

Single copy for use in this building only



August 24, 2026



School district boasts best AP performance in five years, gains in English language learning



In deep-blue Waltham, the election that matters is the one people skip



Conservation Commission still waiting on city's explanation about Fernald



Inside the Waltham Garden Club ahead of its 85th anniversary

In deep-blue Waltham, the election that matters is the one people skip

BY ARTIE KRONENFELD • ELECTIONS • AUGUST 18, 2026



Voting experts in Massachusetts expect relatively high turnout for this year's state election because of the numerous ballot questions and some [high-profile contests](#).

Even so, Waltham and other municipalities may have trouble bringing people to the polls for the Nov. 3 general election and especially for the Sept. 1 primary.

Turnout for state elections regularly outpace turnout for [municipal elections in Waltham](#). Neither, however, reach the heights of typical turnout for presidential elections. Between 70 to 80% of Waltham voters cast ballots, whereas statewide elections since 2010 have averaged 55% turnout in the city.

Shanique Rodriguez is the executive director of the nonprofit [Massachusetts Voter Table](#), which works to increase voter turnout in Boston and the state's gateway cities, especially in marginalized and historically disenfranchised communities.

Rodriguez said Waltham sees better turnout than many of the communities she works with directly, partly because of the city's larger size and budget. But turnout is a statewide problem, she said. Many communities, Waltham included, do better in hotly contested races that draw heavy news coverage and in elections with high-profile ballot questions. Lopsided contests and local and district-level races without state or federal name recognition struggle to attract as much attention – and, thus, voter turnout.

Primaries fare even worse. A primary is “way harder to advertise than the general election, because it's happening at an odd time of year,” Rodriguez said. Plus, candidates aren't certified until the start of the summer, when many families are juggling childcare and vacations.

Yet, in Massachusetts, a state that consistently leans Democratic, (as is the case in any state where one party dominates) a primary can be more closely contested – and more consequential – than the general election. Skipping one, therefore, can mean giving up a voter's most meaningful say.

In fact, one November ballot question goes to this point, as it seeks to eliminate partisan primaries in favor of one unified primary where the top two vote-getters advance to the general election, regardless of party affiliation. Rodriguez backs this primary model, saying that it would give voters a more

competitive choice. Still, it would not close the public education and engagement gaps that depress primary turnout, she said.

Outside of “super voters” – people in the habit of voting every single election – many people vote only in presidential elections, Rodriguez said. She attributes this partly to the public’s disproportionate focus on the federal government, and said public institutions and organizations like hers must make a better case for how primaries and local races also shape people’s lives.

The Waltham Clerk’s Office uses social media posts and outreach, sandwich boards around the city and voter registration drives at Waltham High School to encourage voting. The city has posted an ad on The Waltham Times website, too.

In an email to The Waltham Times, Ward 6 Councilor Sean T. Durkee called for funding more turnout programs, including door-to-door outreach, and stressed councilors’ power to inform constituents about local issues.



He wrote that low voter turnout in recent municipal elections may reflect a growing reluctance to engage with democratic systems. “Post-COVID, more people are working from home, commenting more online, and voting less,” he wrote.

Rodriguez agreed that political debate has migrated online, where partisan forums can breed isolation and echo chambers. But the internet can also draw voters in, she said, if advocates build trusted forums for neutral information, online and off.

“One of the most beautiful things about this country is our democracy, and it’s very sad to see how less and less engaged we become,” she said. “And I think there are a lot of things behind that, but people need to remember that regardless, [for] the sake of our own democracy, we should still uphold it by engaging in the process as best we can ... it’s our job to work hard to change it so it is upheld in a way that feels meaningful to us all.”

The city website’s [elections page](#) contains information on registration deadlines, voting locations and the questions on the ballot. The deadline to register to vote in the Sept. 1 primary election is Aug. 22.



ARTIE KRONENFELD

Artie Kronenfeld is a Waltham-based reporter who enjoys writing about policy and administration that affect people’s everyday lives. Previously hailing from Toronto, they’re a former editor-in-chief of the University of Toronto’s flagship student paper The Varsity. You can find them during off-work hours playing niche RPGs, wandering through Haymarket and making extra spreadsheets that nobody asked for.

Election 2026: Mara Dolan

BY ARTIE KRONENFELD • ELECTIONS • AUGUST 20, 2026



[Mara Dolan](#) was the breakthrough challenger in the last Governor's Council election, defeating a 25-year incumbent for the position. This time around, she says she's more than ready – and qualified – to continue her work.

