

City of Newburyport Boards & Commissions Information

Below you can find information on all Newburyport's Boards and Commissions. This resource will be updated should there be any changes to these bodies.

[Affordable Housing Trust](#)

[Board of Health](#)

[Board of Sewer/Water Commissioners](#)

[Commission on Disability](#)

[Community Preservation Act Committee](#)

[Conservation Commission](#)

[Council on Aging](#)

[Cultural Council](#)

[DEI Alliance](#)

[Emma Andrews Branch Library Commission](#)

[Energy Advisory Committee](#)

[Fruit St Local Historic District Study Committee](#)

[Harbor Commission](#)

[Historical Commission](#)

[Human Rights Commission](#)

[Library Board of Directors](#)

[Newburyport PRIDE](#)

[Open Space Committee](#)

[Parks Commission](#)

[Planning Board](#)

[Resiliency Committee](#)

[Tree Commission](#)

[Trust Fund Commission](#)

[Waterfront Trust](#)

[Zoning Board of Appeals](#)

Affordable Housing Trust

Description of Board/Commission: The City is interested in increasing affordable housing opportunities for those who would like to live in Newburyport. The Trust works with developers to increase the City's supply of units that are reserved for people who are considered low- to moderate- income, who might not otherwise be able to afford housing in Newburyport. The city has a goal of developing or preserving at least 10% of its housing stock for those earning no more than 80% of the Area Median Income, or \$140,200 for a family of four.

Composition: 7 Trustees, including the Mayor. Trustees currently include one member with expertise from each of the following fields: Affordable housing, real estate, planning and lending.

Term Length: Initially, three (3) members shall be appointed for a one-year term and three (3) members shall be appointed for two-year terms. As the term of each member expires, his successor shall be appointed for a term of two years. Members may be appointed for successive terms.

Mission: The mission of the Newburyport Affordable Housing Trust is to support, preserve, and create housing that is affordable to low- and moderate-income households in the City of Newburyport. The Trust defines affordable as housing costs of no more than 30% of gross income for a household that earns no more than 80% of the Area Median Income, as determined by HUD.

Board of Health

Description of Board/Commission: The Board of Health may make reasonable rules and regulations to educate, promote, improve and protect the public health and wellbeing of the citizens of the City of Newburyport, while contributing to building a healthy community and environment in which to live.

Areas which fall under the purview of the City Health Department include disease and injury prevention, promoting and offering immunization clinics, responding to bacterial illnesses, monitoring disease outbreaks, providing health education & prevention programs, provide health advisories, promoting health & wellness, nutrition and fitness information , tobacco control programs, environmental protection, respond to health hazards, ensuring water quality, monitoring waste disposal, investigating noise & air pollution, animal health, health monitoring, enforcement and ensuring of health and safety codes, health care access, and emergency preparedness and response.

Composition: 3 Members, appointed by the Mayor. One member shall be a physician.

Term Length: 3 years

Mission: We are committed to promote the health and wellness for all Newburyport residents through the prevention and control of disease and injury. The Board of Health is responsible for a wide spectrum of activities regarding environmental and public health concerns. The Board of Health conducts inspections and investigations to maintain local and Federal code compliance for the following permitted establishments.

Commission on Disability

Description of Board/Commission: The Newburyport Commission on Disabilities is a commission of volunteers serving three-year terms, appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by vote of the City Council. The 7-9 member commission works to advocate on disability-related issues.

- NCOD members provide research, as well as advise and assist those in need.
- NCOD may also make recommendations and provide technical knowledge where needed, to City departments, businesses and organizations throughout the community

Commission members are all residents of Newburyport and must have a disability or be directly involved (personally or professionally) with a person with a disability. The commission also requires membership of one city employee.

Composition: Not less than 7, no more than 13 members.

Term Length: 3 years

Mission: The NCOD is an advisory, educational, and advocacy group.

- To promote the full inclusion of all persons with disabilities.
- To represent and assist people with disabilities in the City of Newburyport.
- To eliminate barriers to any and all activities, services, and employment opportunities throughout our city.
- To advocate for the accessibility of all public spaces and accommodations.

