



Newton Lower Falls
IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

LOWDOWN SPRING 2022

LETTER FROM THE LFIA PRESIDENT

Dear Neighbors

This Spring marks the two year anniversary of the COVID pandemic. Thankfully, we seem to be at a positive turning point. I am happy to announce that for the first time in two years, the LFIA will be holding its annual Spring community meeting in person at the Hamilton Community Center. While masks are not required, we fully support anyone who wishes to wear a mask. Whether you are new to the neighborhood or not, please consider coming to the meeting on **Sunday, April 10th**. At the meeting, you can learn about the many ways the LFIA supports Newton Lower Falls from sponsoring activities and events, enhancing our neighborhood's green landscape, and informing you of citywide initiatives like the Riverside Development that directly impacts Lower Falls. If you are not a member of the LFIA, please consider joining. Membership information is listed below and you can join directly on our website at [Newton Lower Falls Improvement Association - Join-the-LFIA](#). We will also talk more about how you can join the LFIA board as we do have a few spots available. Serving on the LFIA board is a great way to make a direct impact to our community.

LFIA Spring Community Meeting

When: April 10, 2022 at 2PM

Where: Hamilton Community Center

Meeting Agenda:

- Approval of Minutes from Fall 2021
- Riverside Update
- Landmarking Update
- Landscaping for Planned Roundabout on Asheville/Grove
- Beautification Update
- Upcoming Events Communications Update
- Membership Update
- Treasurer's Report

As we launch into Spring and celebrate the beginning of longer days and later sunsets, I am excited to announce a few events and initiatives. Suzanne Pond who leads our Beautification Committee has been busy planning to transform our community garden into a perennial flower cutting garden to honor former Lower Falls neighbor Wayne Clark who passed away at the end of last year and Marlene Archer who supported Lower Falls in many ways. The LFIA received over \$1,000 in donations to support this garden and will be announcing plans to help transform it this Spring. Get ready to jam out to some local beats as Newton Porchfest returns on **June 4th**. Newton PorchFest will be held outside at neighbors' homes throughout Lower Falls, Auburndale and Waban Center for an afternoon of free music. It's where the community comes together to share the joy of playing and listening to music. More information on Newton Porchfest can be found here <https://newton.porchfest.info/>. We are in early talks about sponsoring a Falls Ball type of event again this June and are working with some volunteers in the neighborhood. For those not familiar with the Falls Ball, it's

basically a day-long series of really fun activities including food, sports, games, music, lots of laughs and occasionally square dancing. And finally, the LFIA will again sponsor a series of outdoor movie nights on the field. If you are interested in getting involved with any of these events or have an idea for an event, please be in touch with me or any member of the LFIA board.

Warmly,

Erin Kandamar (erin@kandamar.com)

NEIGHBORHOOD SHOUTOUTS!

By Summer Zeh

- **Ricky and Melody Pouchot** welcomed their daughter, Shea, to the family in October. Her big brother, Vail, is excited to begin introducing her to all the children in the neighborhood!
- **John and Lucia Stewart** celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary last November.
- **Paul Stewart**, son of John and Lucia, is running the Boston Marathon to raise funds for the Newton Food Pantry, which supports many Newton families with food and personal supplies. You can access Paul's fundraising page here: <https://www.givengain.com/ap/paul-stewart-raising-funds-for-newton-food-pantry/>
- **Megan Hughes**, daughter of Jeffrey Hughes and Nancy Stauffer, is running the Boston Marathon this year to support West End House, a Boston-based organization empowering youth in academics, skills, passions and leadership. You can access her

[fundraising page here](#) and track her progress with her bib number 26346.

PORCHFEST RETURNS

By James Wexler

After a 2 year break, Newton Porchfest returns on **Saturday, June 4th**. Check out dozens of free concerts in people's yards throughout Lower Falls, Auburndale, and in Waban center. Visit <https://newton.porchfest.info/> for more information and details on how you can help out.