Dolan is running in the Democratic primary for reelection to the Governor's Council, where she currently represents District 3, which includes Waltham. [The Governor's Council](#) is responsible for reviewing and deciding whether to confirm appointments made by the governor, including judges, public administrators, parole board members, and more. It also votes on pardons and commendations recommended by the governor.



Mara Dolan. Courtesy photo.

At a [July event](#) hosted by the Waltham Democratic City Committee, Dolan highlighted her experience on the council and her 20-year career as a public defender. She described told attendees about her journey to the bar, which included supporting herself financially through college and law school. She then started her career as a defense lawyer while balancing the responsibilities of a single mom.

"I had to make it on my own. I had a lot of fights and a lot of battles, and those made me very strong," she said. "There's no one who is a stronger and more effective advocate for the vulnerable than I am."

Over [the course of her campaign](#), Dolan has emphasized her support for reproductive rights, rehabilitation for incarcerated people, efforts to fight systemic racism and protect courtrooms against ICE intervention.

As a practicing defense attorney, Dolan said she has a direct view of the issues that come up in court and can help create balance in a system historically dominated by former prosecutors. She puts a strong emphasis on education and has a long list of topics she wants nominees to understand. For juvenile court judges, she asks about their knowledge of juvenile brain development, and she places particular importance on their understanding of the science of addiction.

In her first term, Dolan has consistently voted to confirm Governor Maura Healey's judicial appointments — something she attributes to Healey's selection of qualified and informed candidates. "Our criminal justice system at its best helps people to get to a better place, and the nominees that we're seeing share that view," she said.

Dolan points to her long list of endorsements from labor unions and government officials, including Waltham's current state representatives [John Lawn](#) and [Tom Stanley](#), as further evidence of her record.

She also has a history of political advocacy beyond the governor's council, having served as a Massachusetts Democratic Party State Committee member and worked on the campaigns of several Democratic candidates.

This campaign season has become more contentious since Dolan's challenger, [Margie Palladino](#), entered the race. Palladino, a former supporter of Dolan, is running against her in part to protest Dolan's April vote to confirm attorney Mary Ferriter as an associate justice in family and probate court.

Ferriter has come under fire from some domestic abuse survivors for her former role as the director of the High-Conflict Parent Education Course, which [some Massachusetts family court judges ordered divorcing couples to attend](#). At her confirmation hearing, [Ferriter told councilors](#) the program screened out potential participants in active domestic abuse situations. However, before the program was shut down in 2024, some domestic violence survivors [publicly stated](#) it forced them to interact with their abusers over extended periods.

Dolan maintained that Ferriter was not responsible for requiring participation in the program. She said she heard positive testimony from many of the program's attendees and said other aspects of Ferriter's record further justified her candidacy. "[Ferriter] was a multiple award-winning person. Her application came with 23 pages of commendations and recommendations – so she was really, really rock solid. And [she was] also compassionate, and had a track record of really helping people."

Dolan said she stands by her vote, and expressed frustration that much of Palladino's campaign has centered on it, describing her opponent's effort as a "single-issue campaign." Other parts of the Governor's Council job, Dolan says, are equally as important, but haven't been getting as much airtime.

She pointed to the parole board, which oversees parole decisions and advises the governor on pardons, as an example. Until recently, the board was down a member, and Dolan said she would support expanding it further.

Dolan was one of the "no" votes on the only one of Healey's appointments the council blocked this term – a parole board nominee who Dolan said didn't address her concerns about wrongful parole.

Dolan said she's worked hard throughout her campaign to educate voters about the work of the governor's council and make its proceedings more transparent. She encouraged members of the public to get involved by watching council hearings, either via [livestream](#) or in person at the state house [at noon on Wednesdays](#).

Author



ARTIE KRONENFELD

Artie Kronenfeld is a Waltham-based reporter who enjoys writing about policy and administration that affect people's everyday lives. Previously hailing from Toronto, they're a former editor-in-chief of the University of Toronto's flagship student paper The Varsity. You can find them during off-work hours playing niche RPGs, wandering through Haymarket and making extra spreadsheets that nobody asked for.

Comments (1)



MELISSA • AUGUST 21, 2026 AT 10:25 AM

Well written informative article on an important election that directly affects the city of Waltham.
Thank you
Keep up the good work
And the spread sheets!

