The City of Newton will hold a Special Municipal Election on March 3, 2020, the same day as the Massachusetts Presidential Primary Election. Voters will have an opportunity at the Election to vote on a ballot question to either approve or repeal a measure passed by the City Council that changes the zoning district of parcels of land located at 156 Oak Street, 275-281 Needham Street and 55 Tower Road, commonly known as the Northland Project.

The ballot question asks whether voters will approve an amendment to Newton’s Official Zoning Map that changes the zoning of the Northland site from Mixed Use 1 District to Business 4 District (BU4). The zoning change would allow for the construction of the Northland Project as described in a special permit and site plan approval granted by the City Council.

A “YES” vote on this question would allow the zoning change that was passed by the City Council to take effect, and the Northland Project, as approved in the Special Permit, may be constructed.

A “NO” vote on this question would stop the zoning change that was passed by the City Council from taking effect, and the Northland Project, as approved in the Special Permit, may not be constructed.

A copy of the Special Permit and other materials related to the Northland Project, including plans, renderings and memoranda, can be found on the City’s website. The following link will direct you to the Planning Department’s Northland page:

www.newtonma.gov/northlandproject

Argument in Favor of the Change of Zone
Prepared by: YES For Newton’s Future Ballot Committee

A YES vote will position Newton as a forward-thinking and welcoming community for all. The Northland Newton project embraces Newton’s values by providing affordable housing to working people and retirees, creating much-needed open space, and setting the highest standard for environmental sustainability.

Our teachers, first responders, older adults, young professionals and city employees can’t afford to live in Newton. To help Newton remain an inclusive city, this project will create 140 permanently affordable apartments. Housing advocates across Newton have endorsed the project.

The project will create an unprecedented amount of new public open space accessible to all Newton residents, including seven parks, 750 new trees, a splash park, community playground and a village green.

This project would be the most environmentally sustainable mixed-use project in Massachusetts and has earned the endorsement of prominent Newton environmental organizations.

Vote YES for an inclusive and sustainable Newton.

Argument Against the Change of Zone
Prepared by: Committee for Responsible Development

Vote NO to reject Northland Investment Corporation’s current plan for development on Needham Street. The property should be developed, but it should not be oversized, overwhelm local infrastructure, or burden city finances. The City Council approved a 1.4 million square foot development with 16 buildings and 800 apartment units – too dense for the area and not enough affordable units. We want development to represent Newton’s progressive, inclusive values.

Both the City and the developer agree that traffic is a problem on Needham Street, an area without access to public transportation. This development will increase congestion causing even more traffic which will spill into adjacent neighborhoods. Additionally, 800 units will likely add to school enrollment and costs to taxpayers.

We welcome development at this site and elsewhere in Newton, but it should be in partnership with our residents, not driven by developers. Vote for responsible, responsive Newton growth.
Dear Newton Voter,

The City of Newton will hold a Special Municipal Election on March 3, 2020, in conjunction with the Presidential Primary Elections. Voters will have an opportunity at the Municipal Election to vote on whether to approve the change of zone to allow the Northland project to move forward.

The City of Newton is required to mail to Newton voters the text of any local ballot question. The Mailer must also include a fair and concise summary of the question prepared by the City Solicitor, and arguments for and against the question prepared by the principal proponents and opponents of the question. The City of Newton is not responsible for the accuracy of the statements made in the arguments for and against the ballot question.

If you have any questions, please contact the City Clerk’s office at 617-796-1200.

Sincerely,

David A. Olson
Newton City Clerk