



LOWDOWN FALL 2021

LETTER FROM THE LFIA PRESIDENT

By Erin Kandamar

I hope everyone is falling into fall in Lower Falls! One thing many neighbors seemed to fall head over heels over was our modified Progressive Dinner held on Saturday, October 2. Instead of the traditional three course meal, we had appetizer rounds hosted by many neighbors in their lovely backyards. The weather, the food, the drinks and all the fun socializing made for a perfect night out. After the event, the LFIA sponsored a movie on the field, Big Night. A huge thanks to Matt Day, Jack Green and Cate Stabile for once again organizing a terrific event for our neighborhood. Speaking of movies, the LFIA is hosting another outdoor movie event on **Friday, October 22** on Hamilton Field. We'll have a double feature with an early movie at 6:30pm for kids and a second, slightly scarier movie at 8:30 for teens/adults. Keep reading to the end to see which movies we'll be showing!

Our annual fall community meeting is planned for **Sunday, November 7th at 4 PM**. The meeting will be via Zoom. Hopefully we'll be able to meet in person by next spring! If you are new to the neighborhood, or if you have lived here for a while but never came to the LFIA community meetings, please consider coming. At the LFIA community meeting, you will learn more about how the LFIA supports our

neighborhood and the many ways you can get involved! The LFIA is a volunteer organization and we rely on our neighbors to help. If you have an idea for a neighborhood event, please let me or another board member know. If you are interested in helping with some projects like our neighborhood skating rink or the community garden, please reach out. More information about volunteering is provided in this newsletter.

It's hard to believe that just a year ago the Newton City Council approved the new development at Riverside Station. Since then, the original plans were revised and the City Council approved the new plans in September 2021. You can read more about the changes to the project in this newsletter. Many thanks to the Riverside Committee for leading this effort.

And lastly, with the pleasant fall weather and onset of vibrant foliage, I encourage you all to take a walk, jog or run along the Pony Truss Trail, a historic trail along the Riverside Greenway and the Charles River. In September 2020 work was completed to refurbish the trail, which is part of a larger network of local trails. The best way to access the trail is from Riverside Park, off Recreation Road, which also has free parking. More information on the Pony Truss Trail can be found here: <https://newtonconservators.org/pony-truss-trail-work-begins/>

As always, feel free to reach out at erin@kandamar.com or 617-864-9950.

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**LFIA COMMUNITY MEETING
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2021 @ 4PM
ZOOM (INVITE TO BE DISTRIBUTED)**

Agenda

- Welcome
- Approval of Minutes (Spring 2021)
- Treasurer's Report
- Beautification Update
- Communications Update
- Membership Update
- Riverside Update



THE LFIA IS A VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATION

By The LFIA Board

The non-profit Newton Lower Falls Improvement Association relies on members of the Lower Falls community volunteering. All residents are welcome. Without volunteers, the LFIA would cease to function. Think about Hamilton Park without the trees surrounding it, without benches; imagine Riverside 30% larger than what was described in the Riverside update, without bike and pedestrian

connections; and what would Lower Falls be with no listserv!

Your energy is needed to keep the LFIA a vibrant community organization. Volunteer activities include:

- joining the board for a two-year term - there are currently 2 vacancies on the board;
- helping to maintain the listserv as a vibrant neighborhood communication tool;
- helping to organize events such as the Falls Ball, Movie Nights, or the annual Progressive Dinner;
- participation in Spring and Fall clean up and plantings organized by the Beautification Committee.

Right now, there are two projects that need leadership. If there is no interest, then the Board may terminate these activities. We need one or more people to organize and develop teams for:

- **The skating rink:** the rink needs installation in late November, maintenance of the ice surface over the winter, special skating events to celebrate, and take down/storage in the spring.
- The **community garden and orchard** need loving care and upgrades. The garden can be a source of delicious produce for personal or shared consumption, education and modeling of how each of us can grow some of our own food.

If you are ready to step up and volunteer or have more questions about what is involved contact any member of the LFIA Board of Directors.

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RIVERSIDE APPROVED (AGAIN)

By the LFIA Riverside Committee

The Newton City Council unanimously approved a revised development plan for the Riverside MBTA Station site on September 9, 2021, after months of public hearings and discussions on important changes to the project, such as building heights and design, traffic, noise, lighting, and lab safety.