Community Preservation Act Committee

Description and Mission of Board/Commission: The residents of Newburyport voted to adopt the Community Preservation Act (CPA) in 2002. This program creates a 2% surcharge on real estate taxes for all property owners. The Commonwealth provides matching funds in October, which has resulted in past additional annual receipts of between twenty-six to one hundred percent of local revenue. A nine member Newburyport Community Preservation Committee (CPC) was established. The CPC is charged with reviewing the City's needs, possibilities, and resources with respect to community preservation and making recommendations to the City Council with respect to the allocation and expenditure of CPA funds in the areas of historic preservation, open space, recreation and community housing.

The CPC holds a public informational hearing every fall to hear suggestions and proposals from residents, City Boards, local organizations, and other stakeholders for projects which will best serve the goals of the CPA and the needs and interests of the City. The CPC then reviews project applications each winter and makes recommendations for funding to the City Council in late spring.

Composition: Nine members, six of whom are currently serving on the City's Conservation Commission, Planning Board, Housing Authority, Historical Commission, Open Space Committee or Parks Commission. The three remaining seats are At Large.

Term Length: Three years, subject to re-appointment upon request and approval by the Mayor.

Time Commitment: Six to eight two-hour evening meetings per year plus review of 12 to 15 applications for funding.

Conservation Commission

Description of Board/Commission: The Conservation Commission, created after the passage of the Conservation Commission Act of 1957, was established to oversee protection and enhancement of the natural resources, wetlands and watershed lands of the City of Newburyport. Conservation Commissions are considered the municipal environmental agencies in Massachusetts. They are responsible for protecting the land, water, and biological resources within their municipal boundaries and regularly coordinate natural resource protection activities with neighboring communities.

Composition: Not less than 3, no more than 7.

Term Length: 3 years

Mission: The Conservation Commission's primary mission is to review project applications and make determinations pursuant to the Wetlands Protection Act and the local Newburyport Wetlands Ordinance. Projects range in size from small additions located near wetlands or water bodies to large developments that may impact wetland resources. The Conservation Commission also manages many of the city's permanent open space parcels and assists in long-term City planning efforts related to open space, watershed protection and resiliency.

Council on Aging

Description of Board/Commission: Newburyport's COA is overseen by an advisory Board of Directors appointed by the Mayor. With significant growth of the City's senior population expected to continue well into the next decade, the COA Board will play a critical role in guiding the development of programming and services that meaningfully meet the needs of the vulnerable population it is designed to serve. Currently the Board has 3 working sub-committees focusing on food insecurities, transportation, and data analysis.

Composition: 11 Members maximum.

Term Length: 3 years

Mission: The mission of the Newburyport Council on Aging is to advocate for older adults, to identify their needs, to develop and implement services and programs to meet their health, economic, social and cultural needs, to encourage maximum independence, and to improve their quality of life.

Cultural Council

Description of Board/Commission: The Massachusetts Cultural Council's Local Cultural Council (LCC) Program is the largest grassroots cultural funding network in the nation supporting thousands of community-based projects in the arts, humanities, and sciences annually. Each year, local councils award more than \$2 million in grants to more than 5,000 cultural programs statewide. The program promotes the availability of rich cultural experiences for every Massachusetts citizen.

Composition: 5 to 22 members

Term Length: No more than 2 terms

Mission: The Cultural Council's goals are in part expressed through their grant awarding criteria. This year the Newburyport Cultural Council will give priority to projects that:

Serve all ages

Foster creative exploration in our youth

Encourage engagement with emerging artists

Promote diversity, equity, and inclusion, elevating the voices and experiences of the historically marginalized and highlighting current and historic diversity

Demonstrate innovation, creative material use and new perspectives

Prompt inquiry and dialogue

Foster collaboration within our own community and with our neighboring communities

Take place in Greater Newburyport

Provide maximum audience and/or community impact

Focus on the Arts, History, Environment and Science

Emma Andrews Library Commission

Description of Board/Commission: The Commission's responsibilities are to liaise with the Office of the Mayor regarding the state of the building, the apartment, and the building's revolving fund; to ensure that the Association follows adopted policies and procedures in operating the library and maintains the integrity of the collection; to advance and oversee the buildings use as a community center and its relevance to that community; and to support the Association's work in managing the Emma Andrews Library and Community Center.

Composition: 5

Term Length: 1 year

Mission: The Emma Andrews Library is both a lending library and a local activities center for adults and youth. The mission of the city- appointed commission is to set policy that ensures that the organization, its volunteers, its building and its public-facing programing are all in compliance and align with the City of Newburyport standards of conduct and the library standards.

