



## HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT

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# City of Newton Youth Commission Advisory Board

## Meeting Minutes

Monday, December 3, 2025 – 6:30pm

This meeting was held in person at the Newton Free Library in the Druker Auditorium.

Attendance: Melissa Bernstein, Artistic Director, Newton Theater Company (YCAB member); Ana Ciric, Newton South Sophomore (YCAB member); Marcia Cooper, Board Member & President Emerita, Green Newton (YCAB member); Naman Dadlani, Newton South Sophomore (Youth Commissioner); Theo Evangelinos, Newton North Junior (YCAB member); AGeorgia Finkelstein, Newton South Senior (YCAB member); Hana Futai, Newton South Senior (Youth Commissioner); Armine Freeman, Newton South Senior (Youth Commissioner); Alex Gusenoff, Brown Middle School 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Student (YCAB member); Leyla Gustin, Newton North Junior (Youth Commissioner); Meri Haas, Assistant Director, Human Services, City of Newton (Advisory Board staff); Safinah Kasirye, Newton North Sophomore (YCAB member); Amelia Kessler, Newton North Sophomore (YCAB member); Stephanie Lapham, Recreation Program Manager, Newton Parks, Recreation and Culture (YCAB member); Chloe Lee, Newton North Senior (Youth Commissioner); Lauren Lele, Senior Director, Community Health and Volunteer Services, Newton-Wellesley Hospital (YCAB member); Jeff Lemberg, Executive Director, Newton Food Pantry (YCAB member); Josh Levitt-Horne, Newton South Junior (YCAB member); Chloe Lyons, Newton North Senior (Youth Commissioner); Deirdre Madden, Resource Navigator, Health & Human Services, City of Newton (YCAB member); Simbarashe Makura, Roxbury Latin School Senior (Youth Commissioner); Archana Mennon, Associate Director of Newton Cultural Development Department (Presenter); Gassia Minassian, Newton North Senior (Youth Commissioner); Grace Mitrokostas, The Rivers School 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Student (YCAB member); Henri Rousseau, Teen Coordinator, West Suburban YMCA (YCAB member); Alex Savoulides, Belmont Hill School Junior (YCAB member); Evie Shih, Nobles & Greenough School Junior (Youth Commissioner); Laura Tavares, Executive Director, WPS Institute (YCAB member); Colin Van Vliet, Newton North Freshman (YCAB member); Delia Walsh, Newton North Freshman (YCAB member)

- I. Meeting began at 6:35pm
- II. Youth Commission Advisory Board voted to approve the meeting minutes from October 27<sup>th</sup>, 2025 with a small edit suggested by one member (start time).
- III. Archana Mennon, Associate Director of Newton Cultural Development, presented about the Cultural Development Department mission and current initiatives and programming. (slides enclosed as part of the December 3 slides). Email [culture@newtonma.gov](mailto:culture@newtonma.gov) to volunteer or with any questions.

- IV. Meeting attendees took a 10-minute break.
- V. Parent Step-Up Day Update
  - a. Hana Futai announced that the proposal from last year is in the hands of NPS staff and she is currently responding to email questions. Meeting attendees signed up with Hana to let her know if they were interested in helping.
- VI. Introduction to 2025-2026 Subcommittees
  - a. This year's subcommittees are:
    - i. **Substance Misuse** - Mental Health, focus on Youth Substance Misuse
    - ii. **Newton Civic Spotlight** - Youth Opportunities, focus on planning Newton Civic Spotlight
    - iii. **Connecting Youth to Opportunities** - Youth Opportunities, focus on determining how to better connect youth with available opportunities.
- VII. Announcements, Upcoming Programming: Members shared relevant events and other announcements
- VIII. Close Meeting: Closed at 8:02 PM