Marc C. Laredo
Mayor

Katie Whewell
Acting Director
Planning & Community Development

Lauren Berman
Director, Economic Development

Cheryl Lappin
Deputy Director, Economic Development

Commissioners
Jane Obbagy, Chair
Chuck Tanowitz, Vice Chair
Chris Steele, Secretary
Lisa Adams
Andrew Copelotti
Ramzi Elfekih
Jim Griglun
Debora Jackson
Hedy Jarras
Florent Mali
Marcela Merino
Hema Narayan
Phil Plottel
Lori Yarvis

1000 Commonwealth Ave.
Newton, MA 02459
(617) 796-1000
www.newtonma.gov

CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Economic Development Commission

AGENDA

Meeting Date: Tuesday, July 14, 2026

Meeting Time: 7:00 PM

Location: Hybrid- In Room 204 and via Zoom

This hybrid meeting will be held at Newton City Hall in Room 204 and virtually via Zoom. To view and participate: https://newtonma-gov.zoom.us/j/86124274782

1. Attendance

2. Approval of June meeting minutes

3. Formalizing 2026 EDC Working Groups, membership and deliverables

Managing the Curb
Chuck
Hema – Wayfinding signage
Hedy

Vitality of Village Centers
Marcela
Ramzi
Jane

Commercial Businesses for Newton
Jim
Chris
Lori
Florent

Business Access & Regulatory Review
Phil
Andrew
Debora
Lisa

5. Economic Development Updates

6. City Updates

7. Next Meeting Tuesday, August 11, 2026

8. Adjournment

CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Economic Development Commission (EDC)

Meeting Minutes - June 9, 2026

The monthly meeting of the Commission was held at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, June 9, 2026, at City Hall in Room 204. Remote participation was available via Zoom.

Attendance: Jane Obbagy (Chair), Chris Steele (Secretary), Lori Yarvis, Deborah Jackson, Hema Narayan, Lisa Adams, Lauren Berman (Director of Economic Development), Cheryl Lappin (Deputy Director of Economic Development), Dana Hanson (Mayor Laredo's Chief of Staff).

Remote Attendance: Jim Griglun, Hedy Jarras

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Jane Obbagy at 7:03 p.m.

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

The Commission approved the May 12 meeting minutes as amended, updating the next meeting date to July 14.

Discussion of Working Groups and Group Membership

The Commission discussed establishing three targeted working groups:

- Commercial Attraction & Regulations: Led by Jim, focusing on business recruitment and supportive regulatory frameworks.
- Parking & Curbside Management: Led by Chuck, examining wayfinding and curbside usage strategies.
- Quality of Life & Cultural Vitality: Led by Deborah, addressing village center enhancement.

The Commission noted the importance of reviewing Open Meeting Law considerations regarding working group operations. Final group assignments will be confirmed after consulting with absent members.

Newton Arts & Culture Update

Meryl Kessler, Director of Arts & Culture, provided an update on current and future initiatives, noting that the department will add two staff members in July. Key updates included:

- Plaza Tuesdays: Launched three weeks ago to activate Newton Centre Plaza on Tuesdays from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. The program runs through the end of June.
- Pop-Up Initiatives: Highlighted a successful retail collaboration between Shepherd & Mosley print studio and a West Newton landlord.
- Newton Poet Laureate Program: Partnering with Lily Weitzman from the library to form a selection committee. The application process will be launched this summer, with the position beginning in January.
- Ribbon Cutting: Announced the official opening of the Linda Plaut Center for Arts and Culture at Brigham House in Newton Highlands, scheduled for Sunday at 1:00 p.m.

Economic Development Team Update

The Economic Development Team shared several operational and community updates:

- Zoning Discussion: The Commissioner of Inspectional Services will join the August meeting to discuss commercial zoning and business integration.
- Business Database: Harvard Kennedy School intern, Artemis Huang, is compiling a comprehensive database of Newton businesses to improve market analysis and outreach.
- Spring Preview Farmers' Market: Plans are underway for the event, which features local farms and vendors. Union Street will be closed to vehicle traffic, allowing brick-and-mortar businesses to set up outdoor tables.

- Development Projects: Briefed the Commission on the phased opening of the Newton Crossing project's retail component, alongside ongoing development updates in Newton Center, West Newton, and the Washington Street corridors.

City Updates - Chief of Staff, Dana Hanson

Chief of Staff Dana Hanson presented updates on municipal initiatives:

- Infrastructure: The city is revisiting the Washington Street redesign and planning Bullough's Pond upgrades, both incorporating public feedback.
- Commuter Rail: A public meeting regarding improvements to the Newtonville Commuter Rail Station is scheduled for June 24 at 6:00 p.m. at the Cooper Center.
- Community Engagement: Highlighted the upcoming Mayor's Community Coffees, which will take place at various city locations throughout the summer.

Next Meeting
Date: July 14, 2026
Location: Hybrid – Newton City Hall, Room 204 & Zoom.

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10. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:36 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Cheryl Lappin