NEIGHBOR'S EXPERIENCE IN UKRAINE

By Michelle Goldhaber

My first trip to Ukraine was in July of 2002. I was studying religion and peacebuilding at Harvard Divinity School, and after doing research in the local Ukrainian community, I went to continue my project in Ukraine that summer. I got to see a lot of the country – from city to village, east-west, north-south, and because my language skills were not that great yet, I worked through translators, and relied heavily on intuition and non-verbal communication. That trip was life changing - I made very deep connections with people there, with the land itself and with my own identity as a Jew and future clergy-person. One day, while traveling on a dusty, bumpy road in an overheated car with no AC, after a long stretch of travel and field notes and interviews, I had something of a calling. My mind drifted to my own ancestors, who fled from these lands in 1921, to my rabbis, many of whom had been apprehensive about me being in Ukraine, to my own relationship with Judaism and my inclination towards reconciliation, connection and universalism. I had the realization that: (1) this was a place I would return to, and (2) part

of my role was to be an ambassador of sorts – being a Jew in Ukraine after centuries of complicated and intertwined history, and bringing something of Ukraine back to the Jewish community in America. At that time, I had no idea how that role would manifest 20 years later.

I went back to Ukraine the following summer to learn the language, and again the next year as an election observer in the Orange Revolution. Finally, after HDS graduation, I went to live in Lviv on a Fulbright in 2006, which stretched on for the next 12 years. My focus was Jewish-Ukrainian relations, though I also did work and research in diversity in general. I led wilderness expeditions with people from all backgrounds, taught and edited English, did mediation trainings, presented at academic conferences, and fully immersed in everyday life. I joined a run group, a ballroom dance team, various Jewish communities, frequented countless coffee shops, played street music, and made lots of close friends who became like family. I celebrated Ukrainian holidays and made other international friends from Africa, Asia, Europe and South America. My most recent work was at the Ukrainian Catholic University, helping support their Jewish Studies Program. Our hope was to begin an exchange with Hebrew College Rabbinical School, where I'm currently a student. Then the pandemic curtailed those plans. And now, the Russian invasion...

My heart is breaking for Ukraine and for my friends there. I'm doing all I can to support from afar, but it's not easy. We've all witnessed the cruelty, war crimes and violence Ukrainians are enduring now, but also their unbreakable spirit, which is strong as ever. This does not surprise me in the least. What does surprise me is the massive showing of support here. I never imagined I'd see so many Ukrainian flags on our streets, or hear so many Jews crying out

in solidarity with Ukrainians. Our stories continue to be complicated and intertwined.

I hope and pray for a swift and total end to the violence, for continued support for Ukrainians and all refugees, and that peacetime life can resume in a free, if forever-changed Ukraine.

Slava Ukraini! Glory to Ukraine!

RIVERSIDE NEWS

By Ted Chapman

As part of the special permit granted to Mark Development (MD) for the Riverside Station project, a **Neighborhood Liaison Committee** was formed to review and discuss plans and issues that arise concerning the project. The current Committee members are:

- Ward 4 Councilors Josh Krintzman and Chris Markiewicz;
- representatives from Mark Development; and
- representatives from Auburndale (Phil Wallas) and Lower Falls (Barbara Gruenthal and Liz Mirabile).

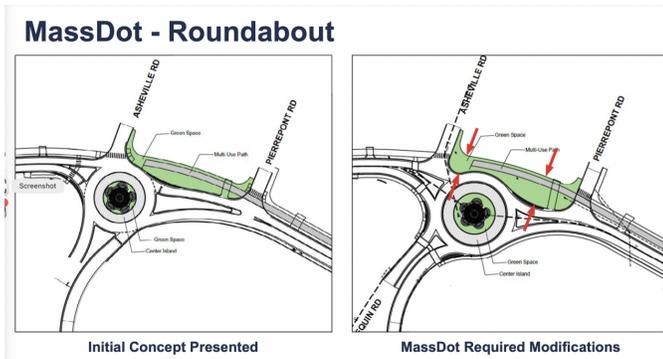
The Committee meets regularly. The meetings, which are open to the public, are announced on the Lower Falls listserv. See also [Upcoming Events](#) on the LFIA Riverside website for links to recent meetings, building designs, and other documents.

To manage the significant increase in traffic that the development will bring, a new roundabout will be constructed on Grove Street near the intersection of Asheville and the I-95/Rt. 128 Southbound ramps. Because this section of Grove Street is a state highway, the roundabout must be approved by the Mass Department of Transportation (DOT).

