



Newton Lower Falls
IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

LOWDOWN

SPRING 2019

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

By Kathleen Snyder

Dear Neighbors:

Happy Spring! I hope this edition of the Low Down finds you enjoying warmer weather.

We have a lot going on in Lower Falls right now and the weekend of April 27th and 28th is full of LFIA activities. Saturday evening there is an indoor movie night with a pot luck dessert table. Sunday we will have the Spring Community Meeting and the Spring Fling treasure hunt for kids.

Please see the attached agenda for our Community Meeting. While we expect Riverside to dominate the agenda, we also want to thank Bill Renke for his years of service to the LFIA. Bill is an example of a neighbor who gave so much to the Lower Falls community and his energy and spirit will be missed when he moves later this spring.

As most of you know, the LFIA is a volunteer run organization that sponsors many of the community activities that make Lower Falls such a special place to live. We manage the list serve, run the skating rink, sponsor movie nights, coordinate the Progressive Dinner, and throw fun parties for kids. In addition, the members of the Riverside Committee spend hours attending meetings across the city to make sure that we as a community have the most current information on the Riverside Development.

At this time, we are in need of additional volunteers. It is not a huge time commitment, but we need more people to make this organization work. We are looking for board

members to backfill open positions, neighbors to get involved with the Riverside project, folks to help with fundraising, and individuals who are willing to pick up an event and run with it.

If you have an idea for an event, a question about the neighborhood, or would like to get more involved, please contact me at snyderkathleen@gmail.com or 617-230-4576.

Kathleen

LFIA COMMUNITY MEETING

Sunday, April 28th 2:30pm to 4:30pm
Hamilton Community Center

Agenda

- Welcome
- Approval of Minutes
- Overview of LFIA sponsored activities
- Communications Updates
- Beautification Committee Update
- Treasurer's Report
- Membership Report
- Riverside Update
- Update from the State House and City Hall
- Announcements

NEW NEIGHBORS

By Cate Stabile

A few new neighbors have arrived in Lower Falls.

Gina and Andrew O'Connor moved to 10 Baker Place from Cambridge with their daughter, Ava, and dog, Gizmo. Gina works from home as a freelance editor/writer, and Andrew is an attorney in Boston. Ava, four years old, is excited to start kindergarten at Angier this fall!

Ricky, Melody, and 6-month-old son Vail Pourchot have moved from Newton Highlands to 29 Pierrepont Road. They are excited to be in Lower Falls and look forward to making new friends in the neighborhood!

Please welcome our new neighbors!

New to the neighborhood? Want to be included in the next Lowdown? Please contact me at stabilec@gmail.com.



RIVERSIDE DEVELOPMENT HEATS UP

By the LFIA Riverside Committee

The LFIA Riverside Committee is working nonstop to advocate for an appropriately sized development at the Riverside station that will not overwhelm Lower Falls and Auburndale with traffic, noise, pollution, and congestion. A huge thanks to our neighbors who have supported our efforts with time, wisdom, and donations and voiced their opinions in public forums. Gratitude as well to our City Councilors for their support and guidance! A lot is happening; here's a brief recap:

In late March, Mark Development filed for a special permit to cram 1.5 million square feet of apartments, condos, offices, retail shops, and parking into the MBTA Riverside Station site. We believe this new urban neighborhood, which includes two towers standing 18 and 14 stories tall, would strain the capacity of area roads, schools, infrastructure, and other services. Our committee's traffic consultant predicts this project would generate 13,800 vehicle trips a day – on top of the traffic we already have! This plan is more than double the size of a mixed-use plan the Newton City Council approved in 2013, which ultimately fell through.

We are also concerned the current proposal is so big that it would limit the site's ability to become truly transit-oriented, with enough room for badly needed expanded bus and rail services. And we are deeply worried about the cumulative effect of so many large development projects now under construction or consideration in Newton, including Riverside. We were dismayed that the developer filed for a special permit even before the conclusion of the City's Riverside visioning process, which has its final public meeting on **April 30 at 7 p.m., at Williams Elementary School.**

The special permit filing will kick off a series of public hearings, held by the City Council's Land Use Committee, that will focus on various aspects of the project. They might include traffic, housing, economic impact, design, and open space.

