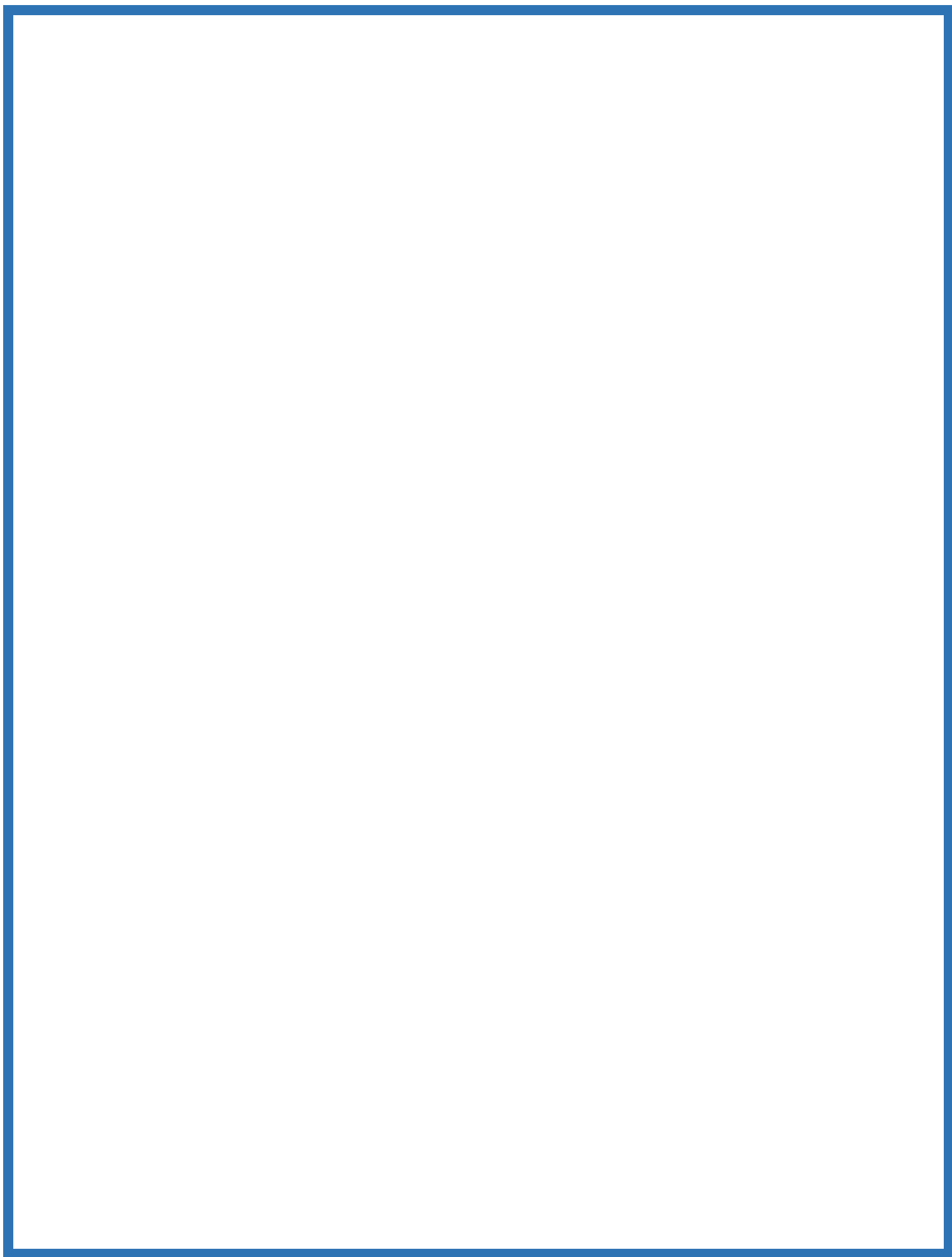


# Newton Upper Falls Area Council 2022 Annual Report





## NEWTON UPPER FALLS AREA COUNCIL



January 29, 2023

City Council  
Newton City Hall  
1000 Commonwealth Ave  
Newton MA 02459

Dear Honorable Members of the City Council:

Pursuant to Section 9-10 of the City Charter, the Newton Upper Falls Area Council is pleased to provide you with this Annual Report of its activities for the calendar year 2022.

