteen nights (Mondays through Thursdays) between Monday, Oct. 3 and Nov. 3 from approximately midnight to 5:00 a.m. The work is weather dependent so MBTA officials warn it could change without prior notice. (No work will be scheduled on Halloween which falls on a Monday this year.)



MBTA officials describe the drilling noise as having a specific rhythm as the steel rods are hammered into the ground to take soil measurements. The work requires temporary lighting as well.

Questions? Email the MBTA at [NewtonCR@mbta.com](mailto:NewtonCR@mbta.com). Find more information about the station improvements at [mbta.com/NewtonCR](http://mbta.com/NewtonCR).

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### Treats With No Tricks

I know what I'll be doing to celebrate National Bakery Day – I'll be “crawling” from bakery to bakery throughout our villages, visiting some of the 15 new and old favorites in Newton.

The official [Newton Bakery Crawl](#), organized by ALL Over Newton (thank you Lauren Berman!), is a “do it yourself” tour of bakeries on both Friday, Sept. 30 and Saturday, Oct. 1.

Can't make it on one of those days? I say any day is a good day to visit a Newton bakery.

Warmly,

Ruthanne

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P.S. We know it's fall when it's time to sign up for **Paddy's Road Race** hosted by the O'Hara family and Paddy's Public House to support Newton Athletes Unlimited. The 21<sup>st</sup> running of Paddy's Shillelagh Shuffle will be in person this year on Sunday, Oct. 16. Adults and kids of all abilities are welcome. Find more info and register at [paddysroadrace.com](http://paddysroadrace.com). See you in West Newton!

P.P.S. Another fall tradition in Newton transports us back to the 19<sup>th</sup> Century with apple cider pressing, weaving and candle dipping at **Historic Newton's Hayfest**, this Sunday, Oct. 2 from noon to 4:00 p.m. Events take place in the backyard at the Jackson Homestead, 527 Washington Street, rain or shine.

P.P.P.S. **Upper Falls Village Day** is this Sunday, Oct. 2 with live music, magic, food and fun. See you at the Upper Falls Greenway (1225 Chestnut Street) between 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.

*(Photo: With Jerry Reilly, the “Mayor” of Upper Falls, at the Upper Falls Greenway.)*

P.P.P.P.S. Congratulations to the Newton residents who are **2023 National Merit Semifinalists**, 19 of whom attend Newton North or Newton South. Good luck to all of you as you move toward the finals. See the list [here](#).

P.P.P.P.S. I wish all those who observe **Yom Kippur** an easy fast beginning on Tuesday, Oct. 4.



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