Our committee members have met regularly with city officials (Councilors, Mayor Fuller, planning staff); traffic, architecture, and other experts; other local advocacy groups; and even Mark Development to gather information and build our case for RightSize Riverside. We were invited to present at the City Council's Land Use Committee meeting on March 14, and we will be presenting at the Newton Free Library on **April 23, 7-9 p.m., at Druker Auditorium.**

The LFIA Riverside Committee does not oppose development at Riverside. We support sensible, sustainable development that reflects the scale of the Newton Lower Falls and Auburndale villages ... is limited to traffic that local streets and highways can bear ... provides access to efficient and reliable transportation ... maintains the ability to build out future transportation options to reduce highway congestion and pollution ... welcomes people of ALL ages, backgrounds, and abilities ... creates affordable housing ... preserves open and usable green space within the development ... links to nearby trails for recreation and transportation ... provides indoor and outdoor community space ... and connects, not isolates, Newton's close-knit communities.

We will share a hearing schedule and other updates as they arise. As we enter this new phase of public hearings, we will need everyone to show up, speak up, and/or write to the City Council and Mayor so they know there is reasoned, robust, and widespread opposition to the size and scale of this proposed development. Councilors are more likely to approve this project if they don't hear from us, especially because some special interest groups are urging large development. You can reach the Councilors and Mayor by writing to City Clerk David Olson at dolson@newtonma.gov.

Check out our (evolving) website, at <https://newtonlowerfalls.org/Riverside>. You may also follow us on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter (Username @RiversideSize) or email us at lfiariverside@gmail.com.

UPDATE FROM REPRESENTATIVE KHAN

By Kay Khan

Last month, in advance of the public pre-meeting presentation to the City Council Land Use Committee scheduled on March 14th, Mayor Ruthanne Fuller and I, State Representative Kay Khan, coordinated with the MBTA to organize a meeting with the LFIA Riverside Committee to answer questions in the letter I submitted on their behalf to MBTA/MassDOT. I was pleased we were able to meet with Scott Bosworth, Chief Strategy Officer of MassDOT, to receive clarification on a number of questions the LFIA Riverside Committee had regarding the Developer's plans and its effect on Newton. I thank the Ward 4 City Councilors Gentile, Krintzman and Markiewicz, Councilors Downs and Auchincloss for attending as well as the Mayor's team - Barney Heath, Planning Director, and Jonathan Yeo, Chief Operating Officer - for joining the meeting. We will continue to advocate for improved transit and greenway options at Riverside. Please stay tuned for forthcoming updates on my website: www.KayKhan.org.

UPCOMING LFIA EVENTS

- *April 27th:* Movie night and potluck dessert @ 6:00pm
- *April 28th:* Spring Fling and Spring LFIA Membership Meeting @ 2:30pm
- *June 1st:* PorchFest 12pm to 6pm
- *June 15th:* Falls Ball
- *July 27th:* Movie night
- *September 7th:* Movie night

NEW OWNERS OF WALLY'S ICE CREAM

By Editor

In March, Wally's Wicked Good Ice Cream celebrated its grand re-opening, now owned and operated by Theresa Keyes' grandson Matt Gioia and his fiancé, Annan Walker. Matt and Annan have been renting Theresa's house on Grove Street for nearly three years. Wally's has been a popular ice cream parlor in Auburndale for 10 years. Matt and Annan are thrilled to have this opportunity to continue the business and provide quality ice cream and candy in the very same neighborhood that Matt's grandfather grew up in!

Enjoy wicked good ice cream at Wally's on Lexington Street in Auburndale.



Matt Gioia and Annan Walker, new owners of Wally's Wicked Good Ice Cream
Photo credit: Wally's Ice Cream

IN APPRECIATION OF BILL RENKE

By John Stewart

Bill Renke will soon be moving to Linden Ponds, a retirement community in Hingham. He takes with him a host of memories of Lower Falls, for he has lived here since his birth at Newton Wellesley Hospital in 1951.