Fruit Street Local Historic District Commission

Description of Board/Commission: The district shall be overseen by a commission consisting of five members, to be appointed by the mayor and confirmed by the city council, with each appointment to be made for three years. The commission shall include, if possible, one member from the Historical Society of Old Newbury (HSON), one member from chapter of the American Institute of Architects covering Newburyport; one member of the Board of Realtors covering Newburyport; one member from the Newburyport Planning Board, Zoning Board or Historical Commission; and one property owner from within the district.

Composition: 5 members

Term Length: 3 years

Mission:

The purpose of the FSLHD Commission is to aid in the preservation and protection of the distinctive characteristics and architecture of buildings and places significant in the history of the City of Newburyport, the maintenance and improvement of their settings and the encouragement of new building designs compatible with the existing architecture.

Harbor Commission

Description of Board/Commission: The role of the Harbor Commission focuses on making recommendations to the Mayor and/or other City Officials about the operation and safety of the harbor of Newburyport. The Commission is also responsible for the oversight of the Harbormaster's budget, proposing ordinances, permitting docking and mooring facilities and monitoring the overall management of the Newburyport waterfront on behalf of the city.

Composition: 7 Members, 2 alternates

Term Length: 3 years

Mission: Our purview is to advise the Mayor's office on the operation of the Harbormasters department and to be the liaison between the USCG and Army Core of Engineers and other stakeholders in the relation to the Merrimack River.

Newburyport Historical Commission

Description of Board/Commission: The Historical Commission reviews applications subject to the Demolition Delay ordinance and any other projects occurring within the Newburyport Historical District that may seek, or require, the advice of the Commission. The Commission is a volunteer board made up of local residents and acts as a local advisory group to the Massachusetts Historical Commission for projects that require Section 106 or M.G.L. Chapter 254 review for historic preservation.

Composition: 7 members, and 2 alternates, who serve for 3-year terms.

Term Length: 3 years

Mission: The mission of the Newburyport Historical Commission (NHC) is to protect, preserve and promote Newburyport's historic structures, neighborhoods, and landscapes.

Human Rights Commission

Description of Board/Commission: We are a city-appointed commission that promotes human rights and nurtures relationships that embody the principles of dignity and respect. We are a resource for residents, municipal departments, the business community and public agencies.

Composition: 9 Members maximum

Term Length: 3 years with a term limit of 2 terms

Mission: It is the policy of the City of Newburyport to uphold the human rights of all persons in Newburyport and the free exercise and enjoyment of any rights and privileges secured by the Constitutions and laws of the United States and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. This policy shall ensure equal opportunity to each person regardless of race, color, religious creed, national origin, sex, age, ancestry, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, marital, family or military status, source of income or disability where unlawful discrimination exists in housing, employment, education, public accommodations, City services, insurance, banking, credit and health care.

Library Board of Directors

Description of Board/Commission: The Newburyport Public Library is governed by a 12-member Board of Directors. The Mayor is the Chairman ex-officio, the President of the City Council is an ex-officio member, there are three trustees of the Building Fund who are self-perpetuating members of the Board, seven board members are appointed for seven-year terms, and the Head Librarian is Secretary to the Board.

Composition: 12 members, 5 of which are ex officio.

Term Length: 7 years

Open Space Committee

Description of Board/Commission: The Newburyport Open Space Committee (OSC) was established in April 2001 as an advisory committee to the Mayor pursuant to the Master Plan. Tasks involved in carrying out this charge include identifying and evaluating parcels, gaining knowledge about available tools and strategies for open space acquisition and protection, researching funding options, cultivating relationships with landowners, and crafting public education and outreach all in an effort to make timely and informed recommendations to the Mayor and organize campaigns for the protection of open spaces.

Composition: Up to eleven at-large members

Term Length: 3 years

Mission: The mission of the Open Space Committee is charged generally with advocating for the protection of open space and specifically to monitor opportunities for open space acquisition. Open space is defined broadly to include natural resources and wildlife habitats, scenic landscapes, agricultural lands and working landscapes, recreation resources, public access water resources, and supplies and buffers to existing protected lands.

Parks Commission

Description of Board/Commission: The Newburyport Parks Commission was established in 1996. Commissioners are appointed by the mayor to serve five-year terms. The Commission was established to serve the residents of the City and other park users through the establishment and implementation of plans for the maintenance, expansion, and betterment of the open spaces, parks, and recreational facilities over which the Commission has jurisdiction. The Commission serves to monitor and officially act on issues affecting the use and management of facilities in a manner that provides the most optimal facilities for the residents of Newburyport and other users. The Commission engages the public in a democratic manner to allow for a continuous dialog towards meeting the intent of the mission statement and marshal the resources within its powers to address the needs of the community.

