

Newton Community Report

From the Board of Aldermen

In April the Board of Aldermen began their review of the City of Newton Budget for Fiscal 2008. By city Charter the review must be completed within 45 days. Also in April the Board began discussion on the taking by eminent domain of the property at 20 Rogers Street.

Budget Review

On Tuesday, April 17, 2007, Mayor David Cohen gave his annual budget address and submitted to the Board of Aldermen his FY08 Budget. The Mayor's complete budget address can be found on the City's website at: www.ci.newton.ma.us/Budget08/Mayors-budget-speech.pdf. In his address, the Mayor stated that there were no cuts in the budget this year and he highlighted three initiatives that will be undertaken in fiscal 2008: a new city phone system to alert residents about emergencies, enhancements to the Newton Free Library, and a new construction crew for the Department of Public Works.

Since the Mayor's presentation, the Board through its committees have been reviewing the budget and meeting with department heads to learn about each department's accomplishments this past fiscal year, and to review the department goals for the coming year. The Board of Aldermen has 45 days to complete its review of the budget or the Mayor's budget is approved as proposed. Under the City Charter, the Board may not add funds to what has been proposed, but may cut specific items or amounts and may also make resolutions asking the Mayor to consider specific increases. The Board plans to complete their review on May 23. For a full schedule of budget meetings please see the proposed Aldermanic Committee and Board meeting schedule on the City's website at: www.ci.newton.ma.us/Aldermen/Aldermen%20Calendar.pdf

Rogers Street Property

Mayor Cohen and the Community Preservation Committee have docketed a request with the Board of Aldermen to take the property at 20 Rogers Street by Eminent Domain with funds from the Community Preservation Act. The property is on Crystal Lake, adjacent to the City's Crystal Lake Bath House. The request has been forwarded to the Board Committee on Community Preservation and Finance Committee. Both committees have reviewed the proposal and have approved the plan with the caveat that the City have in writing from the State and Internal Revenue Service that their liens on the property will not continue if the City takes the property. The City will pay the appraised fair market value of \$2.3 million for this property.

The City has chosen to use eminent domain because the city will be able to clear the governmental liens with the IRS and State through negotiated agreements and commitment letters. The Mayor and City Solicitor made it clear that the approval of \$2.3 million of public money would not be 'harnessed' with outstanding government, or non-government, liens. As of May 1st the State has provided those assurances, but the city is still waiting for written documents from the Internal Revenue Service. The item came to the floor of Board for a vote, but President Baker chartered the item to allow a special

meeting to be called as soon as the letter was received. He did call one meeting, but because the letter had not yet arrived, the item has been deferred until Monday, May 7, 2007, by which time the letter from the IRS may have arrived.