In order to reduce speeds and improve safety, MassDOT recently requested significant

changes to the roundabout conceptual design that was approved by the City Council as part of the special permit.

This re-design eliminates the ability to make a left turn from Asheville onto Grove Street towards Auburndale or to access the highway ramp from Asheville. (See the diagrams below.) Instead, neighbors will need to use alternate routes. MD's traffic engineer has suggested that the most reasonable alternate route will be to take Pierrepont, make a *right* onto Grove (because a left out of Pierrepont will be challenging with the increased traffic volume), and then use the roundabout to reverse direction.



LANDMARKING SUCCESS!

By Cyrisse Jaffee

In May 2021, Tori Zissman and I, along with Jennifer Bentley and City Councilor Lenny Gentile, requested that 206-208 Concord Street be landmarked. Landmark status is granted by the Newton Historical Commission to preserve and protect “distinctive architecture and other characteristics of buildings, structures, landscapes, and places significant in the history and prehistory of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the City of Newton.”

There are only 26 properties in the entire city of Newton that are landmarked. On February 24, 2022, the house at 206-208 Concord Street became the 27th!

Stephen Crane Jr., one of the founding members of St. Mary's Church, and his younger brother Zenas were early paper mill owners in Newton Lower Falls—the industry that helped make it a prosperous 19th century village. (Zenas went on to build the Crane paper mill in Dalton, MA, which still has an exclusive contract to make U.S. currency.)



One of Stephen's sons, also named Zenas, remained in Lower Falls. By 1848, his widow, Rebecca, and their 3 children, were living at 206-208 Concord Street, which had been built c1830. As neighbor Randy Block said in his testimony to the Newton Historical Commission:

“If Rebecca Crane were able to look at her house today, she would recognize it instantly. It is true that the siding is now vinyl instead of clapboard but the size of the house, its two separate entrances, its distance from the street, its proximity to the neighboring houses also built in the 1830's is exactly as it was then. Rebecca and her children lived in half of the house at 206 Concord Street and the laborers lived in the other half at 208. The laborers would have had a short walk from the mills to the Crane house for their mid-day meal.

Rebecca would have been paid by the mill owners to provide room and board to their laborers.”

Landmarking does not lessen the value of a house, nor does it prevent the owner from making changes to it. However, it does preserve the property from being torn down, and any major (usually exterior) changes must be approved by the Newton Historical Commission.

206-208 Concord Street is not the oldest house in Newton Lower Falls, nor is it the fanciest. However, along with its associations with the papermaking industry and the Crane family, it is a fine example of how people lived and worked in our village in the 19th century. We are thrilled that it will join the roster of landmarked buildings in Newton.

Note: You can read a full report on 206-208 Concord Street prepared by the Newton Historical Commission, beginning on page 50, here:

<https://www.newtonma.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/81124/637822453637700000>.

Interested in more Newton Lower Falls history? Check out the expanded [The History of Lower Falls](#) section on the LFIA website, with links to two slide shows about the village as well as photographs and maps.

NLF SUGAR SEASON

By Matt Day

Many neighbors know that I have a passion for trees. I spend a lot of my free time reclaiming downed trees and carving them into bowls, spoons, serving boards, and furniture. Fewer people know that my first tree-based hobby was something totally different. In grade school, I started backyard maple syrup

production as a cub scout project. I kept it up, with help from my dad, until I moved away for college and then largely forgot about it.

Many years later, soon after we purchased our NLF home, we had an arborist survey our trees. Offhandedly, he mentioned that most of our maples were in fact sugar maples. That triggered some fond childhood memories and I was determined to restart my syrup making.



The process is simple and it's one of the first comforting signs that spring is coming – well ahead of the crocus blooming. When the calendar turns to February, I start scanning the forecast. The ideal sugaring weather is when the highs break 40 degrees, and the lows are below 20. When that happens, sap begins to flow and it's ready to tap the trees. It takes 30-40 gallons of sap to make one gallon of syrup, so big buckets are needed.

