



Public Facilities Committee Agenda

City of Newton In City Council

Wednesday, April 8, 2026

7:00 PM

Room 207/City Council Chambers

The Public Facilities Committee will hold this meeting as a hybrid meeting on Wednesday, April 8, 2026, at 7:00 PM that the public may access in-person or virtually via Zoom. To view this meeting using Zoom use this link: <https://newtonma.gov.zoom.us/j/87673420136> or call 1-646-558-8656 and use the following Meeting ID: 876 7342 0136.

Items Scheduled for Discussion:

Public Hearing 04-08-26

#114-26

Eversource petition for a grant of location on Smith Avenue

EVERSOURCE ENERGY petitioning for a grant of location for one pole located on the East side of Smith Avenue approximately 556 feet southwest of Cleveland Street to be relocated to approximately 16 feet southwest of its current location.

<https://newtonma.portal.opengov.com/records/912655>

Public Hearing 04-08-26

#122-26

National Grid petition for a grant of location on Clarendon Street

NATIONAL GRID petitioning for a grant of location to install and maintain gas main in Clarendon Street as follows, due to water work by the City of Newton:

- 400 feet of 6-inch Plastic gas main to replace 145 feet of 4-inch Bare Steel (1944) and 255 feet of 4-inch Cast Iron (1911/1914) in Clarendon Street from Norwood Avenue to #30 Clarendon Street (north side of Laundry Brook culvert)
- 290 feet of 6-inch Plastic gas main to replace 195 feet of 4-inch Cast Iron (1911 & 1914) and 95 feet of 4-inch Plastic (2007/2014) in Clarendon Street from #34 Clarendon Street (south side of Laundry Brook culvert) to Cabot Street

<https://newtonma.portal.opengov.com/records/908605>

The location of this meeting is accessible, and reasonable accommodation will be provided to persons with disabilities who require assistance. If you need a reasonable accommodation, please contact the city of Newton's ADA Coordinator at least two business days in advance of the meeting: ADACoordinator@newtonma.gov or (617) 796-1253. The city's TTY/TDD direct line is: 617-796-1089. For the Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS), please dial 711.

- #116-26 Requesting a discussion on the status of the Newton Highlands Working Group**
Requesting a discussion on the status of the Newton Highlands Working Group and their findings and recommendations (180 days: 09/12/2026).
- #132-26 Discussion on the Transportation Network Improvement Plan**
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS requesting to provide an update on the Transportation Network Improvement Plan (180 days: 10/03/26).
- #43-26 Request for a discussion and ordinance change to only require a new sidewalk installation if the existing sidewalk is damaged during construction**
COUNCILORS ALBRIGHT, KALIS, and LEARY requesting a discussion and ordinance change regarding Chapter 29 Sections 157-166 of the Revised Ordinances' requirement to install a sidewalk when renovations exceed 50% of house costs. The homeowner typically learns at the end of a long renovation project that a new sidewalk will be required at a cost of between twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000) to fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) depending on sidewalk configuration. The ordinance change would only require a new sidewalk installation if the existing sidewalk was damaged during construction (180 Days: 07/19/2026).
Public Facilities Held 7-0 on 02-04-2026

Respectfully submitted,
David Kalis, Chair of the Public Facilities Committee

Mr. David Kalis
Chair, Public Facilities Committee
City of Newton
1000 Commonwealth Avenue,
Newton, MA 02459

Re: Newton Highlands Village Enhancement Project
Summary of Working Group Activities

March 31, 2026

Dear Mr. Kalis,

In November 2025, City Council asked that a Working Group provide feedback on the Newton Highlands Village Enhancement Project. Working Group members were appointed by Mayor Fuller in December 2025. The first charge for the Working Group was to evaluate the Newton Highlands Village Enhancement Plan and to provide a recommendation on whether to continue with the current project scope or to redirect any funding to an existing ARPA funded contract. The Working Group was instructed to report its recommendations to the City Council no later than March 31, 2026.

