



Newton Lower Falls
IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

LOWDOWN SPRING 2021

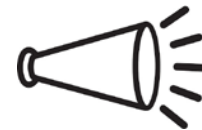
LETTER FROM THE LFIA PRESIDENT

By Erin Kandamar

It's hard to believe that one year ago the LFIA held its first ever remote annual meeting via Zoom as the world slowly settled into what would become a very new normal. While last year created a lot of fear and uncertainty, I believe this year we have turned a corner and am hopeful for the future. A long-awaited spring is in the air, our kids are heading back to full time learning at Newton public schools, and the vaccine rollout is well underway in Massachusetts. Despite having to postpone many of our LFIA sponsored events this past year, the LFIA did embrace the power of giving back. Our Plants and Poinsettia's fundraiser raised **\$1300 that was donated to the Newton Food Pantry**. The LFIA also donated an additional **\$1000 to the Centre Street Pantry**. If folks in the neighborhood have fundraising ideas, please let me or any member of our board know and we'd be happy to help. I'm excited to learn that [Newton Serves](#) is a go this spring with limited capacity and strict adherence to Covid guidelines. Our new beautification chair, Suzanne Pond, will lead a neighborhood volunteer day targeted for a Saturday morning this spring to distribute much needed mulch in Hamilton Field. More information about this event will be communicated over the next few weeks.

Additionally, we're in the planning stage to partner with our beloved ice cream shop, Wally's Wicked Good, to provide ice cream on the field to neighbors who volunteer for our spring mulch clean-up event. More to come! Lastly, the Riverside development project has taken a new turn. As many of you know, the 1.025 million square-foot Riverside development was approved by the Newton City Council in October 2020. On March 8, 2021—just over four months after approval—Mark Development filed for a zoning amendment and an amendment to the Special Permit that includes several significant changes to building use, heights, and other aspects of Riverside. The developer says these proposed changes were prompted by the coronavirus pandemic. More information on these changes and actions we can take as a neighborhood are included in this newsletter. And lastly, the LFIA extends a warm congratulations to our newly elected city councilors Tarik Lukas (Ward 2 At-Large) and John Oliver (Ward 1 At-Large). For questions, comments or looking for opportunities to get more involved in our neighborhood, please reach out at erin@kandamar.com.

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Hooray! Thanks to the advocacy of our Ward 4 Councilors—Chris Markiewicz, Josh Krintzman, and Lenny Gentile—Grove Street in front of Riverside is set to be repaved. Work may begin as early as March 29, 2021.



**LFIA COMMUNITY MEETING
THURSDAY APRIL 15, 7PM
ZOOM (INVITE TO BE DISTRIBUTED)**

Agenda

- Welcome
- Approval of Minutes (Fall 2020)
- Treasurer's Report
- Fundraising Update
- Communication Updates
- Beautification Committee Update
- Membership Report
- Riverside Update



NEW NEIGHBORS

By Sasha Woldman

Will Hardin, Sasha Woldman and their 3-year-old daughter Ellie moved to 4 Pierrepoint Rd. in November. Will works as an engineering consultant, and Sasha is an engineer/research scientist. They love the new neighborhood and can't wait to get to know everyone properly post-pandemic. For now, you can find them playing in the yard, on the playground, or scooting around the neighborhood with their cattle dog Sheba in tow.



RIVERSIDE UPDATE

By LFIA Riverside Committee

As many of you know, the 1.025 million square-foot (SF) Riverside development submitted by Mark Development (MD) was approved by the Newton City Council in October 2020. (For the Special Permit details, check the City's website [here.](#))

On March 8, 2021—just over four months after approval—MD filed for a zoning amendment and an amendment to the Special Permit that includes **several significant changes** to building use, heights, and other aspects of Riverside. The developer says these proposed changes were prompted by the coronavirus pandemic. While we acknowledge the current market shifts, we believe it is premature to propose significant changes now, given that the project will be built over 10 or more years. (Click [here](#) to see our full LFIA Riverside statement.)

Below are highlights of the proposed changes:

- **The hotel (70') would be replaced with a much taller (124') lab/life sciences building** on the NLF side of the project.
- **The original office tower would be reduced** in height from 169' to 143' and be a lab not office building.
 - Although the signage would be the same as the original office tower (200 SF signs facing Route 128, possible logo sign facing NLF), it

- should be less visible from NLF because the building would be 26' shorter.
 - The signage for the other lab building would be **more visible** from NLF.
 - The overall office/lab space would increase by over 115,000 square feet, from 254,120 SF to 369,735 SF.
 - **Residential units would be reduced** by 32, from 582 to 550.
 - **MD has proposed that 20% of the units be affordable, up from 17.5 %** in the earlier plan.
 - **Public open space would decrease slightly**, from 1.56 acres to 1.21 acres.
 - **Retail space would shrink** by 17,000 square feet, from 39,014 SF to 21,981 SF.
 - The developer wasn't able to contract with a grocery store like Trader Joe's, as originally planned.
 - They are proposing instead a 6,000 SF convenience store/small food market.
 - **Parking spaces would increase** by 139 (from 2,032 to 2,171).
 - **Garage height would increase** by one story.
 - **Revised traffic impact remains unclear.**
 - The developer indicates a 1% traffic increase overall and roughly 37% decrease at morning and evening "peak hours." Our traffic engineer will analyze MD's traffic study.
 - Since there isn't much data on the traffic generated by lab/life sciences buildings, it's hard to predict what this change would mean for traffic at Riverside.
 - MD remains committed to the zoning requirement to build a new ramp to 128 North.
 - **Mitigation money amounts will remain unchanged** for the Lower Falls/Auburndale neighborhood (\$1.5 million) and for recreation trails (\$3 million).
 - **City net tax revenue is projected to increase** by approximately \$850,000 annually.
 - **Changes to Grove Street buildings will affect design.**
 - One residential building will be longer by 21' and another residential/retail building will be shorter by 39'.
 - These changes could make Grove Street look slightly less dense than under the approved plan.
 - **No change to the timeline.** Construction has been slated to begin in Spring 2022 and continue for many years.
- NEXT STEPS:** Mark Development will **need City Council** approval for these proposed changes. **This will likely mean public hearings will begin in mid- to late April.**
- Stay informed!** Watch for emails from the LFIA Riverside Committee and visit our [website](#).