Once the sap buckets fill up, the next step is boiling. In our suburban setting and my small scale, I use a turkey fryer. Larger or more rural makers typically use wood fired set-ups. I use the many hours of boiling to clean out the garage, tend to the early tasks in the yard, or

just sit by the fire and relax. When enough water boils off and the temperature gets up to 219, the transformation to syrup is complete. You can filter the syrup, or just let it settle and pour off the clear “liquid gold.”

There have been other NLF sugarers out there. Former neighbor Andrew Hodgdon told us that he and his boys had more than a dozen taps in each year across the “woods” behind Colgate Rd, Cornell, and Grove Street. Interested in continuing the tradition? I’d be happy to chat and get you started.

LOWER FALLS GARDEN TOUR IS BACK FOR 2022!

By Ron Parkinson

If you enjoyed the garden tour last year we hope to see you again. If you missed it last year now is your chance to see what everyone was talking about. I think all of last year’s gardens are participating and we hope to add more this year. We welcome all gardeners to open their gardens, no matter the size or type, for one day. There is no judging and no awards; the gardens are just open for the enjoyment of the neighborhood.

Please don’t think gardens have to be flower gardens. Organic kitchen gardens, native plant gardens, container gardens, etc. can be even more interesting. This is a chance to see neighbors ask questions or just look and chat. Newton calls itself the garden city; let’s see if it is still true.

Please contact me (Ron@parkinsonmedia.com) if you are interested in opening your garden or just want to know more about what is involved.

We have not picked a date yet. That decision will be made by the garden hosts and announced on the listserv.

NEW FLOWER GARDEN AT COMMUNITY CENTER

By Ted Chapman

The LFIA Beautification Committee is excited to announce that we are converting our community veggie garden into a perennial flower garden filled with native pollinators that will flower from June through November providing blossoms for our homes.

The creation of a community flower cutting garden is an opportunity to honor our neighbors Wayne Clark, who we lost recently, and his wife Marlene Archer. They were both active members of our Lower Falls community, including the garden and orchard. This cutting garden will be a tribute to their contributions.

Please [join the fundraiser](#) for the Wayne Clarke and Marlene Archer Flower Garden. Our goal is \$1000. We plan a wooden plaque for the garden. We need someone with the skills to design and create this sign.

Gardening is a wonderful opportunity for neighbors, young and old, to learn about nature, gardening, and ecosystems. You’ll have seasoned mentors! We welcome and need your help with planting and the ongoing maintenance of this new garden. We are fortunate to have Francisco Shelton volunteer organizational support as an Eagle Scout project. Expect an email from him on the list-serve providing more details. We expect to plant in mid-May, and prep in the weeks leading up to that date.

Please reach out to [Suzanne Pond](#) or [Ted Chapman](#) if you would like to volunteer or if you have any questions about the donation process. Please [register your donation](#) on the website event page; payment can be made online or by check. We’ll send another email as

we get ready to prepare and plant the garden in April. Spring is just around the corner! Thank you for your support and helping to create cheer.

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

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SLOW COOKER CARROT CAKE AND ZUCCHINI BREAD OATMEAL: FAST, EASY DELICIOUS AND NUTRITIOUS - GET YOUR VEGGIES FOR BREAKFAST!

By Suzanne Pond

Vegan/gluten free/soy free

INGREDIENTS:

1/2 Cup Steel Cut Oats (you can use Gluten Free)
1 1/2 Cups vanilla flavored non-dairy milk (almond works well but you can use coconut or rice)
1 Carrot grated
1/2 Zucchini grated
Pinch of Salt, Nutmeg and Ground Cloves
1/2 TSP Cinnamon
2 TBS Brown Sugar or Maple Sugar or Agave Nectar (I prefer using Maple Sugar)
1/4 Cup Chopped Pecans – you can substitute with Walnuts
1 TSP Pure Vanilla Extract

DIRECTIONS: Oil your slow cooker. Combine all ingredients, except nuts, in the slow cooker. Cook on low for 6 to 8 hours (while you sleep!). Top with nuts when serving. You can also add raisins or any other toppings that you like. You will wake up to a yummy and hearty breakfast. You can store leftovers and reheat during the week.

SERVES 2 to 4 (2 large portions / 4 small portions) – I usually double the recipe.