



# Zoning & Planning Committee Agenda

**REVISED**

**City of Newton**  
**In City Council**

**Monday, November 8, 2021**

**7:00 PM**

The Zoning & Planning Committee will hold this meeting as a virtual meeting on Monday, November 8, 2021 at 7:00 PM. To view this meeting using Zoom, use this link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85493813834> or call 1-646-558-8656 and use the following Meeting ID: **854 9381 3834**

## **Items Scheduled for Discussion:**

### ***7 pm Public Hearing***

**#180-21**      **Requesting a review and possible amendments to Section 4.2.5(A)**  
**COUNCILORS LAREDO, LUCAS, LIPOF AND MARKIEWICZ** requesting review of and possible amendments to Section 4.2.5(A) of the City of Newton Zoning Ordinance to clarify language concerning shadows and blocked views in the Mixed Use 4 district.  
**Zoning & Planning Held 8-0 on 09/13/21**  
**Zoning & Planning Held 8-0 on 10/14/21; Public Hearing Scheduled for November 8, 2021**

**#392-21**      **Referred to Zoning & Planning and Programs and Services**  
**Authorization to acquire property at 163-144 Hancock Street and 169 Grove Street**  
**HIS HONOR THE MAYOR** requesting authorization to acquire whether by purchase or friendly eminent domain the real properties which are portions of 136-144 Hancock Street and 169 Grove Street, known as The Walker Center for Ecumenical Exchange.  
**Program & Services Approved 7-0 (Councilor Noel not voting) on 11/03/21**

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The location of this meeting is accessible and reasonable accommodations 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, Jini Fairley, at least two business days in advance of the meeting: [jfairley@newtonma.gov](mailto:jfairley@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.

**#438-20 Request for creation of Trust in Newton to support affordable housing development**  
COUNCILORS ALBRIGHT, CROSSLEY, HUMPHREY, DANBERG, MALAKIE, KELLEY, BOWMAN, KALIS, GREENBERG, DOWNS, WRIGHT, RYAN, NOEL, LEARY, LIPOF AND NORTON requesting the Planning Department analyze mechanisms already in use in other cities and towns, identify funding sources, and create a Housing Trust in Newton to facilitate and foster the development of affordable housing in Newton.  
**Zoning & Planning Held 11/09/20, 03/22/21, 07/26/21, 09/27/21**

***Chairs Note:*** *The committee will continue its discussion of the common themes that emerged from the community engagement process presented at its 10/25/21 meeting. The staff summary memo is again in this week's packet. This presentation/discussion series focuses on Newton's village center districts. Meeting #3 will be November 18; Meeting #4 will be December 16.*

**#88-20 Discussion and review relative to the draft Zoning Ordinance**  
DIRECTOR OF PLANNING requesting review, discussion, and direction relative to the draft Zoning Ordinance.  
**Zoning & Planning Held on 01/27/20, 02/10/20, 02/24/20, 03/09/20, 03/23/20, 04/13/20, 04/27/20, 05/19/20, 06/01/20, 06/15/20, 06/29/20, 07/09/20, 07/16/20, 08/13/20, 09/14/20, 10/01/20, 10/15/20, 11/05/20, 11/09/20, 12/14/20, 02/22/21, 03/08/21, 05/24/21, 07/08/21, 09/13/21, 10/25/21**

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah J. Crossley, Chair



City of Newton, Massachusetts  
Office of the Mayor

Ruthanne Fuller  
Mayor

#392-21

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RECEIVED  
2021 OCT 28 PM 4:50  
CITY CLERK  
NEWTON, MA. 02459  
October 28, 2021

Honorable City Council  
Newton City Hall  
1000 Commonwealth Avenue  
Newton, MA 02459

Honorable City Councilors:

The 150-year old Walker Center for Ecumenical Exchange, covering 2.2 acres at the Grove & Hancock Street intersection in Auburndale, went on the market for sale in spring 2021. The institution sits directly adjacent to the Williams Elementary School and playground/ballfield. Public Buildings Commissioner Josh Morse, Chief Operating Officer Jonathan Yeo, Director of Planning & Development Barney Heath and Newton Public Schools reviewed the possible benefits of acquiring some portion of the property for the future needs of the Williams School and for potential affordable housing and then contacted the real estate firm working for the Walker Center.

