necsema
New England Convenience Store & Energy Marketers Association

Newton — Document Notes

14 DOCUMENTS · PUBLIC RECORDS PRODUCTION · REAL TRUTH MA · RETRIEVED OCTOBER 1, 2026

The substantive documents in Newton's production, in the order the events occurred: what each one is, what it says, and a link to the file. The complete production is in the document library on the main Newton page.

Newton is the largest municipality on this site and the only one that acted by City Council ordinance rather than Board of Health regulation. Its correspondence was released as a single 957-page file, published here in five parts; roughly 300 of those pages have no text layer. Page references below are approximate positions within that file.

Nothing is characterized or interpreted. Where a document is ambiguous, it is quoted and left ambiguous.

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1 A phone call, and an introduction the same day

Email · April 9, 2024 · Wendy Machmuller of Brookline's health department to Anthony Ishak, who forwards to City Councilor Susan Albright · around page 64

> "I just received a call from Newton City Council member, Susan Albright. She wanted to speak with someone about "strategies" used to get the warrant article passed [at Town Meeting]. She has a City Counsel meeting tomorrow night; she just found out it is on the agenda."

A call from Newton to Brookline starts the sequence. Within the day Ishak is connected to Albright and writes back copying "Kate Silbaugh who was a primary petitioner with me and Mark Gottlieb from PHAI who provided legal support and a lot of policy knowledge for our bylaw proposal," offering: "I'm happy to attend your meeting tomorrow evening in support of this bylaw proposal." He calls himself a Town Meeting Member in Brookline.

2 After the first committee discussion

Email · April 11, 2024 · Councilor Susan Albright to Anthony Ishak, Kate Silbaugh and Mark Gottlieb · around page 75

> "I'll tell our attorney to share his draft with you all - and if you could review that i'd appreciate that."

Albright supplies the docket number, the committee chair's and clerk's names and the address for letters, and reports "[w]e have already heard from several convenience store owners and operators as well as the statewide lobbying group." The message she answers asked: "Where can people send in letters of support? I have colleagues and friends who live in Newton—with children—who would be supportive."

3 A running tally of other municipalities

Email thread · June 4–13, 2024 · Anthony Ishak, Councilor Susan Albright, Katharine Silbaugh and Mark Gottlieb · around pages 74 and 108

> “we met with Chelsea‘s Board of Health today and they are interested in implementing this idea. Winchester, Malden, Stoneham, Wakefield, and Melrose have already approved it to take effect January 1, 2025. Reading has their hearing for a vote next week.”

Albright asks “Do you have any new approvals to report?” and says the item “[h]asn’t come back to committee again yet… We will probably get back to it in the fall.” Ishak replies: “No update, we continue to add communities that are starting the process. Please let us know what we can do to help so it takes effect by January!”

4 A councillor’s memorandum to committee

City Council memorandum · June 14, 2024 · Councilor Susan Albright to the Programs & Services Committee · around page 115

> “On April 10th the Programs & Services Committee held an initial discussion on adopting an ordinance that would prohibit the sale of tobacco products to anyone born after 1/1/2004.”

The memorandum lists six communities with similar measures already passed. Its birth date, 1/1/2004, differs from the 1/1/2000 on the committee’s own docket for the same matter; the ordinance as passed used March 1, 2004.

5 Soliciting letters of support before the committee vote

Email thread · June 18, 2024 · Councilor Susan Albright to Anthony Ishak, Katharine Silbaugh and Mark Gottlieb; the committee clerk added to a later message · around pages 91 to 175

> “This ordinance is coming up for a vote by the Programs and Services Committee on Thursday night - June 20. I did get a letter of support from the Commissioner of Health and Human Services. Would you be interested in sending a letter of support?”

Silbaugh replies “Yes I will send a letter of support”; Ishak commits to the same within the hour. Albright explains how to route letters through the committee clerk, copies her “so she will know a letter might be coming,” and attaches the June 20 agenda.

6 When the vote did not go as expected

Email thread · June 21, 2024 · Councilor Susan Albright, Katharine Silbaugh, Mark Gottlieb, Anthony Ishak and Maureen Buzby of Melrose · around pages 561 to 564

> “We have a pediatrician on that committee and he switched his vote to no yesterday in favor of “free choice”. What the hell?”

The docket item was held. Of the councillor who changed his vote Silbaugh asks: “Could you share his name? We might have a few pediatricians who could reach out to him directly.” Ishak offers to approach local clinics and hospitals for letters. Buzby: “I’ll reach out to our MTCP TA’s though they have been a little late to the table… at least one of them is not personally in favor of this policy.” Albright: “I need to get letters from the public - which i will work on.”

7 Through the summer

Email thread · July 11 to August 8, 2024 · Anthony Ishak, Councilor Susan Albright and Mark Gottlieb, Executive Director, Public Health Advocacy Institute · around pages 587 to 628

> “I’m trying to find citizen support for it. There is a public health advisory committee but hhs won’t won’t give me contact info for them.”

