

Thursday, Nov. 17, 2022

## Mayor's Update

### March 14, 2023: Vote on Override Proposal

Last Thursday, the City Council in a "Committee of the Whole" voted unanimously to put three Override questions on a ballot for Newtonians to decide on Tuesday, March 14, 2023.

The full City Council will meet this Monday, November 21 for a final vote.

In the weeks ahead, the City Council will also make decisions on early voting by mail and early in-person voting.



Residents will vote on three questions:

- Question 1: An operating override to fund Newton Public School student needs, street and sidewalk paving and safety improvements, tree planting and maintenance, park and recreational facility improvements and maintenance, improvements to Horace Mann Elementary, sustainability and climate resiliency, and Senior Services programming and operations.
- Question 2: A debt exclusion override to renovate or replace Countryside Elementary School.
- Question 3: A debt exclusion override to renovate or replace Franklin Elementary School.

The Council's "Committee of the Whole" also unanimously moved forward my proposal to expand our tax assistance/deferral programs for older residents, veterans and surviving spouses or minor children, and people who are disabled, as well as the City's Water and Sewer Discount program. I know how important it is to provide further relief to vulnerable residents. Find more information about these programs [here](#).

The City Council's votes came after an extensive presentation on the City's finances by our Chief Financial Officer Maureen Lemieux, who was joined by our Chief Operating Officer Jonathan Yeo, Interim School Superintendent Kathy Smith, and Assistant School Superintendent Liam Hurley. Watch the full meeting [here](#), and view the powerpoint presentation [here](#).

CFO Lemieux's presentation focused on our revenues, expenses & capital investments, the City's general operating budget, our debt capacity, the one-time Federal pandemic funding, and other revenue sources.

For more information on the Override, please visit the City website at [newtonma.gov/override](https://newtonma.gov/override).

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*The City of Newton is hiring. We're looking for multiple skilled mechanics to join our Department of Public Work's Fleet division team. Visit [newtonma.gov/jobs](https://newtonma.gov/jobs) for more information on this position, as well as a variety of other opportunities to work for the City of Newton, including as an emergency dispatcher, a crossing guard, or a police officer/police transfer.*

*(Click the flyer to see a larger version).*

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## **Winter Overnight Parking Ban**

The citywide Overnight Parking Ban will again go into effect this winter the week after next on Thursday, Dec. 1. It extends through Friday, March 31, 2022. During these four months, parking on City streets is prohibited from 2:00 a.m. to 6:00 a.m.

Last winter, I and the City Council heard from those of you who wrote in to share how challenging the winter overnight parking ban can be.

When the Commonwealth was under the COVID-19 State of Emergency declared by Governor Baker, I was able to lift the ban to ease the burden on college students and family members home during the pandemic. During that winter, we found that we were still able to get cars off the streets during heavy snowstorms by declaring a snow emergency, so that our plows could clear our roadways curb to curb.

The COVID-19 State of Emergency ended in June 2021, so my ability as Mayor to lift the ban wasn't an option last winter or now. Any permanent changes to the parking ban need to be decided the City Council. I know the City Council continues to consider what changes may be appropriate. Council President Susan Albright and Councilor Andrea Kelley recently put forward a docket item for the full Council to discuss modifying the Overnight Parking Ban to help alleviate the burden on residents without a place to park their car during the winter.

Are you looking for a place to park your vehicles from 7:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. from Dec. 1 through March 31? Free Municipal Parking Lot stickers are available to residents from the Newton Police Department. You need a valid driver's license and vehicle registration. (Proof of residency is also required if your car is not registered in Newton.) Parking permits are given out on a first-come first-serve basis. Get more information [here](#), and the application for a Municipal Lot Parking sticker is [here](#).

Where are our municipal parking lots? Lexington/Melrose Streets (same lot - two entrances); Cherry/Elm Streets (same lot - two entrances); Chapel Street; Adams

Street; Austin Street; Cypress Street; Langley Road; Pearl Street; Richardson Street; Pelham Street; Hartford Street; and Chestnut Street (angled spots at end of Chestnut St in Pettee Square). Click [here](#) for map locations of municipal parking lots.