Election 2026: Margie Palladino

BY ARTIE KRONENFELD • ELECTIONS • AUGUST 20, 2026



[Margie Palladino](#) is new to running for state office, but she says it's another step on a path of political involvement she's been following her entire life.

Palladino is challenging incumbent Mara Dolan in the Democratic primary for a seat on the Governor's Council representing District 3, which includes Waltham.

[The Governor's Council](#) is responsible for reviewing and deciding whether to confirm appointments made by the governor, including judges, public administrators, parole board members and more. It also votes on pardons and commendations recommended by the governor.

At a [July event](#) held by the Waltham Democratic City Committee, Palladino described her childhood in upstate New York as the daughter of politically involved parents.

As a young adult, Palladino decided to create change by going into law instead of politics. At the time, she said, she shied away from family court after hearing about its inconsistent and difficult rules; instead, she went into corporate litigation, where she felt her work wasn't making much of an impact. When she and her former partner adopted children, she agreed to retire from the law to take care of them full time.

When Palladino attended family court years later as a party on the other side of the bench, she found the experience as inconsistent and difficult as she'd expected. This time, she resolved to change it. With the help of other women who'd had bad experiences in family court, she helped found the Mass Family Advocacy Coalition to advocate for reforming the family court system to make it more predictable for participants and to advocate for survivors of domestic abuse.

What catalyzed Palladino's decision to [run for the Governor's Council](#) was a vote in April when Dolan and three other council members voted to confirm [attorney Mary Ferriter](#) as an associate justice in family and probate court. Ferriter has come under fire from some domestic abuse survivors for her past role as the [director of a program](#) that they said [required them to interact with their abusers over extended periods of time](#). Palladino, who [supported Dolan in her last election](#), said this vote felt like a "betrayal."



*Margie Palladino.
Courtesy photo.*

Palladino argued that the Governor's Council hearing process isn't sufficiently transparent. She was also unsatisfied with attempts to reach out to Dolan after the hearing, characterizing Dolan's responses to domestic violence survivors from MFAC as dismissive.

Palladino said transparency is particularly important in the Governor's Council's work, because in Massachusetts, judges aren't elected and can continue to serve until they turn 70.

Palladino argued that her position outside the legal system as an advocate positions her as an independent and accountable choice. She also has experience in local politics as a member of the Wellesley Town Meeting, and she pointed to her endorsement from state auditor Diana DiZoglio.

Beyond the judiciary, Palladino said she maintains her political priorities as a lifelong Democrat. She said she wants to see humane immigration legislation, protections for reproductive rights and LGBTQ+ communities, and the upholding of equal protection and due process.

Palladino also wants potential judicial candidates and other state-level appointees to continue their education. She pointed out that although Massachusetts attorneys have access to continuing legal education resources, they aren't required by law to use them.

She said judges need to be aware of the changing legal landscape around issues like ICE in courtrooms, and members of the parole board should stay up to date on new data and findings about recidivism and rehabilitation.

As a domestic abuse advocate, Palladino said she's particularly committed to making sure victims are heard in the council, and the candidates she confirms are trauma-informed. She's still focused on court reform: Before voting to confirm a judge, she said she wants to know they're thinking about how their procedural decisions will impact the people on the other side of the bench.

Author



ARTIE KRONENFELD

Artie Kronenfeld is a Waltham-based reporter who enjoys writing about policy and administration that affect people's everyday lives. Previously hailing from Toronto, they're a former editor-in-chief of the University of Toronto's flagship student paper The Varsity. You can find them during off-work hours playing niche RPGs, wandering through Haymarket and making extra spreadsheets that nobody asked for.

Election 2026: Tom Stanley

BY CYD ABNET • GOVERNMENT • AUGUST 18, 2026



Tom Stanley is running uncontested for his 14th term as the 9th Middlesex District Representative in the upcoming Sept. 3 Democratic primary.

Stanley is a lifelong Waltham resident, graduating from Waltham Public Schools and currently lives in the city with his wife, dog and two sons.

Stanley has been a state representative since 2001 and served on Waltham's city council for 25 years. He ran for mayor of Waltham in 2003 and 2015. Stanley says that politics and civics were staples of his childhood.

"I caught the political bug as they call it, really early," he said.

Stanley's father, William F. Stanley, served on Waltham City Council and served as Waltham's mayor from 1985 to 1999. However, Stanley wants to be clear: he isn't just following in his father's footsteps.

"I just determined that being involved [in politics] was what I wanted to do with my life," he said.