The Council had approved a multiuse development at Riverside in October 2020 that includes housing, offices, and retail, transportation, and green spaces. But in January 2021, Mark Development (MD) pivoted their project and asked to replace the hotel planned for the site with a lab/life science building, as well as other changes. With the approval of the revised development plan, construction by MD is expected to begin in 2022–23.

MD plans to build 10 buildings totaling 1.025 million square feet. The project includes:

- 550 apartments, 20% (110) of which will be permanently designated affordable;
- Two lab/life science office buildings standing 109 feet and 157 feet tall, respectively;
- 22,000 square feet of ground floor retail that will likely include a 5,000-6,000 square foot specialty grocer; and
- 2,170 garage and street parking spaces.

The project provides for:

- \$3,020,000 in funds for neighborhood improvements, including off-site traffic

mitigation, noise mitigation (such as a sound barrier), and possibly plantings along DeForest Road near Grove Street;

- \$3 million for walking and biking trails behind the project. You can learn more about these at <https://riversidegreenwayma.wildapricot.org>;
- \$1.5 million for improvements to Williams School; and
- \$1.4 million for improvements to the City's sewer system.

To handle the additional traffic generated by the project, MD plans to build a new highway ramp for 128 North and a roundabout at Grove Street and Asheville Road for 128 South. The developer also plans to create a 10-foot, two-way bike path from the development to the Hamilton Community Center.

Schedule: MD expects to demolish the Hotel Indigo in Spring 2022 and to begin construction of the parking garage, highway ramp, and roundabout in early 2023. A parking plan for Newton Lower Falls is to be put in place before construction begins to help prevent overflow parking on local streets.

Liaison Committee: The city has established a neighborhood Liaison Committee to address residents' concerns before and during construction. It will include Barbara Gruenthal and Liz Mirabile (from Lower Falls) and Italo Visco and Phil Wallas (from Auburndale), along with two of the Ward 4 City Councilors and representatives from Mark Development. The committee will hold public meetings to discuss issues that arise and to update the community on plans and progress.

To learn more about the project and the work it took to reach a compromise, please visit the LFIA website at: <https://newtonlowerfalls.org/Riverside>. You will also find a memorandum that explains the federal, state, and local safety regulations around lab/life science uses in Newton.

Many, many thanks to everyone who attended virtual and in-person meetings and public

hearings, wrote emails and letters, and donated time and money in support of the LFIA Riverside Committee over the past three-and-a-half years!

Big thanks also go to our Ward 4 Councilors—Lenny Gentile, Josh Krintzman, and Chris Markiewicz—who advocated tirelessly on behalf of Lower Falls and Auburndale, as well as other City Councilors who recognized the concerns of local residents during the long review process.



IS YOUR HOUSE A HISTORIC LANDMARK?

By Tori Zissman and Cyrisse Jaffee

Did you know that property owners can nominate a property for landmark status at any time? The mayor, city councilors, and members of the Newton Historical Commission (NHC) can also nominate properties.

Landmark status protects only the exterior of the house unless the application specifically includes the interior. The designation won't adversely affect the value of the house or the ability to sell it. Landmark status does protect the house from being torn down; major changes to the exterior need to be approved by the NHC.

Along with Ward 4 City Councilors Lenny Gentile and Chris Markiewicz, plus Councilor-At-Large Pam Wright, we recently supported the nomination of 206-208 Concord Street, also known as the Zenas Allen Crane House, for landmark status. This house, which is already recorded in the Massachusetts Historical Commission database, is distinctive in architecture and is also significant to the history of Newton—two of the requirements for landmark preservation. (See Section 60,

Chapter 22 of the Newton Planning Development Ordinance.)

Built circa 1830, the Federal-style house includes a fieldstone foundation, a side gabled roof, and a clapboard exterior. By 1848, it was owned by the Crane family, whose papermaking business was part of the industry that shaped Newton Lower Falls for over a century. Stephen Crane and his brother, Zenus (also spelled as Zenas), began their careers in NLF. The mill in Dalton, MA, which Zenus opened in 1801 with his NLF partners Henry Wiswall and John Willard, had an exclusive contract to produce currency paper for the entire U.S. The Crane family name is still associated with papermaking today - over 200 years later! (Stephen Crane was also a founding member of St. Mary's Church.)

