

Tuesday, Dec. 3, 2024

Mayor's Newton Update



We are blessed to live here in Newton – there is no better place to build a life, pursue a livelihood, raise a family, make friends with neighbors, and retire gracefully. Our community is vibrant, full of residents contributing to an active civic ecosystem. Newton does not shy away from the world but grapples with the challenges of our times, continuing the work of improving our community in the face of the vicissitudes of the American experiment.

I'm honored to serve this community and count myself as blessed indeed.

For over 15 years, I have dedicated myself to Newton, its people and our future. I was honored to serve as a City Councilor for eight years before having been elected Mayor. Seven years later, I can confidently say that today I am prouder than ever to be a Newtonian and enthusiastic about our future.

Our prospects are bright in large part because of the incredible work we have accomplished together:

- Striving continuously to provide a great education for all our students while investing heavily in 5 new and renovated school buildings across the city
- Creating more opportunities to live in Newton by building more affordable, diverse housing and updating our zoning
- Dedicating an historic amount of funds to pave our streets and improve conditions for drivers, bikers and walkers
- Expanding access to public transit and finally prevailing on the Commonwealth to invest in our Newtonville Commuter Rail Station
- Prioritizing safety in our community with excellent police, fire and ambulance services
- Championing the unique character of each of our villages while reinvesting heavily in 3 village centers with plans for more on the horizon as we support businesses and non-profits
- Establishing Newton as a leader in tackling the climate crisis – creating Newton Power Choice, electrifying the municipal fleet, and shifting to solar

and renewable energy sources

- Preserving Webster Woods, Newton's largest green space, for generations to enjoy in perpetuity
- Supporting Newtonians who are marginalized, stigmatized or financially insecure
- Opening the Cooper Center for Active Living next year, a milestone for our older adult community
- Responding when the world comes to us in challenging ways like the global pandemic or navigating the insidious side of social media by restricting cell phone use in schools
- Modeling respectfulness and civility and reinforcing Newton as a welcoming, warm, and accepting community
- Lifting up art, culture, the Newton Free Library, parks, recreation (think of two Gath Pools, refurbished and expanded athletic fields with lights, updated tennis and more pickleball courts), neighborhoods and community, the joyous glue of our city
- Writing a newsletter for our community – with 38,000 of you signing up – and providing lots of information week in, week out on what's happening in Newton and why (with a few P.S.s and P.P.S.s added in for good measure)

Each of these successes is the result of collegiality and collaboration, supported by our promise to invest time and resources carefully.

While this work has many stewards, it has been powered in countless ways by the extraordinarily talented people at City Hall. I have loved being part of the "Get Stuff Done" wing of government. Our municipal team inspires me every day. They are problem solvers, hard workers, good listeners, willing collaborators, and change makers. They pay attention to the immediate needs of the city while never losing sight of our long-term goals. They do the hard work and deliver for all of us in so many ways.

With nothing but gratitude for the past 15 years, I have decided not to run for re-election next year as Mayor of Newton. I look forward to continuing to serve our common goals, our common good, and our Commonwealth in other ways. In addition, I look forward to carving out more time for four wonderful grandkids – Henry, Jeremiah, Donovan and Frances – and their parents, and my husband and best friend, Joe.

I'm all in on working as hard as ever for the next 394 days as your Mayor. There is much to do. The work of this city and the needs of our residents are always evolving – in education, transportation, housing, climate resiliency, public safety, public health, community and civility. We'll build new schools, pave more roads, improve our athletic fields, open the Cooper Center for Active Living, redesign the Newtonville Commuter Rail Station and Police headquarters, and find time to

celebrate along the way. The procession at Festa, fireworks on the 4th of July, and pumpkin smashing after Halloween are wonderful examples of opportunities to gather, to support one another and enjoy each other's company.

We are blessed to live here in Newton. I feel particularly blessed to have raised my family here and to have served each of you.

I will end with a brief word of encouragement – if you have ever thought of getting involved in Newton public life, just do it. Go to your street's block party, join an advocacy group, serve on a Newton board or commission, run for office, or just show up. Life in Newton is shaped by those who grab an oar and pull and it's meaningful, satisfying time well spent. Newton and its people need you, perhaps now more than ever.

Warmly,

Ruthanne



Mayor Ruthanne Fuller | 1000 Commonwealth Avenue | Newton, MA 02459 US

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