A renaissance man in MA government

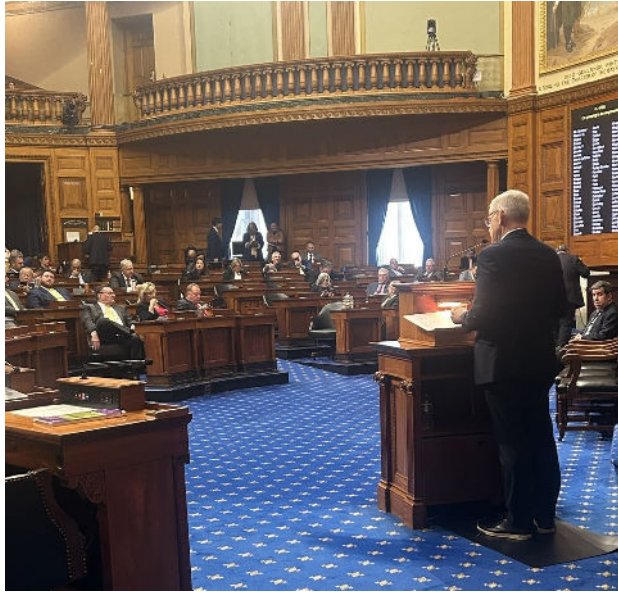
Stanley, who graduated with a bachelor's degree from Bentley University and a master's in public administration from Suffolk University School of Management, feels he is in a unique position to lead because of his experience holding multiple offices.

"One of the things that differentiates me from other elected officials is that I represented Waltham at two levels: state government and as a city councilor," Stanley said. "Both roles helped me to represent Waltham better than I would have without."

Stanley stepped down from his role on the city council in 2025 to focus on his job as a state representative because he felt he could make the most impact for the community on the national stage. With his deep understanding of the city, Stanley plans to continue listening to residents and, if re-elected, make decisions about what he thinks is best for the community.

A decision that stands out to Stanley in his career was the decision on whether to support same-sex marriage. He says he put aside what he thought was best for his political career and chose what he felt was truly the right decision.

“That was probably the most stressful time,” he said. “At one point I was meeting with constituents on both sides of the issue at the same time. I made the decision that I thought was right, voting in favor. I thought I was going to lose the election the next year because of it, but I was wrong.”



Leading the way for the aging population

Stanley currently serves as the chairperson of the Joint Committee on Aging and Independence, which works on legislation supporting the state’s aging population. Stanley hopes to continue his work on the committee if re-elected.

“There’s a great deal of work to be done. Funding [for care programs] is being made worse by federal government cuts. There wasn’t enough money to help fund these programs before, and now it’s going to be so much more difficult.”

In response to the funding cuts, Stanley recently led the charge on a bill that aims to establish a long-term services and support commission that will determine what programs are fiscally feasible to support healthcare needs for residents as they grow older.

As part of his work on the committee, Stanley hopes to continue protecting all residents from scams. Alongside AARP, Stanley is advocating for banning cryptocurrency kiosks around the Commonwealth. Scammers often request payment from victims via cryptocurrency and direct them to complete the payments through kiosks. The kiosks are [banned in Waltham](#), but not statewide. If re-elected, Stanley intends to continue advocating for that bill to protect everyone in the state from being targets of cryptocurrency scams.

Widespread support of issues facing MA

Outside of his work on the Joint Committee on Aging and Independence, Stanley dabbles in a little bit of everything. In 2025, he introduced a bill to limit commercial harvesting of the wild striped bass. According to Stanley, the bill supports not only fish populations but also the health of the state’s waterways.

Stanley also presented legislation to ensure large housing developments are in line with Massachusetts fair housing requirements. With several large housing development projects on Waltham's horizon, this law may come into play.

Additionally, Stanley introduced a bill asking the Health Financing Committee to create a loan-forgiveness grant program for medical students specializing in primary care to address the shortage of primary care doctors in the state.

All three bills are currently in the House Committee on Ways and Means.

"There's a million issues that you can work on to help improve everything, but that's the underlying drive. My passion to represent my community," Stanley said.

Through the relationships he's built during his time in office, as well as his holistic knowledge of the state's governmental structure, Stanley hopes to keep pulling levers within the political system to benefit the city of Waltham.

The 9th Middlesex District representative primary will take place along with other primary races on Sept. 1 from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. at precinct locations around the city. Although Stanley is running unopposed, he urged people to still vote. "Voting is a fundamental right of our democracy. I hope no one ever takes it for granted," he said.

