

Verne Vance

Alderman at Large, Ward 7

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For the Newton we want

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Dear Friends:

I have decided to seek reelection this year as an alderman at large from Ward 7, and I am seeking your support in what will be a contested citywide election.

Here are some of what I have done, some of the challenges we will face in the next aldermanic term, and how you can help.

I have been privileged to serve as an alderman at large from Ward 7 from 1982-1991 and (after serving eight years on the School Committee) again for the past three and a half years. During those recent years I was elected by my colleagues to serve as president emeritus of the Board (having served as president from 1988-1991). In 2004 Board of Aldermen President Lisle Baker appointed me to chair a special advisory committee of the Board on the design of the new Newton North High School and also to chair the Board's new Long Range Planning Committee. These roles have given me a particularly rich perspective on the upcoming challenges we face.

For example, President Baker and I, on behalf of the Board; representatives from the Mayor's office; and other city officials developed the first long-range financial forecast that the city has had in ten years. That laid the foundation for the creation of the Blue Ribbon Commission on the Municipal Budget, which was jointly appointed by the Mayor and the Board President. It is that commission's sobering assessment, in a recent report, of the increasing structural budget deficits that the city will face in the years ahead that has made us realize that only by finding new ways to address our fiscal challenges will we be able to preserve – and, where appropriate, to enhance -- the quantity and quality of the municipal and educational services that make Newton the special community that it is. Those challenges include not only adequately funding our operating budget but also funding our overdue infrastructure needs such as Newton North and our other public schools, our firehouses and aging firefighting equipment, and our other public buildings and roadways.

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In addition, my service as a member of the Board's Land Use, Public Safety & Transportation, and Community Preservation Committees has given me extensive experience and knowledge in dealing with the problems and opportunities that impact most directly on the lives of all of us in Newton. These include (1) land-use development that generates needed additional property-tax revenues and meets such needs as affordable housing while comporting with Newton's special character and minimizing adverse environmental impacts; (2) parking and traffic regulations that accommodate the varying public-safety and other needs of residents and the general public; and (3) appropriate use of funds generated through the Community Preservation Act to preserve open space, develop affordable housing, preserve historic resources and develop recreational resources.

A special interest of mine which I intend to continue to pursue if I am reelected is finding ways to utilize Newton's zoning ordinance and other land-use regulations to promote the use of sustainable building practices to conserve the use of energy and natural resources in our private and public buildings. In this aldermanic term I took the first step in this effort by drafting and co-docketing with President Baker amendments to the Newton zoning ordinance to add the use of such sustainable building practices to the purposes of the ordinance and to include such conservation of energy and natural resources as a criterion to be considered by the Board of Aldermen in acting on requests for special permits and site plan approvals. Recently those amendments were adopted by unanimous vote of the Board.

But if I am to continue in this work I will need your help. This year I have a well-known opponent who is the president of the Newton Taxpayers' Association. To respond to his challenge I intend to conduct a vigorous citywide campaign, for which I will need whatever forms of support you are able to give my campaign. I will need financial support to pay for newspaper ads, mailings, campaign signs and other materials. I will also need help from you and your neighbors in spreading the message of my campaign through such things as displaying yard signs, sending "Dear Friend" cards, and helping with campaign mailings, as well as helping with poll coverage on election day.

Please give my campaign an important early push by returning the enclosed envelope indicating the ways you are willing to support my campaign. With your help I am confident that we will wage a winning campaign that will enable me to serve another two years in working to achieve the Newton we want.

Best wishes,

Verne Vance