The application was reviewed at the October meeting of the Newton Historical Commission and was deemed worthy of further research and a landmark hearing, which is currently set for the November meeting of the NHC. If you are interested in supporting the nomination, or to find out more about landmarking, please contact Tori at tzissman@gmail.com.



PORCHFEST RETURNS IN 2022

By James Wexler

Get excited for a day of great outdoor music throughout our corner of Newton. Newton Porchfest will return next summer. More details to come as we start planning!



STREET TREE PLANTING

By LFIA Beautification Committee

You have surely seen young trees in green irrigation bags popping up in Lower Falls and throughout Newton. You may have also noticed the steady loss of street trees that have aged and deteriorated, leaving streets and sidewalks unshaded heat sinks.

These new trees are planted through a group tree planting program sponsored by the non-profit Newton Tree Conservancy (NTC). NTC selects the best tree species for each site from large canopy trees to smaller ornamental trees that will not disrupt the sidewalks or overhead power lines. For example:

- Under utility wires: serviceberry, crabapple, Amur maackia, tree lilac, and cherry.
- Where wires are not present: swamp white oak, red oak, linden, London plane trees, disease-resistant American elms, and pear.
- Other species have included hornbeam, hophornbeam, Kentucky coffee tree, Turkish filbert, Worplesdon sweetgum and mountain ash.

Last year we planted 21 trees in Lower Falls!

We are putting together a group application for the Spring of 2022. This is a great opportunity for kids to be involved. The deadline for our group application is **January 9, 2022** and the expected planting date is sometime in April.

If you have an open space of 20 feet or more in the berm (space between the sidewalk and curb) in front of your house, then you can plant a tree there and add shade to your street and sidewalk. Trees help the climate by cleaning and cooling

the air, and adding oxygen and moisture to the atmosphere.

There is no cost for the tree or water gator. You only need to commit to keeping the tree watered, using the tree gator provided, for two years and be available to assist in planting in April. Last year, due to COVID, the city Forestry Dept. did the planting. In 2022, we will be helping to plant. If you are interested, download the application from the LFIA website: <https://newtonlowerfalls.wildapricot.org/resources/Documents/NTC-TREE-APP-FORM-Committment%20expectations%20and%20Details.pdf>

The process is simple: review the application page-1 (expectations) and complete page 2 (details). Return your completed page 2 to Ted Chapman by **December 15th, 2021**. Ted will consolidate the group order and coordinate the process with NTC volunteers.

Let Ted know if you have any questions or need support in completing the application. One easy way to generate a site plan showing where you want the tree(s) planted is to download/print an image of your house lot on the city website – <https://gis2.ci.newton.ma.us/browser.html> – type in your address, zoom in and take a screen shot of your lot. If you add the aerial layer it will show existing trees and overhead wires. Draw in the proposed tree locations, where any overhead wires exist and the width of the berm. If there is no sidewalk and berm, that's ok; just let us know.

Forward the application and site plan to Ted Chapman, 91 Cornell St. either digitally or in print form. NTC will review the application including making a site visits to determine the

best tree for your proposed location. This will be largely dependent on whether there are power lines overhead.

Trees are especially needed on Grove, Concord, Cornell, Pine Grove, Colgate, and Hallron. But there are openings on every street in Lower Falls. Let's all do our part to keep our neighborhood green and prevent climate change.

Whether you want to plant a tree or not, consider supporting NTC!
<https://www.newtontreeconservancy.org/donate>



MEMBERSHIP: JOIN THE LFIA!

By Nancy Finn

Lower Falls is a community of about 450 homes and apartments. Current membership of the LFIA is 141 households with 227 active members — 144 family, 10 individual, 17 senior and 30 senior family and 21 inactive; 42 have dues pending. The most regular source of LFIA income year after year is dues.

Please support your neighborhood association by paying your tax-deductible annual dues. These funds help support many events Lower Falls events. You must be a paid-up member to vote at LFIA meetings. Payment will enroll you as a member for a year following the date received.

