

**CHESTNUT HILL ASSOCIATION, INC.**  
P.O. BOX 67173 • CHESTNUT HILL, MA 02467-0002  
WWW.CHANEWTON.ORG

April 2017

**Dear Neighbors,**

Spring is here. Tulips are blooming, birds are nesting, and the Red Sox are trying to win.

**It's time to sign up or renew your membership in the CHA. We need your support!**

If this is the first time you have seen our newsletter, we hope it catches your attention and support. Just complete the enclosed form and mail it with your contribution of \$50 or more. Every donation helps maintain our programs and contact with you.

**Annual Members Cocktail Party – Tentative Date: Friday, June 2, 2017**

Our annual social gathering for dues-paying members will be at a beautiful home in Chestnut Hill. Save the date of June 2<sup>nd</sup>. We hope that this notice gives you an incentive to mail in your dues so you will receive an invitation. Please stay tuned, and check the website - [chanewton.org](http://chanewton.org) - for updates on social events or other CHA meetings. Invitations will be mailed in the next few weeks.

**Message from CHA President, Ken Lyons**

*Dear Neighbors,*

*Some positive highlights of the recent past: 1) Successful efforts to discourage further construction of new buildings on the edge of Hammond Pond behind "The Street." 2) Our friend and Ward 7 Council member Lisle Baker led the effort to preserve a requirement for prior permit approval of any new "accessory apartments." 3) An April clean-up at Houghton Garden led by Bob and Michele Hanss. 4) Our former president, Ruthanne Fuller, announced as a candidate for Mayor to succeed Setti Warren in November. 5) The City has taken positive action on much-needed tree work and street paving.*

*Looking ahead to the fall, we plan a meeting to discuss changes in Newton's City Charter, particularly the reduction in the size of the City Council. We will also invite Boston College to provide an update on their ambitious construction plans on campus and an update on plans for the Webster Woods area. Finally, we welcome volunteers to assist on our committees and lead various projects at the CHA. This is your Association and we need your help. We look forward to seeing you at our upcoming cocktail party in early June. Thank you for your continuing support.*

*Ken*

***BREAKING NEWS***

**City of Newton Budget**

The recently announced preliminary City Budget anticipates a \$2 million shortfall in Public Schools spending for Fiscal 2018, which could lead to layoffs of staff and other problems. Like cities

everywhere, Newton must deal with rising costs for retiree healthcare, retirement benefits, and a continual capital projects construction backlog. The accumulated shortfall in deferred projects and/or unfunded liabilities is not widely discussed, despite honest efforts to manage the issues. There simply isn't enough revenue to cover the projected costs. Maybe we should invite City officials to explain.

### **Charter Commission proposals**

The most provocative issue in Newton's Charter Commission recommendations is a proposed reduction in the City Council from 24 members to 12. The expected benefits include a more efficient leadership with each member assuming a larger job with more influence in City-wide issues. The proposal would by definition reduce the influence and accessibility of current neighborhood representatives. Voters will decide in November, and we will find out if it works.

One viewpoint suggests that change is not good; things are working fine as they are. Pros and cons usually offset one another, but it's a healthy process, and a new format is worth exploring intelligently. We will hear many more opinions before the election.

### **Accessory Apartments**

There are many long-term homeowners in Newton who would like to downsize without leaving home. One new (legal) way to do this is to convert part of that home into a guest or rental apartment. The recent action by the City Council allows such conversions, provided that owners obtain a special permit for any detached structure to serve as an "accessory" living space. In any event, such homes may not have multiple owners and occupants are limited to three unrelated individuals in any unit. Furthermore, any new unit must be part of the owner's primary residence

Mayor Warren and many others like the idea of providing additional housing in Newton, and this new regulation accomplishes that goal with less disruption to established neighborhoods and may reduce the need for as many multi-unit projects in the future. It's not clear if there will be amnesty for current illegal apartment landlords who now might want to come clean and register their units

## ***In Other News***

### **Historic Newton Annual House Tour**

This year's House Tour will take place in several different locations on Sunday, May 21st, from noon to 5 pm. Ticket information available at [historicnewton.org](http://historicnewton.org) or call 617-796-1450. Advance tickets are \$5 less than day-of-tour. Historic Newton members get a further break.

