

From: Kathleen Hobson khobson65@gmail.com
Subject: Zoning Redesign—Thanks for your continuing hard work
Date: August 23, 2020 at 5:00 PM
To: Newton City Council citycouncil@newtonma.gov
Cc: Barney Heath bheath@newtonma.gov, Ruthanne Fuller rfuller@newtonma.gov, Zachery LeMel zlemel@newtonma.gov



Dear Members of the Zoning and Planning Committee,

We are writing to thank you and the Planning Department for the prodigious work you have done on Zoning Redesign since the beginning of the year. We applaud the goals you affirmed back in April—more housing serving a wider range of people and incomes, development that is environmentally and economically sustainable, development that preserves and adapts our historic fabric—which have since helped frame and guide your deliberations.

We commend you for your recent discussions, teed up nicely by Planner Zack LeMel, around increasing housing opportunities within walking distance of transit hubs and village centers, and making more of these opportunities allowable “by right.” We appreciate your seriously considering the idea of enabling two-family homes throughout the city, with appropriate dimensional controls for preserving context and deterring tear-downs. We hope you’ll consider how to integrate the full range of [“missing middle” housing](#) into the overall plan.

With this new direction, we can more easily imagine a time when Newton seniors needing to downsize, people who work but don’t live here, and our own grown children—not to mention the many others we’d love to call neighbors but who are effectively shut out, deprived of the opportunities we enjoy—will not have to look elsewhere to find a suitable home.

We understand that Zoning Redesign is a major undertaking. It could also be an enormous gift to ourselves and future generations. Now more than ever—in this Black Lives Matter, Covid-19 moment, resounding with new calls for justice and accountability—Newton as a community is ready to commit to real, transformational change.

At the first event in the City speaker series, “Overdue: Confronting Race and Racism in Newton,” Dr. Ibram Kendi made clear that progress on racial equity requires changing policies that have discriminatory impacts. Our zoning ordinance is the perfect place to start—and we’re already on our way, thanks to your diligence.

We will continue to support your work, help spread accurate information, correct misunderstandings, and generate enthusiasm in the public at large for this momentous project.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Hobson, Nancy Zollers, Lynn Weissberg, Fran Godine, Doris Ann Sweet
Engine 6 Leadership Team

P.S. In case you didn’t see today’s Boston *Globe*: [Tear down this paper wall, Newton](#) (editorial); [Housing will test white support for Black lives](#) (Ideas). Metro Boston is watching, and even cheering us on!