Working Group members consisted of Ward Councilor Martha Bixby, business owner Karl O'Hara, Newton Highlands Area Council member Srdjan Nedeljkovic, and Newton Highlands resident and former Ward 6 City Councilor Alan Lobovits. Appointed member Maureen Oates, a Newton Highlands resident, was unable to participate in the meetings. Working Group meetings included lead liaison John Rice from Mayor Laredo's office and DPW Commissioner Shawna Sullivan. The Working Group met on 5 occasions: January 27, February 10, March 4, March 10, and March 24, 2026. The Working Group was joined by two representatives from Apex Consulting during the March 4 meeting.

Summary of Working Group Recommendations

The Working Group recommends continuing with the current project scope and to utilize remaining funding to advance the project forward.

Furthermore, the Working Group recommends the following course of action to implement the project.

1. Phase 1: The project should initially focus on making significant safety improvements in Newton Highlands.
2. Phase 2: Remaining full build-out of the project is to follow completion of the initial safety improvements.

Phase 1: Four safety priorities for the Village Improvement project have been identified, along with the proposal to improve lighting on Lincoln Street. These five items have been prioritized in order of implementation:

1. Lincoln Street and Hartford Street intersection at Rodney Barker Square.

Curb extensions and a narrowing of this intersection are desirable from a safety perspective. Replacement of the existing bricks in the plaza with pavers is necessary for purposes of improving accessibility. An RRFB is recommended for this location. The intersection would include a raised table at this location. Public meetings will be scheduled to review the new intersection design and subsequently to obtain input on the quality of the amenities to be included in the plaza, such as benches, trees, and pavement in the plaza.

2. Lighting on Lincoln Street.

Working Group members recommend improved lighting on Lincoln Street in the village center as an important safety issue that should be prioritized. To integrate the lighting project with the reconstruction of Rodney Barker Square, it is recommended that the new lighting is done concurrently with the redesign of Rodney Barker Square. The new lighting is to be installed on Lincoln Street between Walnut Street and Columbus Street as part of the proposed short-term improvements, separately and prior to full reconstruction of Lincoln Street.

3. Walnut St and Floral Street intersection.

This component involves curb extensions on Walnut Street to shorten the distance of pedestrian crossing on Walnut Street. It also includes a median refuge and curb extensions at Walnut and Floral between O'Hara's and the former Service Station to reduce the crosswalk distance and to improve safety and accessibility. An RRFB is recommended for this location. There was also discussion on the height and shape of the proposed median so that trucks turning into Floral Street to make deliveries could be accommodated. Due to safety, utility, and space constraints, the proposed median on Walnut Street north of Floral Street is recommended for removal.

4. Lincoln Street and Bowdoin Street intersection.

The working group agreed that the curb extensions and raised table planned at this intersection should be the fourth portion of the safety improvements to be implemented.

5. Walnut Street and Station Avenue.

The working group agreed that this intersection should be reconstructed as the fifth component of the safety improvements. This would involve implementation of a curb extension that reduces the pedestrian crossing distance at Station Avenue.

Apex Engineering (the consultants) have provided estimates for the cost of construction for these elements. Their letter is appended to this summary. The preliminary estimated cost for constructing Phase 1 of the project is \$3.5 million. An additional 10-15% cost is anticipated for engineering work related to Phase 1.

Coordination of traffic signals.

Working Group members noted that although not part of the list of safety improvements, more immediate attention needs to be given to prioritizing a new traffic signal at the intersection of Walnut Street and Centre Street and to improving and coordinating the traffic signals at Walnut and Centre Streets with those at Centre Street where it meets Route 9 and also with the traffic signal at Walnut Street and Lincoln Street.

Phase 2: As funding sources are identified, the Working Group recommends proceeding with full completion of the project. Discussions took place regarding important design elements of the full project.

1. The proposed design at Walnut Street and the Fountain.

Working group members support the current version of the plans for this site, which include restoring or maintaining 3 of the existing 4 parking spaces that are on the current slip lane while removing the slip lane and creating a parklet at the fountain that is integrated and does not require crossing a roadway to access. Additional support was given for the continuous bike lane on Walnut Street southbound towards the village center that improves bicyclist safety, the inclusion of a traffic median to improve safety and reduce the risk of vehicle crashes into the church property, and the “gateway” treatment that these plans provide.

