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Sunday in the Park with Candidates (tomorrow 9/8); Washington Street Vision Plan; NewCAL meetings on fast timetable

1 message

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Sat, Sep 7, 2019 at 7:40 AM

Sunday in the Park with Candidates - 11am Sept. 8, by the piano at Newton Centre Green

I can't promise Sondheim, but there will be music. Several of Newton's non-incumbent candidates for City Council, including me, are gathering at Newton Centre Green tomorrow morning at 11am to give you an opportunity to meet us. Bring friends, family, neighbors, questions and comments, and enjoy some live piano music, light refreshments, and what is forecast to be a beautiful fall day! Hope to see you there.

There's a lot going on this week, and next week...

If you're feeling like there's too much happening too fast, on the development & (up)zoning front, you're right. Below is a recap. For more details, not just for this week, but ongoing, see the city website's [Electronic Posting Board](#), and [Friday Packet](#) pages.

Monday, Sept. 9: The Zoning & Planning Committee (ZAP) on Monday holds a joint meeting with Land Use to discuss the **Riverside** zoning proposals, beginning at 6:30pm in the Council Chamber. Then at 8:15pm, ZAP opens the public hearing on the **Washington Street Vision Plan**. One hopes they will not also close the public hearing the same night for such a consequential document that very few affected residents have likely had a chance to review. But [this memo](#) indicates the Planning Department wants to present a final draft to ZAP on October 2.

The [latest draft of the Vision Plan](#) is dated July 29 and available on the [Washington Street page](#). It's very similar to the previous draft of July 8. Text changes appear to be marked in red, although there are no notations of deletions. The height maps on pages 92-93 still describe heights of up to four, six, and even ten stories as "Village Character," with Taller Heights now defined as "4 to 10 stories," rather than the open-ended "4 to 6+ stories."

Wednesday, Sept. 11: Land Use Committee agenda includes another discussion of the "bait and switch" to allow a bank use at **Washington Place**, even though "no banks" was a

condition of the special permit. Mark Development's petition to lease to a bank was rejected, then reconsidered, then this Monday, sent by the full City Council back to committee. But the big item on the agenda is **Northland**.

NewCAL/Senior Center



The next Community Meeting for public comment and questions about the NewCAL project is Thursday, Sept. 19, but the revamped [web page for NewCAL](#) lists a very compressed schedule of other City Council committee and other meetings on the project.

As I told the [Boston Globe](#), I believe the announcement of Albemarle as the preferred site, a mere week after the sites were narrowed down to six, with no intervening public discussion other than on blogs and googlegroups, was an attempt to defuse the growing opposition to using parkland. It didn't work. The Change.org petition "Save Newton's Parks" - which had about 3,100 signatures before the announcement of Albemarle, now has over 6,600 signatures, and counting. I've signed that petition, as well as a less publicized [petition](#) begun after the Albemarle announcement, specific to Albemarle.

I'd like real consideration given to other property the city already owns, like the former Park & Rec HQ at Crescent Street, or Aquinas, or acquiring an existing building or land, from a tax-exempt institution if possible. We've seen two closed churches sold recently that would have been great sites -- St. Philip Neri in Waban, and Parish of the Messiah at Comm Ave and Auburn Street in Auburndale (in addition to the earlier missed opportunity of Temple Mishkan Tefila). Are any other churches closing or downsizing? Would the Andover-Newton buyer part with some of that land and a building? Would Newton Family Access consider selling back the former Davis School (if, perhaps, they were outgrowing the space)? It has the desired square footage, a gym, and about 57 parking spaces with proximity to West Newton Square. One lesson here not to "surplus" or sell city property without a way to get it back when we need it, as we were able to with the Carr School.



Would you help me by hosting a lawn sign?

Candidates' signs can go up on September 21. They do help! If you'd like one, please reply to this email, or to

signs4julia@gmail.com.

This email was sent to juliaannemalakie@gmail.com

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