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PORCHFEST UPDATE

By James Wexler

Unfortunately, we won't be able to have a Newton Porchfest this year. The public health uncertainty makes it impossible to do all the advance planning required. We very much look forward to seeing everyone when return in 2022, on **June 4th, 2022** to be exact—mark your calendars now!

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A HIT SPRING RECIPE

By Joanna Calcagno

Here is an appetizer recipe that friends and family will love. It's originally from a Todd English cookbook.

Tuna Tartare

- 1 1/2 pound of sashimi grade tuna, diced into pieces the size of a raisin.
- 1 tablespoon of chopped fresh basil leaves
- 1 tablespoon of chopped cilantro leaves
- 1 tablespoon of finely chopped peeled fresh ginger
- Greens from 1 bunch scallions, finely chopped (just the green part)
- 1/2 to 1 teaspoon Vietnamese chili paste (could also use Chinese or Thai chili paste)
- 2 teaspoons of soy sauce
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 1 teaspoon of kosher salt (you can add more if you think you need it, I just do 1/2 of a teaspoon)
- 1 teaspoon of toasted sesame oil

Combine all the ingredients in a large bowl and chill. I take it out about 30 minutes before serving. You should make this and serve it the same day.

Put the tuna on a ritz cracker or any cracker you like or just eat it without a cracker. I sometimes get seaweed salad and put a little on my serving of the tuna.

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CONFESSIONS OF A NEIGHBOR

By Summer B. Zeh

I have a confession. I was this many years old before I started composting. Before you ask why I would do something so not on brand for me, it has to do with a childhood memory involving my grandfather's compost pile, a pitchfork and a rodent nest. For years, I've been haunted by that memory and also by the knowledge that the anaerobic decomposition of all my clementine peels is creating methane gas. Newton has a great curbside pick-up option with Black Earth Compost, but that didn't work for me. However,

among the few silver linings of 2020 was that the city added a compost drop-off pilot program at Rumford. Now I keep a container with a compostable bag in my kitchen freezer. When it fills up, I tie it up and move it to the chest freezer. Every couple of months I bring a ton of frozen food waste to Rumford. So, if you're like me, looking for a way to compost but crippled by a definitely-exaggerated childhood memory, perhaps the drop-off program is right for you. Learn more about the city's compost options [here](#):

<https://www.newtonma.gov/government/public-works/sustainable-materials-management/composting>



Our last compost haul to Rumford!



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

LFIA website: <https://newtonlowerfalls.org>

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Riverside Development Plan Comparisons

	BH Normandy	Mark Development Past Filings			MD Current Plan	LFIA Riverside Committee
	Approved Plan	Initial Filing	Revised Filing	Revised Filing Approved by City Council 10/19/2020	Revised Filing	Initial Filing
Filing Date	10/2013	3/29/2019	8/21/2019	3/24/2020	3/8/2021	5/31/2019
Retail GFA	20,000	64,655	64,176	38,895	21,981	40,000
Residential GFA & units	335,000 290	738,709 675	556,494 524	654,977 582	633,284 550	575,000 540
Hotel GFA & keys	85,681 191	103,852 194	79,683 154	77,300 150	0 0	80,000 154
Office GFA	225,000	552,268	523,509	253,828	369,735 *	120,000
Community Ctr.	11,000	0	0	0	0	10,000
Parking spaces	2,050	2,922	2,758	2,032	2,171	NA
Total GFA	676,681 ⁽¹⁾	1,459,484 ⁽²⁾	1,223,862 ⁽²⁾	1,025,000 ⁽²⁾	1,025,000 ⁽³⁾	825,000 ⁽⁴⁾
# Subsidized Units ⁽⁵⁾	44	102	92	102	110	95
Residential %	50%	50%	45%	64%	62%	70%
Site Information						
Office/Lab Bldg. 1	NA	14 stories ⁽⁶⁾ 197 feet	13 stories ⁽⁶⁾ 145 feet	10 stories ⁽⁶⁾ 169.3 feet	9 stories ⁽⁷⁾ 143 feet	10 stories ⁽⁶⁾ 135 feet
Hotel/Condo Bldg. 2	NA	18 stories 209 feet	6 stories 69 feet	6 stories 66.3 feet	0 0	NA
Office/Lab Bldg. 2	NA	NA	NA	NA	7 stories ⁽⁷⁾ 124 feet	NA
Grove Street bldgs. Minimum Setback from curb	NA	30 feet	30 feet	40 feet	40 feet	45 feet

* Includes 7,500 MBTA office space located in garage.

(1) Plan excluded Hotel Indigo. However, hotel sf of 85,681 is included for comparison with subsequent plans.

(2) Excludes 20,000 to 30,000 sf mechanical space.

(3) Excludes 70,000 sf mechanical space.

(4) The original filing allocated 95,000 excessive square footage to the Hotel Indigo. The excessive square footage has been reallocated to housing.

(5) Includes 100% AMI units that do not meet state Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) standard.

(6) Maximum building height does not include rooftop mechanicals.

(7) Includes rooftop mechanicals