Sincerely,



Anil Adyanthaya  
President

## **About the Newton Upper Falls Area Council**

2012 was the inaugural year of the Newton Upper Falls Area Council. Newton Upper Falls was the second of Newton's villages, following Newton Highlands, to take advantage of the Newton city charter's provision allowing for the creation of an area council "to encourage citizen involvement in government at the neighborhood level by permitting limited self-government." Following a petition drive and a public hearing before the Programs and Services Committee, the Board of Aldermen approved the creation of the Newton Upper Falls Area Council on March 21, 2011. Since then, Area Councils have been established in Waban and Newtonville.

The nine members of the Area Council were elected during the city elections in November 2021 and were sworn in in January 2022. The nine members of the 2022-23 Area Council are in alphabetical order:

Anil Adyanthaya (Tamarac Road)  
Kathaleen Brearley (Rockland Place)  
Patty Connolly (Rockland Place)  
Julie Irish (Columbia Avenue)  
Marie Jackson (Spring Street)  
Matt Lai (Cottage Street)  
Jack Neville (High Street)  
Jeff Riklin (Champa Street)  
Jay Werb (Williams Street)

Ward Five City Councilor Bill Humphrey is an ex officio member of the Area Council. Ward Five At-Large City Councilors Deb Crossley and Andreae Downs also provided much appreciated support for our work.

Carol Stapleton, Manager with the Parks & Recreation Department, while not an official member of the Area Council, attends every meeting and has provided invaluable organizational guidance and other assistance to the Area Council.

We were sad to announce the retirement of two of our original Area Councilors, Susan Huffman and Nina Kochs. Both contributed a great deal to the Area Council and will be missed.

At a subsequent Area Council meeting in 2022, the following officers were elected by a vote of the Area Council:

President – Anil Adyanthaya  
Vice President – Jeff Riklin  
Secretary – Kathaleen Brearley  
Treasurer – Jay Werb

The Area Council addresses all issues in full session. A working group was formed in compliance with Open Meeting Law requirements to understand the effect of proposed village center zoning updates on Upper Falls.

### **Work of the Area Council**

Due to the continuing COVID-19 pandemic, some events typically sponsored and managed by the Area Council, such as the John Rice Upper Falls Soup Social, were cancelled. We were very happy, however, to hold Newton Upper Falls Village Day in September. This year's event was the largest in our history of holding the event.

Our monthly meetings continue to be conducted via Zoom.

Highlights of our work in 2022 include the following:

- Hosted Northland for a discussion of a proposed 400 resident 40B development between Charlemont and Christina Streets
- Hosted Cypress Tree for a discussion of updates to the operations at the Redi dispensary on Elliot Street
- Discussed and proposed Upper Falls projects to fund with uncommitted America Rescue Plan Act funds allocated to Newton
- Monitored developments regarding a proposed marijuana dispensary at 1185 Chestnut Street
- Advocated for the establishment of a pocket park next to the Upper Falls Greenway
- Worked to educate Upper Falls residents about proposed village center zoning updates
- Participated in efforts to improve access to the Charles River from Braceland Park and helped fund a gate to support this access
- Attempted to address excess signage on Oak Street
- Monitored developments with the Upper Falls Depot building
- Promoted and participated in an Upper Falls history walk
- Participated in discussions about funding for the 128 Community Bridge Study
- Facilitated discussions about public use of Emerson Community Center
- Organized and ran Newton Upper Falls Village Day

- Followed up on resident concerns about emergency vehicle access to the Northland property via Mechanic Street
- Monitored developments with the Northland project on Needham Street
- Monitored developments with the refurbishment of Pettee Square
- Hosted speakers that informed the community about energy saving opportunities and efforts to protect trees
- Promoted community events sponsored and organized by other groups such as Upper Falls Oktoberfest and the City's fall concert series.
- Worked with Northland to establish a communication channel for receiving updates on the Northland Needham Street project
- Investigated pedestrian safety concerns that may exist on Elliot Street
- Maintained existing communication channels such as Facebook and the Upper Falls News (the latter thanks to the excellent work of Editor-in-Chief Margaret Alexander). The Google Group for Upper Falls residents has not been heavily used, but we will try again in 2023. Nextdoor is another channel that individual Area Councilors use to share updates with village residents.

### **Area Council Finances**

The Area Council does not receive any direct funding from the city and has to rely on donations and its own fundraising efforts. The Newton Upper Falls Community Development Corporation has been a significant benefactor, underwriting many of the projects described above. At year end, the Area Council had a gross amount of \$6543.93 in its bank account at Village Bank, which was \$945.27 more than we ended with in 2021.

[http://www.newtonma.gov/gov/neighborhood/upper\\_falls/default.asp](http://www.newtonma.gov/gov/neighborhood/upper_falls/default.asp)