Residents can use an [online tool](#) on the Secretary of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts website to find their polling location. Early voting for the primary takes place Aug. 22 through 28 at the Rosario Malone Archive and Records Center at 260 Grove St. More information is available on the City of Waltham [website](#).



Author



CYD ABNET

Cyd Abnet is a Waltham native who recently graduated with a degree in Environmental Science from Clark University. She began her journalism career with Clark's student newspaper where she covered topics from on-campus protests to competitive chess scandals. In her free time you can find Cyd enjoying Waltham's numerous natural wonders.

Comments (1)

 TONY MANGINI • AUGUST 19, 2026 AT 10:19 AM

although you have been a fairly decent representative for your district, the one big giant mistake you made which you mention in this article was you and peter koutoujian;s vote to ok same sex marriages. the bill was carried by amerely 2 votes, yours and peters. the blunder you made which many of us will never forget. if you forgot we met at wilson's diner before the vote and i reminded you of your Catholic faith and the need to vote morally. i feel bad that you made such an error of judgement and that in due course justice will be demanded of you. tony

Reply

DiZoglio seeks to expand oversight in second term as state auditor

BY CHARLIE JOHNSON • ELECTIONS • AUGUST 23, 2026



Diana DiZoglio centered her first term as state auditor on her push to audit the State Legislature and expand oversight across state government. She's seeking a second term to continue that work, with a goal of securing additional resources to fund her agenda.

She said her experience drives her priorities as state auditor.

"I learned about all the good things that the government can do, but I also learned about the flip side of how our government can operate when there is no accountability," said DiZoglio, who previously served 10 years in the state Legislature, serving six years in the House and four in the Senate.



Diana DiZoglio is seeking her second term as state auditor. Courtesy photo.

Throughout her time in the Legislature, DiZoglio said she became more outspoken about transparency and accountability. She cited specific issues that concerned her. She pointed to the Legislature's use of taxpayer-funded nondisclosure agreements, which she said could conceal allegations of harassment, discrimination and abuse. She also criticized the speed with which lawmakers were expected to vote on legislation.

She said she decided to run for the auditor's seat first in 2022 and again this year, seeing it as a stronger platform to address those areas of concern.

Pursuing her goals during her first term

Since taking office in January 2023, DiZoglio's office has audited the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority and, through its Division of Local Mandates, determined that the [MBTA Communities Act](#) constituted an unfunded mandate.

But one of her main priorities remains unresolved: auditing the state Legislature. She championed a 2024 ballot initiative granting her office that authority, which voters approved with about 72% support. Since then, she has faced resistance in obtaining records and carrying out the audit.

"I have been stonewalled from being able to conduct that audit as mandated by 72% of the voters of this commonwealth," DiZoglio said.

Legislative leaders have raised concerns about separation of powers and legislative privilege. Attorney General Andrea Campbell argued that DiZoglio initially failed to provide enough detail about the scope of litigation she wanted authorized. DiZoglio has disputed that account.

The dispute reached the Supreme Judicial Court after [DiZoglio sued House Speaker Ronald Mariano, Senate President Karen Spilka](#) and the clerks of both chambers in February. In May the court directed

Campbell to decide whether DiZoglio could pursue litigation over four categories of legislative records. Campbell later authorized DiZoglio to proceed with outside counsel.

Meanwhile, the House passed a [bill](#) in June proposing a narrower framework for legislative audits and giving legislative leaders a role in allowing certain records requests. The Senate later passed a substantially different version, sending the proposals to a conference committee.

State reps. John Lawn (D-10th Middlesex) and Thomas Stanley (D-9th Middlesex) did not respond to requests for comment on DiZoglio's tenure as auditor.

DiZoglio wants 'bold and meaningful change'

If elected to a second term, DiZoglio hopes to secure more resources for an office in which she said has been forced to "audit more with less" as state government has grown. She said the requirement to audit covered entities at least once every three years can limit the depth of the office's examinations.

DiZoglio is also backing [Question 1](#) on the November ballot, which would bring the Legislature, governor's office and judiciary under the state public records law. Massachusetts is the only state where all three entities are exempt from its public records law. DiZoglio criticized recent legislative proposals establishing a narrower framework for the Legislature, calling them a "preemptive strike" against the ballot question.