Composition: 5 members

Term Length: 5 years

Mission: The Parks Commission will maintain and celebrate the unique character of each of Newburyport's parks by upholding and shepherding our set of Core Values. These Core Values are:

1. Environmental Conservation
2. Health & Wellness
3. Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
4. Community Engagement & Communication
5. Economic Vitality, Planning & Stability
6. Historic Preservation

The Parks Commission envisions a future where residents and visitors alike have access to a robust city park system that provides ample opportunities for recreation, education, and community engagement.

Planning Board

Description of Board/Commission: The Planning Board reviews and acts on applications for subdivision approval, site plan approval and special permits, within the parameters established by State law and the City's zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations. The Board is also responsible for adopting the City's Master Plan and making recommendations to the City Council on proposed amendments to the Zoning Ordinance.

The Planning Board typically meets on the first and third Wednesday of each month, with occasional special meetings. Meetings include public hearings as required on development applications and proposed zoning ordinance amendments, as well as other matters that do not require public hearings. Some members of the Board also participate on other committees related to community planning and development, such as the Master Plan Committee, the Community Preservation Committee and the Energy Advisory Committee.

Membership on the Planning Board requires an interest in community planning, land use and development. The Board benefits from having members with a range of skills, including design professionals (architects, landscape architects, engineers); those with experience in real estate, housing or development finance; environmental professionals; and land use attorneys.

Composition: 7 members and 2 associate members

Term Length: 3 years

Tree Commission

Description of Board/Commission: The Tree Commission shall advise the Tree Warden and other City officials with respect to the adoption and amendment of plans, programs and regulations pertaining to the protection of Public Trees in the City, including the City Tree Plan and Tree Regulations, monitor the health and protection of Public Trees, creating and updating inventories of such trees, identify issues relative to the health and protection of Public Trees and recommending solutions to problems identified, advise the Tree Warden and other City officials with respect to the planting and replacement of Public Trees and on tree-related issues, seek grants and conduct fundraising to assist the Commission's mission, such funds to be deposited into the Tree Fund, promote knowledge and awareness of the benefits of trees and their impact on the quality of life in Newburyport and actively design, select, plant and maintain the tree ecology of Newburyport in coordination with the Tree Warden and City Tree Plan.

Composition: 7 members, 2 alternates

Term Length: 3 years

Mission: The mission of the Tree Commission is to select, plant, protect, maintain, plan for and increase the health, beauty, quantity, diversity and vitality of Newburyport's trees.

Trust Fund Commission

Description of Board/Commission: The Trust Fund Commission was established in accordance with Massachusetts General Law Chapter 41, section 45:

Any city or town, except Boston, may create a board of commissioners of trust funds, consisting of three persons who shall have the management of all trust funds given or bequeathed for the benefit of the town or the inhabitants thereof, unless the donor in making the gift or bequest shall otherwise provide. In cities the commissioners shall be appointed by the mayor and confirmed by the council. In towns they shall be elected in the same manner as other town officers. At the time of creating said board there shall be appointed or elected one member for one year, one member for two years, and one member for three years; and there shall be appointed or elected annually thereafter one member for three years. Vacancies shall be filled by the mayor, with the approval of the council, or by the selectmen.

Composition: 3 members

Term Length: 3 years

Mission:

The mission of the Trust Fund Commission is to review and safeguard the City's investment funds so that gifts bequeathed are used to their highest and best use to benefit the public.

Board of Water and Sewer Commissioners

Description of Board/Commission: The Board assists with oversight for water and sewer budgets, policies and procedures, and decides on abatement requests from residents and property owners. The Commission assists in setting the water and sewer rates. They generally meet once a month in the late afternoon.

Composition: 5 members, 2 alternates

Term Length: 3 years

Waterfront Trust

Description of Board/Commission: On January 28, 1991, the City of Newburyport declared a public trust in the conveyance of public land and named five Trustees to oversee a portion of city-owned property along the waterfront for the public good. These lands, according to trust documents, are to, "...remain open and for the benefit of the general public forever." Trustees are appointed by the mayor and confirmed by the City Council for terms of five years. No two terms expire in the same year. The Trustees are granted control and management of the trust property, including maintenance, repairs and renovations. They may apply for grants or gifts to benefit the property, and they may charge fees for temporary use of the land by commercial enterprises. The City of Newburyport allocates money each year in the city's operating budget to pay for said expenses.