Bill is a "graduate" of Hamilton School, but his wonderful perspective on the neighborhood becomes even more significant through its connections to the Lower Falls urban renewal project of the 1960s. The Renke family first lived on Atherton Place, a street that, along with Waverly Place and Hamilton Street, was wiped off the map, literally, to enable the building of Newton Executive Park on Washington Street. But happily, the project also included construction of "upper" Moulton Street, so the eight families displaced simply moved a few hundred yards west to new houses, where the Renkes have lived ever since.

Bill was always involved in the neighborhood, but as his professional career wound down his activism jumped several notches. He served as president of the Improvement Association from 2011 to 2015, and quickly

made his presence known at City Hall – as the sort of ultimate defender of the interests of Lower Falls and the first person for residents to go to in resolving both little and big problems. Bill worked smoothly and productively with the Ward 4 councilors, playing a key role in expanding the awareness people at City Hall have of our little village.

Here are some other thoughts about Bill from a few of the people who worked closely with him.

Lenny Gentile: “In my 38 years serving in public office I have observed and worked with many neighborhood activists. No one has worked harder or been a better advocate for their neighborhood than Bill Renke. Bill put in whatever time was necessary reviewing reports and data to get the facts correct! This was never more evident than during the special permit process for “Riverside #1.” While passionate about the many challenges his Lower Falls neighborhood faced, Bill was always objective and honest. If I had a question, I always knew I could get a complete and accurate answer from Bill. I wish this gentle man of integrity the very best with this new chapter in his life; his departure is a great loss for the Lower Falls community.”

Amy Sangiolo: “Bill will be remembered as a kind and reliable soul, someone always willing to share his knowledge of the history of Lower Falls and the needs of the residents who made up the fabric of the community. He has been a huge resource for the city - heading up the LFIA, working at the polls, serving as our ‘fourth Ward Four councilor.’ I will cherish our friendship and wish him well.”

Jay Harney: “There is no one who loved or cared about his neighborhood and the village of Lower Falls more than Bill Renke. He always kept me on my toes as an alderman/councilor, and I knew I had to stay on top of everything relating to Lower Falls or face Bill Renke! His depth of knowledge and attention to detail was utterly amazing; he frequently knew more about an issue than a lot of elected officials. You did well, Bill, and I thank you for making me a better councilor. I hope Linden Ponds is ready for you!

Josh Krintzman: “When “Riverside #1” was proposed, Bill, as president of the LFIA, dove into the details, devoting thousands of hours to organizing both Lower

Falls and Auburndale, keeping everyone informed and serving as an effective advocate for our interests. Our whole neighborhood benefitted from Bill’s attention to detail, his thoughtfulness and political sense. Riverside was his big “issue”, but there were many more that he handled with equal effectiveness, all reflecting Bill’s commitment to his friends and neighbors. We’re really going to miss him!”

We all wish Bill and his sister Irene the very best in their new “digs” and will hold him to his promise to “stay connected” to Lower Falls.

The Lowdown is the newsletter of the Lower Falls Improvement Association, Newton Lower Falls, MA 02462 • LFIA website: <https://newtonlowerfalls.org>

Editor: Summer Zeh • Email comments to summerzeh@gmail.com

BETTER THAN JIFFY CORNBREAD FROM SCRATCH

by Brandi's Diary February-1-2018

- 1 cup flour
- 1 cup cornmeal
- 1 and 1/2 cups sugar
- 2 tablespoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 and 1/4 cups buttermilk
- 2 large eggs
- 1 stick melted butter

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Combine all dry ingredients and add to wet ingredients and mix until just combined. Butter and flour a cast iron skillet. Pour cornbread mixture into skillet and place in oven. Bake for 35 to 40 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean. When the cornbread is fresh out of the oven take a cold stick of butter and slide it across the surface of the cornbread or drizzle honey over the top. Enjoy!

Credit: <http://www.brandisdiary.com/brandisdiary/betterthanjiffy>