The Williams School and playground area sit on a constrained property making any future improvements difficult. Given the sale of this long-held Walker Center property, the City determined that increasing the amount of land (Lots "A" and "B" on the attached map) next to the school and playground will be helpful to both. The two lots total approximately 36,360 square feet (0.83 acres).

In addition, this purchase allows us to add permanently affordable housing. The four houses (Howard, Hume, Harding West and Harding East) on these lots total about 7,400 square feet and currently have 14 bedrooms. The addition of affordable housing as a part of this acquisition is a significant benefit, especially given that the homes are family-sized units next to an elementary school and playground, in walking distance to three forms of mass transit, and are nestled into a residential neighborhood. (Please note that the Walker Center property is located in the Auburndale Local Historic District.)

I am pleased to submit this docket item to this Honorable Council requesting authorization to acquire, whether by purchase or "friendly" eminent domain, the real properties marked as Lots A and B (shown on the attached map) which are portions of 136-144 Hancock Street and 169 Grove Street, known as The Walker Center for Ecumenical Exchange. The acquisition of the property serves two important purposes. The first is to allow for future flexibility for the Williams Elementary School building and site planning. The second is to preserve the four existing homes on the property to use as affordable housing (after a Real Property Reuse Committee process).

The approval of this acquisition by the City Council is required pursuant to M.G.L. Chapter 79. The Newton Public Schools and School Committee leadership have been informed of the

proposed acquisition and are very supportive. The City kept the Ward 4 councilors informed about the possible acquisition over the summer and fall during negotiations, and also held a community meeting of neighbors to discuss the City's interests in the property.

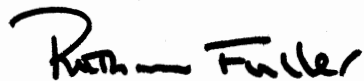
The City will use \$2.45 million of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds for the acquisition. The purchase price resulted from a negotiation between the City and the Walker Center after examination of appraisals.

It is our understanding that the Walker Center is working with a team regarding the remainder of the property to create a residential project that preserves the existing buildings and likely requires a special permit.

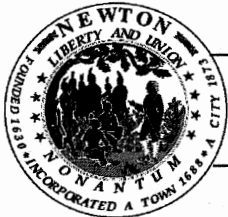
Please see the attached memo from Commissioner of Public Buildings Josh Morse.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ruthanne Fuller". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly stylized font.

Mayor Ruthanne Fuller



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# CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS

PUBLIC BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT  
52 ELLIOT STREET, NEWTON HIGHLANDS, MA 02461

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Ruthanne Fuller, Mayor  
Josh Morse  
Building Commissioner

Telephone (617) 796-1600  
Facsimile (617) 796-1601  
TDD/tty # (617) 796-1608

October 19, 2021

Ruthanne Fuller, Mayor  
Newton City Hall  
1000 Commonwealth Avenue  
Newton Centre, MA 02459

RE: Request to Acquire Property Adjacent to the Williams Elementary School

Dear Mayor Fuller:

I am requesting that you seek authorization from the City Council to acquire by friendly eminent domain two parcels abutting the Williams Elementary School. The parcels are located on Hancock Street (labeled as Lot A on attached map) 169 Grove Street (labeled as Lot B on attached map).

I understand that the owner of both these properties have been contacted by City staff and expressed a willingness to work with the City in terms of the acquisition of their properties.

A portion of the open space on these parcels will allow for future flexibility for Williams Elementary School building and site, and the structures located on Hancock Street (labeled as Lot A on attached map) 169 Grove Street (labeled as Lot B on attached map), shall be preserved while we work with the Planning Department, City Council, and Community to determine the best way to preserve and repurpose these structures for affordable housing.

Accordingly, I would ask that authorization to acquire these two parcels be brought to the City Council as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Josh Morse  
Public Buildings Commissioner

cc: Jonathan Yeo, Chief Operating Officer  
Maureen Lemieux, Chief Financial Officer  
James Mcgonagle, Commissioner of Public Works  
Alex Valcarce, Deputy Buildings Commissioner  
David Stickney, Director of Facilities