Your dues help make many of the following activities possible: annual progressive dinner, ice skating rink, Falls Ball, community garden, orchard and more. The LFIA also operates the

Lower Falls Listserv, which has 489 members, and is open to all residents of Lower Falls.

Your TAX-DEDUCTIBLE membership contribution is vital to continue these activities!

Membership categories are:

- Individual - (\$20) anyone 18 or older who is a resident of Lower Falls;
- Family - (\$30) a bundled membership for all members of resident households;
- Senior Family - (\$15) for resident couples, age 65 years or older;
- Senior - (\$10) individual residents, age 65 years or older;
- Business - (\$30) anyone owning a business in Lower Falls; and
- Friend - (\$15) any person, wherever residing, who desires to further the objectives of the LFIA. Note this is a non-voting membership.

Membership applications may be completed, and dues paid online or by mail:

- online at: <https://newtonlowerfalls.org/Join-the-LFIA>
- download a mail-in application form at: <https://newtonlowerfalls.wildapricot.org/resources/Documents/LFIA%20Mail-in%20Membership%20Form.pdf>

To join the Listserv, send a request to: <https://newtonlowerfalls.org/Join-our-email>

The listserv benefits include:

- keeping touch with community activities;

- getting recommendations for everything from service and health care providers to restaurants;
- wildlife sightings and ID; and
- items being given away by neighbors or listing your own.

Did you know you can support the LFIA by selecting LFIA as your preferred charity on AMAZON SMILE?

To make this selection, go to: https://smile.amazon.com/gp/chpf/about/ref=smi_se_rspo_laas_aas. Select Newton Lower Falls Improvement Association and Amazon will donate 0.5% of all your purchases to the LFIA.

If you have any questions, please email me at nefinn@msn.com.



CINNAMON STREUSAL APPLE CIDER MUFFINS

From Food.com

MUFFINS

1 3/4 cups all-purpose flour
 1/3 cup granulated sugar
 2 teaspoons baking powder
 1/4 teaspoon salt
 1 beaten egg
 3/4 cup apple cider or 3/4 cup apple juice
 1/4 cup cooking oil

STREUSEL

1/3 cup packed brown sugar
 3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
 3 tablespoons cold butter

FOR STREUSEL: Stir brown sugar, flour, and cinnamon in small bowl. Cut in butter with a pastry blender. Set aside.

FOR MUFFINS: Lightly oil twelve 2 1/2-inch muffin cups or line with paper baking cups; set aside. In a medium mixing bowl stir together flour, granulated sugar, baking powder, and salt. Make a well in the center. In a small mixing bowl combine egg, apple cider, and oil; add all at once to flour mixture. Stir just till moistened. (The batter should be lumpy.).

Spoon about 1 tablespoon of the batter into each prepared muffin cup. Sprinkle 1 teaspoon of the brown sugar mixture over each. Fill with remaining batter. Sprinkle tops of muffins with remaining streusel.

Bake in a preheated 400° F oven until golden brown, about 20 minutes. Remove muffins from pans; cool slightly on racks.



EVENTS

LOCAL AUTHOR EVENT

On **Saturday, October 30 at 3:20 p.m.**, Cambridge author Kiaja Langley will read her debut picture book *When Langston Dances* at Saint Mary's Episcopal Church in Lower Falls (258 Concord Street). This is part of Story Starters Fall Open House from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. on that same day. Enjoy fall snacks, meet new friends, and enter to win fun raffle prizes! Learn about Story Starters, a program designed for parents who want to start and strengthen meaningful conversations about race with their young children (ages 3-8 and their siblings),

with whom Saint Mary's is partnering this fall. This fun, free, family friendly event is outdoors, so please bring your own blanket and dress to be outside!

MOVIE NIGHT ON HAMILTON FIELD

Join the LFIA on **Friday, October 22nd** for movies on Hamilton Field.

6:30: Monsters Inc



8:30 (approx): Friday the 13th



Please register, to let us know you are coming at:

<https://newtonlowerfalls.wildapricot.org/event-4533236>

NLFIA will provide popcorn and treats. You bring a blanket or chair to sit on and a blanket to keep you warm.

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The Lowdown is the newsletter of the Lower Falls Improvement Association, Newton Lower Falls, MA 02462 •

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