Please know that if we have to declare a Snow Emergency, the municipal parking lots become unavailable (since we need to plow them). For most nights in the winter, though, they are an option.

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## Update on Leaves/Yard Waste

### Collection

With the tremendously high volumes of leaves and yard waste set out at the curb at this time of year, our DPW yard waste collection team is not always able to complete our regular curbside collection routes in one day.

Sometimes we are picking up your leaves a day late. Please leave the leaves out and we'll be swinging by (and our apology for the inconvenience). If it is *two* days past your regular collection day and yard waste is still at the curb, please ping us and report a missed yard waste pickup either by calling 311 or on our online reporting system [here](#).

Alternatively, through Thursday, December 9, residents can drop off yard waste at our Resource Recovery Center at 115 Rumford Avenue. Residents can drop-off yard waste bags or empty their own barrels during regular hours (Monday-Friday 7 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. and Saturdays 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.). Please know that only yard waste that meets the [guidelines](#) will be accepted and we cannot accept any yard waste from contractors.

Looking ahead, we will be picking up Christmas trees (undecorated only!!) during the first two weeks in January.

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## State Economic Development Bill Includes Support for Projects in Newton

After many months of back-and-forth between the Baker Administration and the state legislature, the Economic Development Bill that was finally approved included funding for important Newton projects. Thanks go to Senator Cindy Creem, Representative Kay Khan and Representative Ruth Balsler for sponsoring amendments totaling \$2,095,000 to make Newton a more sustainable, fun, and pedestrian & bike friendly City.

We're grateful for:

- \$150,000 towards our Newton Highlands Village Enhancement [Project](#)
- \$150,000 for the purchase of additional bike share stations
- \$70,000 for the City of Newton to expand our composting program and make some composting starter kits available to residents free of charge

- \$75,000 towards the design and construction of our new [Spears Park community garden](#)
- \$400,000 towards the replacement of our [Gath Memorial Pool](#) at Albemarle
- \$1,250,000 to install a [bridge and shared-use path](#) across the Charles River at Christina Street (just off of Needham Street) to the conservation area in Needham
- \$75,000 for the Commonwealth's Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) to develop a landscape management plan for the Charles River conservation area along Quinobequin Road

A few months ago, we let everyone know that Representative John Lawn successfully sponsored an amendment to the FY2023 state budget for \$200,000 to improve Coletti-Magni Park in Nonantum and Senator Creem sponsored a \$75,000 amendment to support our NewMo transportation program.

Huge thanks to our state delegation for championing projects for Newton at the State House.

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### **Holiday Mini Golf at City Hall**

City Hall is being transformed into an 18-hole mini golf course complete with greens and holes winding through the secret staircase in the Mayor's Office, City Council Chambers, and War Memorial. Play mini golf on Saturday, Dec. 3 from 10:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. and Sunday, Dec. 4 from 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

A **new and unwrapped gift(s)** is your entry to play a round of mini golf. Gifts should be for children ages newborn to 10 and may include age-appropriate toys, games, electronics, and sporting goods. (We expect that Newton toy stores will have toys for sale on site if you aren't able to get one ahead of time in the holiday rush).

This event benefits the Holiday Gift Drive sponsored by The Village Bank in collaboration with the City of Newton Department of Health and Human Services and the Newton Rotary.

Families, friends and neighbors of all ages and abilities are encouraged to play. Groups of up to ten can sign up at one time. Registration is encouraged. Registration and additional information can be found [here](#) (the sign up link will be available soon, hopefully tomorrow).

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### **Preschoolers and Developmental Screenings**

Staff from the Newton Public Schools conduct preschool screenings for children ages 3 to 5 years old to help identify children who may be in need of special education support. The screening is designed to review a child's development and assist in identifying children who should be referred for further evaluation to determine their eligibility special education services.

This is a free and optional service for Newton residents. If you have questions or concerns about your child's development and would like to have your child screened, please contact Trish Szoke at the Newton Early Childhood Program (NECP) at 617-559-6050 to schedule an appointment.