"I will continue to beat the drum that we can make bold and meaningful change to get our democratic government away from the authoritarian style of governance that is sweeping the Statehouse right now," DiZoglio said.

DiZoglio is running unopposed for reelection. The Massachusetts' primary election is Sept. 1 and the general election is Nov. 3.

Author



CHARLIE JOHNSON

Charlie Johnson is a freelance reporter covering stories across the Greater Boston area. A graduate of Boston University's journalism program, he wrote for The Daily Free Press in the Campus News and City News sections and reported for Brookline.News through BU's pilot Newsroom program. Most recently, he covered local government, business, housing and community news for Fig City News in Newton.

Conservation Commission still waiting on city's explanation about Fernald property

BY LEA ZAHARONI • GOVERNMENT • AUGUST 18, 2026



Nearly a month after the Conservation Commission [approved](#) a proposed golf course at the former Fernald State School site, the city still has not explained why it hasn't filed a legally required conservation restriction for the grounds. Based on the commission's decision, construction on the project will remain paused until the restriction is filed.

At the commission's Aug. 13 meeting, conservation agent Julia Abbott confirmed that she had not received any documentation from the city regarding the conservation restriction. The CR is a permanent, legally binding land-use protection that was supposed to have been placed on the Fernald property when the city purchased it from the state using Community Preservation Act funds in 2014.

The onus to file the protection is on the city, which has yet to do so. Asked whether she expected anything to be filed, Abbott said it seemed unlikely at this point.

Commissioner Anja Shafer questioned whether the project was at a standstill and whether the commission's approval could move forward if the city never provides an explanation for the missing CR.

Chair Bill Doyle pushed back on the standstill framing, saying the project is technically approved. The only thing paused is construction itself, which can't begin until the city satisfies the [condition set](#) back in July that the city must provide a legal justification for proceeding without the conservation restriction in place.

Doyle noted that [many other projects](#) have broken ground at the Fernald property, both inside and outside the commission's jurisdiction, leaving little basis to treat the proposed golf course differently. But the condition, once voted, stands regardless.

The commission directed Abbott to send a follow-up letter to the mayor's office, city clerk and law department, asking that the condition be addressed before any construction begins on the golf course.

Free haircuts, backpacks at Moody Street back-to-school festival

BY JUNE KINOSHITA • COMMUNITY • AUGUST 23, 2026



A Mobar Cuts stylist trims a student's hair at last year's free back-to-school event on Moody Street. Photo by Brenda Gonzalez.

Students heading back to class this fall can pick up a free haircut, a new backpack and a fresh coat of face paint at a pop-up street festival on Moody Street this Thursday.

The ["Rock The School Year"](#) event, sponsored by The Village Bank, runs from 2 to 6 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 27, at Embassy Park, 220 Moody St. Admission is free, no appointment necessary.

Barbers from Mobar Cuts will cut hair on site at no charge for students and families. The event will also feature a backpack giveaway (while supplies last), face painting, and clothing and food vendors with a focus on healthy and sustainable living.

Candido "Coco" Fernandez, owner of Mobar Cuts and a master barber, said a fresh cut does more for a student than change their appearance.

"Every kid wants to get fresh, get a glow up, to start school," Fernandez said. "A fresh cut gives kids the confidence that they belong."

For many families, the new school year brings a stack of costs — supplies, clothes, shoes and haircuts among them. Organizers said the giveaway is meant to ease some of that burden.

“Back to school is an exciting and busy time of year. The Village Bank is happy to celebrate this occasion with our Waltham neighbors and provide families with school supplies and haircuts,” Village Bank President and CEO Joe De Vito said. “This event is a fantastic way for us to support the Waltham community.”

The Village Bank runs a Village Volunteers program, through which employees donate time to civic, educational and charitable organizations.

Vendors and pop-ups scheduled to appear include Brelundi, Common Good, Dylan & Pete’s Ice Cream Truck, Shopper’s Café, Gustazo Cuban Cuisine, In a Pickle, Joco’s Bar & Kitchen and Ya Mother’s Truck n’ Kitchen.

Author



JUNE KINOSHITA

A Waltham resident since 2003, June has been a writer and editor for Scientific American, Science, The New York Times Magazine, among others. She co-founded the Alzheimer Research Forum and N-of-One. She recently retired from a 13-year career as a leader at the FSHD Society, a rare disease patient advocacy organization.

How about aligning mayoral and presidential elections?

BY BRAD ONKEN • IDEAS • AUGUST 20, 2026



People voting at the polls. Canva stock image.