2. To maintain or eliminate the right turn lane from Lincoln Street to Walnut Street.

There is broad support in the community for maintaining the right turn lane. However, there are accessibility concerns regarding the slope of the sidewalk at the Officer English Garden. Questions have been raised regarding the geometry to design an ADA-accessible slope to meet the proposed crosswalk across Walnut Street. Additional input will be needed regarding design and further community input on this issue will be necessary.

3. Parking on northbound Walnut Street between Floral Street and Lincoln Street.

Most working group members are supportive of maintaining the parking while improving bicycle safety and accommodations between Centre Street and Floral Street and then north of Lincoln Street. Input from Bike Newton suggests that the roadway cross-section of 50 ft can accommodate both on-street parking and a bicycle lane in this location. More design work is needed to evaluate this option.

4. Undergrounding of utilities.

Working Group members have identified the mechanism to move forward is to have this item docketed at City Council. The mechanism to fund undergrounding will be through a rate increase imposed by the electric company. If there is enough support from the public for this potential rate increase, the proposal for undergrounding may pass. Otherwise, it is unlikely to move forward. The potential for there to be rate increase to pay for

undergrounding in Newton Highlands needs to be voted on by City Council after due public process. Working Group members were supportive of having City Council initiate this public process and will identify City Councilors who will support moving the issue forward. Furthermore, Working Group members recommended using a portion of the remaining design funds for the Village Improvement project to conduct a preliminary scoping study (estimated to cost \$40,000) to determine if the current geography and placement of utilities will allow for undergrounding. The results of the scoping study will be needed before any final decision can be made by City Council or Newton's residents. Existing agreements with cable providers will need to be reviewed to understand their obligations towards undergrounding.

5. Walnut Street between Centre Street and Floral Street.

The working group noted that there are several parcels in this location that may be subject to new development. A discussion ensued about how those changes may affect design elements that are part of the Village Improvement project. Working group members were supportive that new development must have a positive effect on the pedestrian environment and safety. Elimination of parking in the front setback and reduction in the number and length of curb cuts in this section of Walnut Street are desirable outcomes. The possibility exists that with the elimination of curb cuts and parking in the front setback, additional new on-street parking may be possible on the northbound side of Walnut Street between Centre Street and Floral Street.

Summary:

The Working Group recommends continuing with the current project scope of the Newton Highlands Village Enhancement project. The initial goal of the project is to have Phase 1 of the project, the safety improvements, fully funded, with construction costs estimated at \$3 million. For implementing the remaining project, Phase 2, future funding sources will need to be identified and the remaining project may need to be constructed one section at a time.

There was consensus by Working Group members that a final design for Phase 2 of the project does not yet have full community support. Design documents with new and modified options as brought up by community members and as discussed by the Working Group need to be developed and included in the final set of documents that are to be considered.

Respectfully submitted,

Srdjan S. Nedeljkovic

On behalf of the Newton Highlands Village Enhancement Project Working Group

ARTICLE VI. REQUIRED REMOVAL AND REPLACEMENT OF BUILDING SEWER, WATER SERVICE PIPES AND SIDEWALKS

Sec. 29-157. Definitions.

Unless the context specifically indicates otherwise, the meaning of terms used in this article shall be as follows:

Building sewer pipe: The sewer pipe which connects a building's sewer system to the public sewer main.

CCTV inspection: A closed circuit television inspection.

Commissioner: The commissioner of public works of the City of Newton or his authorized deputy, agent or representative.

Substantially remodeled or rehabilitated: When a dwelling or building is (1) renovated and/or gutted more than fifty percent (50%) or (2) an addition to a building is constructed that increases the footprint by more than 1,000 square feet, or increases the total square footage more than 1,000 square feet.

Water service pipe: The water pipe which connects a building's plumbing system to the nearest water gate valve serving the building. (Ord. No. B-42, 10-07-19)

Sec. 29-158. Updates to building sewer, water service pipes and sidewalks.

