

MAYOR'S UPDATE
December 11, 2023
Mayor Sean R. Reardon

Happy Holidays:

Happy Hanukkah to all who celebrate. We will continue to light the menorah down on Market Square each night this week at 530pm. All are welcome. It is two weeks until Christmas. The Newburyport Chamber of Commerce will host the last of three Invitation Nights downtown on Friday. Come sip and shop local downtown and get into that holiday spirit. City Hall will be closing at 5pm on Thursday for our Annual City Employee Holiday Party. The Newburyport Fire Department will also hold their Santa Parade through town on Friday December 22nd starting at 4pm.

State of the City and the 2nd Annual Public and Community Service Awards:

The date of the State of the City Address will be Wednesday February 28th here at the City Hall Auditorium. We will also have the 2nd Annual Public and Community Service Awards that night. This was my favorite part of the State of the City last year and such a great opportunity to shine a light on all the great volunteer work going on in the city.

Community Preservation Act:

The Community Preservation Act applications are due this Friday December 15th. The CPC has around \$1.2M to distribute to worthy projects around the city this year like new tennis courts at the RAN Middle School to complete that project started years ago.

Half Billion Dollar Whittier School Building Project:

Thank you for hosting the Whittier School Superintendent Maureen Lynch prior to this meeting tonight. It's impossible to underscore the impact this project would have on Newburyport if it proceeds as currently constituted. The Whittier School Committee will take a vote on whether to hold an election on January 23rd at their December 13th meeting at 630pm at Whittier. There is still time to reach out to our Whittier School Committee members and voice your concerns around this project. The current hope is that this process gets paused so there could be additional time to advocate for additional funds from the state and allow cities and towns an opportunity to explore additional options. If this moves forward Newburyport, will be saddled with a \$30M bill for this project with no funding mechanism identified and attached to this vote. Newburyport currently has 29 students who attend Whittier and that number is projected to go down. We have sent multiple letters to the MSBA and the Whittier School Committee asking for a pause in the vote. Once you are voted in to the MSBA program you have 120 days to accept which is why this vote should happen in the Spring if at all.

Thank you:

Thank you to our outgoing Councilors Bruce Vogel and Christine Wallace for your service to Newburyport. Good luck as you both start this new chapter.

Mayor Sean Reardon