Albright reports minor changes to the ordinance requested by the city’s health department and that she “asked the chair to wait until sept to take it up again.” Gottlieb reports “a pair of pediatricians… sent a letter to Dr. Lobovits explaining the importance of NFG for adolescent health and urged him to support it.”

8 A draft from the city’s legal team, reviewed outside the city

Email thread · November 21, 2024 to January 3, 2025 · Anthony Ishak, Councilor Susan Albright, Mark Gottlieb, and two Mass General physicians · around pages 294 and 537

> “They apparently have a draft policy done by their legal team and Susan might have you take a look at it in preparation for a January meeting. Likely at this point it would be a 1/1/2005 birthdate.”

Gottlieb sends “the most recent FAQ as well as a guide to NFG that was created by folks from MAHB, MMA, PHAI, and others” and offers hard copies for committee members. The materials go in the councillors’ Friday packet with “a memo from me explaining that there are now 13 cities and towns in or close to being into this program,” Albright says, adding: “I’m also sending these out to maybe 50 or 60 ‘friends’ who might be willing to send an email in support of this.”

9 After the committee vote, January 9, 2025

Email thread · January 9, 2025 · Councilor Susan Albright with Katharine Silbaugh, Anthony Ishak and Mark Gottlieb · around pages 173 to 175

> “Thanks to all of you for your help. Next step full council vote. I’ll start calling people we only need a majority ie 13 votes. hope to do better than that. you guys were great.”

Albright writes “Whoever you got to talk to alan lobovits did a great job” and “They thought they had alan and were surprised at his vote.” She counts councillors ward by ward and asks “Is anyone talking to Watertown and Waltham?” Ishak: “I was surprised that there were zero retailers there.” The full Council passed the ordinance 19–4 on January 21, 2025.

10 Choosing the next towns

Email thread · January 22–23, 2025 · Anthony Ishak, Maureen Buzby, Anthony Chui, Councilor Susan Albright and Kate Silbaugh · around pages 646 to 651

> “Now that Newton has joined NFG, are able to set our sights on Wellesley (the last town we’d need for Senator Creem), Watertown, Weston, or Waltham?”

The day after the Council vote. Albright had written: “I especially want to get to Wellesley next since that would complete Sen. Creem district and allow us to get her support for the state bill.” Silbaugh asks: “when Susan Albright is done with her current work, does she want in on the NFG Task Force—is she hoping to help us beyond Newton?” Buzby reports training a new regional program manager and that “MTCP will dictate her priorities.”

11 Preparing for Dover

Email thread · March 23–27, 2025 · Anthony Ishak to ten recipients, including Brookline’s and Somerville’s health directors, Maureen Buzby, Mark Gottlieb and Councilor Albright · around pages 202 to 206

> “Isabel and Shresta, can you see if you can get Dover students or clubs to write-in in favor of this policy and their experiences?”

The message names Dover’s health director, Board chair and administrative assistant by name and address, and reports its public health nurse had contacted Brookline. Buzby offers to “write a letter to the HD and the Chair describing the experience with six communities in my region.” Albright: “Does Dover have a Youth Commission? Those folks testified in Newton.” Dover adopted the policy on November 3, 2025.

12 An urgent action item, six months after the vote

Email · July 8, 2025 · Katharine Silbaugh to Councilor Susan Albright at both her city and personal addresses · pages 1 to 8, the first item in the released file

> “you were so instrumental in passing NFG in Newton, and I hoped you’d sign up to testify (in person or online) for next Monday’s hearing on Statewide NFG at the state house.”

The forwarded appeal reads: “Calling all MA NFG supporters: PLEASE sign up to testify at the MA legislatures first hearing on NFG… THIS IS THE HIGHEST PRIORITY to show STRONG AND WIDESPREAD SUPPORT.” Attached is the Joint Committee on Public Health’s notice for July 14, 2025, listing the two statewide bills. Albright replies “I signed up! I’ll be driving up from the Cape on Monday morning,” and Silbaugh answers: “Wonderful! Thank you so much. Please spread around with other Newton supporters.”

13 The state contract behind the city’s tobacco work

State contract package · amendment letter dated June 2, 2022 · Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Bureau of Community Health and Prevention, to the City of Newton · image-only scan, read from the page images

> “The contract total maximum obligation is $50,000.00.”

A renewal of the city’s tobacco control contract with the state to June 30, 2023: $25,000 for 2020–21 and $12,500 for each of the two following years. No text layer, so minor character errors are possible in any transcription.

14 What the city produced, and when

Follow-up letter · March 12, 2026 · NECSEMA to the city's Records Access Officer

> "No responsive records have been provided to date."

Payment of $1,093.25 reached the city on February 13, 2026; a February 26 follow-up was answered by saying review was taking longer than expected; nothing had been produced by the date of writing. The 957-page file described above came afterwards, not in chronological order: it opens with July 2025, returns to April 2024, and mixes years across the later parts. Pages 656 to 957 have no text layer.