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## **Draft Village Center Zoning Informational Meetings**

Newton's Planning Department is hosting information and input sessions on the first draft of proposed zoning for 12 individual village centers. (Watch the presentation to the City Council's Zoning and Planning Committee [here](#).)

Join in and register to attend. All the sessions are from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

- [Upper Falls + Waban \(Tuesday, Nov. 29\)](#)
- [Four Corners + Newton Highlands \(Wednesday, Nov. 30\)](#)
- [Newton Centre + Thompsonville \(Thursday, Dec. 1\)](#)
- [Lower Falls + Auburndale \(Tuesday, Dec. 6\)](#)
- [West Newton \(Wednesday, Dec. 7\)](#)
- [Newtonville \(Thursday, Dec. 8\)](#)
- [Nonantum + Newton Corner \(Wednesday, Dec. 14\)](#)

You can stop by City Hall to check out a physical exhibit of the proposed village center zoning for each of the twelve village centers, now up on the first floor of City Hall.

We welcome comments on the proposed zoning; click [here](#). If you have questions, email us at [zoningredesign@newtonma.gov](mailto:zoningredesign@newtonma.gov).

Results from the recently concluded "feedback tool" for the proposed village center zoning can be found [here](#). We will provide your input (gathered previously from the "feedback tool") and these public sessions to the City Council and use it to shape the next iteration of the proposed village center zoning maps.

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## **Giving Thanks**

In this season of giving thanks, I have much to be grateful for – a loving family and good health, an exceptional community to live in, caring and engaged Newtonians surrounding me, and passionate city & school employees dedicated to service with whom to work.

Next Tuesday, my son David, his wife Roey, and our two grandsons will be flying in from Chicago to join the rest of the family. I can't wait.

With gratitude and hope for "peace, harmony, tranquility and union," part of President Abraham Lincoln's declaration when he first proclaimed Thanksgiving a national holiday,

Ruthanne

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P.S. In a pickle as to where to play **Pickleball**? Our Parks, Recreation and Culture Department has indoor opportunities at the Lower Falls Community Center, 545 Grove Street. Find information and sign up [here](#).

P.P.S. Pick up **ingredients for your Thanksgiving feast** at the Allen Center, 35 Webster Street, West Newton on Tuesday, November 22 from 12 – 4 p.m. Ten specialty vendors and a Massachusetts farm will offer produce, pop-in-the-oven hors d'oeuvres, desserts, locally roasted coffee, honey, jams, hostess gifts, and empanada dinners for the busy nights before Thanksgiving. A mobile knife sharpener will be on site (\$10/knife), so everything can be in tip-top shape for holiday carving. Consider ordering in advance at [www.allovernewton.com/thanksgiving](http://www.allovernewton.com/thanksgiving). The site also lists small businesses throughout Newton offering specials to “gather, gobble, and gulp” your way through the holiday.

P.P.P.S. Congratulations to Tessa K.J. Haining from Newton, one of 32 winners of the **Rhodes Scholarship** for 2023. A senior at Harvard University, Haining is currently completing dual majors in chemistry and comparative literature. She is also a varsity rower, a violinist, and co-director of Harvard’s Eating Concerns Hotline and Outreach service. At Oxford, Haining plans to complete a Master of Philosophy degree in History of Science, Medicine and Technology.

P.P.P.P.S Newton Neighbors is sponsoring a **Thanksgiving Gift Card Drive** which runs until this Saturday, Nov. 19, so consider donating soon. To support local families struggling with food insecurity, Newton Neighbors will be providing families with \$75 gift cards to local grocery stores. Donate [here](#).

P.P.P.P.P.S. **New Philharmonia Orchestra**, Newton’s symphony, will open its 28th season on Sunday, November 20 at 3 p.m. at the Newton North High School Auditorium. The program, “Latin & Slavic Colors,” features works based on folk music of the region including composers from Latin America as well as Dvorak. For info and tickets go to [www.newphil.org/tickets](http://www.newphil.org/tickets). (Tickets will also be available at the door.)



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