Artie Kronenfeld’s excellent [article on voter turnout](#) reinforces a reform that I believe we as citizens of Waltham should request of our city leaders. As Artie pointed out in the article,

Turnout for state elections regularly outpaces turnout for municipal elections in Waltham. Neither, however, reach the heights of typical turnout for presidential elections. Between 70 to 80% of Waltham voters cast ballots, whereas statewide elections since 2010 have averaged 55% turnout in the city.

Our mayoral elections should be aligned with the presidential election instead of the current odd-year municipal cycle. And our city council elections should be aligned with the even-year midterm election cycle to ensure a larger voter turnout. This change would ensure that the broadest possible cross-section of Waltham voters elect our mayor and lawmakers — giving everyone a say rather than leaving these crucial decisions to a small group of “super voters,” as Shanique Rodriguez, executive director of the nonprofit Massachusetts Voter Table, noted in Artie’s article. An added benefit to this shift is that citizens would face fewer separate trips to the polls — easing voter fatigue, encouraging participation and saving the city money on election administration.



Author



BRAD ONKEN

Brad Onken is a Waltham resident, former textbook publishing executive and U.S. history and government teacher who writes to encourage local discussion. His writing explores divergent viewpoints on city issues, aiming to spark thoughtful dialogue and help consider the consensus needed to move Waltham forward as an important hub in the MetroWest region. He serves on the board of Healthy Waltham.

Comments (7)

 ED KUSNITZ • AUGUST 23, 2026 AT 9:10 PM

This is a great way of increasing voter participation in Waltham that shouldn't be controversial.

[Reply](#)

 BRIAN WINTERS • AUGUST 22, 2026 AT 10:49 AM

Very sensible idea. Let's get this done!

[Reply](#)

 KEVIN CURTIS • AUGUST 21, 2026 AT 4:17 PM

The incumbents do not want a full cross section of the potential voter. The incumbent is perfectly happy with the smaller group of people who voted them into office last time.

Off year elections are a genteel form of voter suppression.

[Reply](#)

 ANDREA L • AUGUST 21, 2026 AT 2:10 PM

I think this is a great idea & makes sense for all in our community. Waltham is stronger, more vibrant and more invested in the future for all here in our great city when all people are of the election process. Let's make this happen!

[Reply](#)

 PAPA • AUGUST 21, 2026 AT 1:26 PM

Brad is spot on. The alignment of City Council elections with mid-term elections, and Mayoral with Presidential elections, would be a boon to Waltham resident turnout for the local community elections, and would no doubt spur more interest and scrutiny of those candidates performance four our City, and inhabitants.

A great observation and recommendation by Brad. What is needed to make this so?

[Reply](#)

 BRAD ONKEN • AUGUST 22, 2026 AT 3:03 PM

Thanks for reading and asking! My understanding is that shifting our city election years would require a charter amendment or Special Act under Massachusetts Home Rule laws. There are two ways to do that:

1. The City Council can pass a Home Rule Petition requesting a special act by the State Legislature to align our local election years. It would need to be signed by the Mayor. Once passed on Beacon Hill, it would require a local referendum clause so it comes back to us for final approval on a city ballot.

2. We as residents can organize directly and gather petition signatures from 15% of registered voters to form an elected Charter Commission. Once signatures are verified, the question of whether to form this commission goes to the next regular municipal ballot for voters to decide.

Neither path is easy. The most direct path forward is for the City Council to initiate a Home Rule Petition. Ultimately it comes down to voter engagement and encouragement to make it a priority. If enough residents reach out to their Ward and At-Large City Councilors, the Council can initiate a public hearing and begin exploring a Home Rule petition themselves. Any resident can find their councilors' emails by reviewing the Waltham City Council Directory on the official Waltham City Council webpage, or call the council office directly at 781-314-3499.

[Reply](#)

 SUSAN KAHN • AUGUST 21, 2026 AT 10:34 AM

Great idea!

[Reply](#)

Inside the Waltham Garden Club ahead of its 85th anniversary

BY ALLIE LADJEVA • COMMUNITY • AUGUST 23, 2026



Garden club members pose with the flower arrangements they made for the 2026 Waltham High School senior prom. Courtesy of Waltham Garden Club.

In 1941, as the United States entered World War II, Waltham residents heeded a nationwide call to support the war effort by planting victory gardens. The gardens alleviated food shortages and helped people on the homefront feel they were making a difference. Eighty-five years later, the club that emerged from that movement is still bringing residents together through a shared passion for gardening and community projects.

