

Update: Newton mayor reflects on voters giving Northland green light

By Julie M. Cohen
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This image of the Northland development shows the southwestern corner of Building 6 on the corner of Tower Road and Main Street viewed from the Village Green in the center of the site. [Courtesy photo]



Newton will be getting an 800-unit, 1.4-million-square-foot development on Needham Street after residents voted Tuesday 18,565 to 13,449 to approve the Northland mixed-use project, according to the city's unofficial results.

Over many months, residents for and against the plan for the 22.6-acre site had been embroiled in an oftentimes contentious battle over the development's future. Now that voters have had their say at the ballot box, the zoning change enacted by the City Council will remain and the Northland project, as approved in the special permit, will move forward.

"We're moving forward with a great project," said Mayor Ruthanne Fuller in a phone interview after the vote. "Northland meets so many of our needs and matches so many of our values."

Now that the project has the green light, she said the company will do technical design work and site preparation simultaneously.

"Thank you to the thousands of Newton residents who voted in favor of bringing affordable housing, new open space, sustainable design, and smart growth to our city," emailed Allison Sharma, chairwoman of the Yes for Newton's Future ballot campaign in support of the Northland Newton project.

"Newton voters decisively voted in favor of the Northland Newton project Tuesday night, delivering a loud message that the city's residents want to be a community that is more welcoming and part of the solution to the region's housing crisis and climate change," said Greg Reibman, president of the Newton-Needham Chamber of Commerce, in an email.

As the project moves into its next phase, residents who organized against Northland also reflected on the vote.

"The result of the vote, while disappointing, is understandable," stated members of the Committee for Responsible Development in an email. "Northland and its PR machine spent many hundreds of thousands of dollars spreading misinformation about the proposed development and instilling fear about potential alternatives."

The statement also said that members of RightSize Newton will monitor the Northland project and make any concerns known to elected and appointed officials.

In an email, Fuller said 32,471, or 53 percent of Newton's 61,083 registered voters, cast ballots in Tuesday's Presidential Primary.

Presidential Primaries

A majority of city residents also picked former Vice President Joe Biden in the Democratic Presidential Primary, with 10,510 votes. Unsurprisingly, President Donald Trump won the Republican Presidential Primary in Newton, where he received 2,065 votes. These numbers are also from the city's unofficial results.

Voting results in Newton

Northland development

Yes, 18,565

No, 13,449

Presidential candidate – Democrat

Winner: Former Vice President Joseph R. Biden with 10,510 votes

Michael Bennet 17

Michael R. Bloomberg 4,734

Pete Buttigieg 674

Cory Booker 3

Julian Castro 1

John K. Delaney 4

Tulsi Gabbard 118

Amy Klobuchar 418

Deval Patrick 78

Bernie Sanders 4,994

Tom Steyer 43

Elizabeth Warren 8,441

Marianne Williamson 7

Andrew Yang 69

Presidential candidate – Republican

Winner: Incoming President Donald J. Trump with 2,065 votes

Roque De La Fuente 11

Joe Walsh 43

William F. Weld 408