Composition: 5 Members

Term Length: 5 years

Mission:

The mission of the Newburyport Waterfront Trust is to hold, manage, maintain, and conserve in perpetuity the natural resources of the public lands entrusted to it for the residents of the Newburyport, West Newbury, and Newbury in particular and also for the general public.

Zoning Board of Appeals

Description of Board/Commission:

The Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) listens to, and decides on, proposals from Newburyport residents to make changes to their property that require a special permit or a variance, or where an applicant is appealing a decision of the City's zoning enforcement officer. The most common proposals are for additions to houses that do not fit today's zoning because they were built before the City's zoning was in place.

The ZBA vets an applicant's proposal by holding a public hearing at which the applicant and their neighbors are invited, and which is advertised in the newspaper. At the hearing, the applicant or their lawyer, architect or contractor describe what they would like to do. Then neighbors and others can provide input, after which the ZBA asks any questions of the applicant. Then the ZBA votes, and 4 out of 5 votes are needed for a proposal to pass. The board meets twice a month and has up to four public hearings at each meeting.

Composition: 5 members, 2 associate members

Term Length: 5 Years

Mission:

The ZBA must find a fair balance between the property rights of the applicant and the interests of neighboring property owners and the city as a whole.

Energy Advisory Committee

Description of Board/Commission: The Newburyport Energy Advisory Committee (EAC), established in 2006, studies, evaluates, and makes recommendations to the Mayor regarding energy conservation, energy efficiency, and/or conversion to greener energy sources.

The EAC assists the Mayor by identifying policy implications and cost savings derived from potential energy conservation, and by investigating sustainable development measures and guidelines for local businesses and homeowners.

Composition: Currently 10 members, no statutory cap

Term Length: Members serve at the pleasure of the Mayor

Resiliency Committee

Description of Board/Commission: The Resiliency Committee is a mayoral-appointed advisory board composed of city staff and volunteers. We were formed in 2015 to analyze, coordinate and develop a plan in conjunction with regional planning efforts to increase community resilience related to sea level rise, storm surge, flooding and extreme weather events throughout the city. In 2020, the Newburyport Resiliency Plan was completed and published. The Resiliency Committee now advocates for and oversees implementation of the Resiliency Plan's recommendations.

Composition: City staff and volunteers, no set number of members

Term Length: Members serve at the pleasure of the Mayor

Mission: The Newburyport Resiliency Committee will analyze, coordinate, and develop a plan in conjunction with regional planning efforts to increase community resilience related to sea level rise, storm surge, flooding and extreme weather events throughout the city. Further, the committee will advocate for and oversee implementation of the plan's recommendations.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Alliance

Description: The Newburyport DEI Alliance works to make Newburyport a more welcoming, inclusive and equitable place for all who live, work and visit.

Composition: Volunteer task force of the Mayor's office. 18 current members. Interested candidates can send their resume and letter of interest to Christine Jackson (cjackson@cityofnewburyport.com).

Term Length: Indefinite

Mission:

The mission of the DEI Alliance is to support the City's efforts to develop an equitable and sustainable community. As such, the DEI Alliance will address these issues in an effort to create a community that is racially, socially, economically, fiscally and environmentally sound by:

- Promoting best practices of DEI in city government, businesses, social service agencies, fraternal organizations, religious institutions and the broader community.
- Celebrating examples of DEI throughout the community.
- Collaborating with others to encourage dialogue in support of DEI values.
- Supporting DEI training efforts that are intentionally antiracist and inclusive.
- Monitoring, evaluating and publishing progress of Alliance's efforts to implement DEI best practices.

Newburyport PRIDE Board

Description: Working to plan LGBTQIAP+ events for the city of Newburyport throughout the year, with a focus on June's Pride month.

Composition: 9 Board members from within the LGBTQIAP+ community

Term Length: One year

Mission: Newburyport Pride envisions a community where persons with widely diverse gender and sexual identities are embraced, visible, and fully included in social and civic life. We strive to promote an environment that honors differences and fosters inclusion. We honor the diversity of race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, social class, physical attributes, religious/spiritual affiliations, and national origin.