### **Newton Public Schools Projects**

Three recent public school construction projects are finished or underway. Angier School in Waban is open after being completely rebuilt in a much larger footprint. Zervas elementary school, also on Beacon Street, is nearing completion with a September opening planned. Final plans for the total overhaul/renovation of Cabot School are moving ahead after multiple changes and extensive redesign.

## **Local Real Estate Update**

Recent mailings report prices for single-family homes and condos continue strong in Newton, Brookline, and Wellesley. Transactions are at or near listing price with fewer days between listing and sale. Average price for single-family homes in Newton has been about \$1.2 million and \$1.9 million in Brookline. Interest rates are low but may rise soon.

## **Waban Hill Reservoir Progress**

Plans underway for the Waban Hill Reservoir (by Ward Street and Manet Road) will lead to further improvements for the five-acre site. The Friends of Waban Hill Reservoir welcome inquiries and support. If you want to volunteer or donate (or both) please log on to [wabanhillreservoirpark.org](http://wabanhillreservoirpark.org). Susan Servais, president, or Gail Silberstein, treasurer, would be happy to hear from you. The entire area has been cleaned up, with lots of help from the Friends of Waban Hill and the Newton Parks & Recreation Department, which is the guardian of this special addition to Newton's open spaces.

## **Needham Street**

Traffic is never nice on Needham Street, and the current mammoth construction projects suggest that relief is a long way off. It's strange that new retail space is coming online just when the word is out that "bricks and mortar" shopping is sluggish at best, especially at the big malls. We don't have much information about the future tenants, but it might be a long time before there are no vacancies. We'll try to provide an update when we can.

## **Off-leash Dog Parks are open and happy in Newton**

Dogs in Newton have special advantages, because there are seven active Off-Leash Dog Parks in the City: Old Cold Spring (off Beacon Street); Newton Centre Playground (off Centre or Homer Street); Cabot Park (off Newtonville Ave or Eastside Parkway); Claflin Playground (off Lowell Ave.); McGrath Park (off Washington St. West Newton); Hunnewell Park (enter from New Balance Parking lot); and Braceland Playground (off Chestnut Street in Newton Highlands).

Please review the hours and further information for each park on the website:  
[Newtonma.gov/gov/parks/city/offleash/](http://Newtonma.gov/gov/parks/city/offleash/)

Bring your dog out to play! You will have fun too.

## **Membership Growth is our Goal**

For many years we have had a steady family of members whose support has enabled us to stay in touch, sponsor social events, and hold useful and informative meetings on topics and issues of current importance. Please send your ideas along to Ken Lyons with suggested meeting topics and ideas for useful discussion. As our senior citizens move south or migrate to other parts of Greater Boston, we need to identify new neighbors who might enjoy being part of the CHA. This issue of the newsletter is being sent to a number of nearby neighbors who have not been on our mailing list. If you are one of those, please accept our thanks for reading this far! We hope to see you soon.

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE - CONTACT INFORMATION**

**For more information, please contact any of the following:**

Name	Phone	Email	Committee
Ken Lyons	617-262-5300	lyonsassociates@verizon.net	President
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**Website:** [chanewton.org](http://chanewton.org)      **Send email or address changes to** [admin@chanewton.org](mailto:admin@chanewton.org)

**Detach and fill out the form below when sending dues and membership information to the CHA**

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**MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION – CHESTNUT HILL ASSOCIATION**

**Mail with check to: Chestnut Hill Association, Box 67173, Chestnut Hill MA 02467**

**NAME(S)** \_\_\_\_\_

**ADDRESS** \_\_\_\_\_

**EMAIL ADDRESS** \_\_\_\_\_

**TELEPHONE** \_\_\_\_\_

**2017 Dues PAYMENT: \$50 \_\_\_ \$75 \_\_\_ \$100 \_\_\_ \$150 \_\_\_ More \$ \_\_\_**

**Please send notices or newsletters via Email \_\_\_\_\_ or US Mail \_\_\_\_\_ (check one)**

*Your donations are not tax deductible, sorry!* We always welcome new members and new volunteers. Please contact any member of the executive committee (above) for more information. If you want to suggest friends or neighbors to serve or join the CHA, please send names to [admin@chanewton.org](mailto:admin@chanewton.org) or to CHA address above. **Thank you!**

Dick Tucker