(a) When ~~a dwelling or building is demolished and~~ a new building is constructed or fifty percent (50%) or more of the combined total of the exterior walls and roof of an existing building is demolished, or when a building is substantially remodeled or rehabilitated, the following shall be removed and replaced, or installed, at the owner's expense:

- (1) The building sewer pipe(s) to the public sewer main;
- (2) The water service pipe(s) to the water valve; and
- (3) The sidewalk and curbing across the entire public way frontage of the lot(s) the dwelling or structure is located on.

(b) When a dwelling or building is substantially remodeled, the following shall be removed and replaced, or installed, at the owner's expense:

- (1) The building sewer pipe(s) to the public sewer main; and
- (2) The water service pipe(s) to the water valve.

(c) The existing building sewer pipe(s), water service pipe(s), and sidewalk and curbing shall be removed and replaced, or installed, in accordance with the provisions of this article and shall conform to the requirements of the State Building and Plumbing Codes, any standards and specifications established by the city engineer, and any other applicable federal, state, and city laws, ordinances, rules and regulations. (Ord. No. B-42, 10-07-19)

Sec. 29-159. Building sewer pipe removal and replacement procedure.

When removing and replacing building sewer pipe(s) under this article, the owner shall comply with the procedures and standards set forth in sections 29-60 and 29-61 of article III, which includes the approval of materials by the commissioner of public works. (Ord. No. B-42, 10-07-19)

Sec. 29-160. Building sewer pipe exemption.

The commissioner, upon request from an applicant, may determine that an [existing](#) building sewer pipe(s) is not required to be removed and replaced if all of the following requirements are met:

- (1) the existing building sewer pipe(s) is less than twenty (20) years old;
- (2) the owner obtains a CCTV inspection of the interior of the existing building sewer pipe(s) by an entity licensed to conduct such an inspection and submits with the building permit application a copy of the CCTV inspection along with a signed statement from the inspector attesting to the date of the inspection and the address of the property inspected; and
- (3) the commissioner makes a determination, based on the material and manner of construction of the building sewer pipe(s) and the CCTV inspection, that the existing building sewer pipe(s) has the ability to be adequately reused without replacement. (Ord. No. B-42, 10-07-19)

Sec. 29-161. Water service pipe update procedure.

When removing and replacing water service pipe(s) under this article, the owner shall comply with the procedures and standards set forth in section 29-27 of article II, which includes the approval of materials by the commissioner of public works. (Ord. No. B-42, 10-07-19)

Sec. 29-162. Water service pipe exemption.

The commissioner, upon request from an applicant, may determine that the [existing](#) water service pipe(s) is not required to be removed and replaced if all of the following requirements are met:

- (1) the existing water service pipe(s) is less than twenty (20) years old; and
- (2) the commissioner makes a determination, based on the material and manner of construction of the water service pipe(s), that the existing water service pipe(s) has the ability to be adequately reused without replacement. (Ord. No. B-42, 10-07-19)

Sec. 29-163. Adjoining sidewalks and access curb cuts.

Replacement or installation of sidewalk and curbing under this article shall include appropriate transition to adjoining curbing and walkways, including accessible curb cuts and other access as required. (Ord. No. B-42, 10-07-19)

Sec. 29-164. Sidewalk exemption.

(a) The commissioner, upon request from an applicant, may determine that the sidewalk and/or curbing across the entire frontage of a lot is not required to be removed and replaced, or installed, under this article at those locations where the commissioner determines that either:

- (1) the existing sidewalk complies with the current applicable codes, standards and specifications and is in good condition;

(2) the lack of existing sidewalk and/or curbing is consistent with the current or future nature of the neighborhood; or

(3) such updates are not feasible due to public safety, site constraints, or conflicts with future plans for the area. (Ord. No. B-42, 10-07-19)

Sec. 29-165 Compliance.

The city engineer shall certify to the commissioner of inspectional services when the provisions of this article have been complied with. The commissioner of inspectional services shall not issue a certificate of occupancy for any property subject to this article prior to receipt of such certification. (Ord. No. B-42, 10-07-19)

Sec. 29-166. Severability.

The provisions of this article are severable. If any provision, paragraph, sentence, or clause, of this article or the application thereof to any person, establishment, or circumstances shall be held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect the other provisions or application of this article. (Ord. No. B-42, 10-07-19)