Initially, the Waltham Garden Club was known as Waltham Better Gardeners. Its first official meeting was at the State College Field Station on Beaver Street, later known as the University of Massachusetts-Waltham Field Station. Some meetings were also held at the Waltham Public Library.

One of the club's first projects was a flower show, which took place at Waltham City Hall Annex, formerly known as North Junior High School.

The show was an exhibition of plants and was “the first large-scale flower and garden show the city had ever had,” according to the club's yearbooks. The event was a collaboration between the club and the Waltham Victory Garden Committee, with all profits donated to the Waltham Community Fund War Relief Agencies.



American WWII-era poster promoting victory gardens. Wikipedia.

The Waltham Garden Club Today

Mary Ellen Donovan, a Waltham native who has been a club member for about 12 years and previously served as president and co-president, said the club's long-lasting history comes not only from gardening but also from relationships that members build through it.

Today, the organization has more than 80 members and holds regular meetings at the Carriage House at Gore Place.

“We have regular monthly meetings – we have eight per year. We do the Mayor's Day on [Waltham] Common. We work with the Waltham Community Farm, and we help them with Farm Day. We set up a booth there. We have a program at the Paine Estate every Christmas, [where] we have a floral demonstration. We also have a plant sale every year, and now we have it at the Waltham Senior Center,” Donovan said.

The club has also revived traditions from its past. Its Garden Gatherings program, started about six years ago, was inspired by the club's historical practice of members visiting one another's gardens to exchange gardening knowledge.

Last year, the club also created the flower arrangements for the senior prom. The club worked with high school students, who shared their vision for a “Night in Italy” theme. The members went to the flower market and worked together to bring this vision to life, Donovan said.

Community and relationship-building are at the heart of the Waltham Garden Club.

“I think [the club] is a nice way to meet people ... this woman was saying that honestly, for all of my friends now, she goes, I've met them all through flowers,” Donovan said.

Celebrating the 85th anniversary

As the club prepares to celebrate its 85th anniversary, Donovan has helped document its history and will lead a historical presentation on Sept. 15, covering the Waltham Garden Club's 85-year history. It will be special, she said, because the club's 80th anniversary fell during the pandemic.

"When they had their 80th [anniversary], it was COVID, so we didn't do anything. ... So there was a big celebration for the 75th, and then it was kind of just like it slid by. So that's why I think it's important now to celebrate," Donovan said.

Kathy Hines, Joyce Gianfelice, Kathy Montesanti, Nancy Manzon D'Ercole and Mary Ellen Donovan joined the committee to plan this year's events. In addition to the historical presentation, the committee has planned a Tick-Tock trolley tour and a flower show featuring a public display.

The trolley has a capacity of 30 people and will visit Lyman Estate, UMass Field Station and the homes of Gertrude Sanderson and Dr. Irving and Leola Fraim to share the story of the club's founding years.

The tour will take place Sept. 19. It is free, but advance registration is required due to limited capacity.

Another major anniversary event will be an in-house flower show at the club's October general meeting.

"So we're going to have eight people create something from each of the decades and do a nice arrangement. We're going to have a party, a social. We've invited the mayor to come, and she's going to come," Donovan said.

After the show, all the arrangements will be displayed at the Waltham Public Library between Oct. 21 and 24.

Those interested in joining the Waltham Garden Club can find membership information on the club's [website](#).

Eighty-five years after its founding, the club continues to use gardening not only to beautify Waltham but also to bring neighbors together.

Legion Band to close out Concerts on the Common

BY TIMOTHY LOK • AROUND TOWN • AUGUST 23, 2026



Singers Shannon Mountford and Anna Huynh of Billy and the Jets. Photo by Tim Lok.

A large crowd sprawled across Waltham Common on Tuesday, Aug. 18, to hear Elton John and Billy Joel hits performed by Billy and the Jets.

This week brings the final show of the free summer series Concerts on the Common. Waltham's storied American Legion Band closes out the season Tuesday evening, Aug. 25. The series is supported by a grant from the Waltham Cultural Council.

Enjoy these photos by Timothy Lok.

Author



TIMOTHY LOK

A Waltham resident since 2013, Timothy only started leaning into photography in 2024 when he received his first proper camera. From wild life, concerts and cars — he continues to learn the art and techniques of photography through regular practice. Although he retired from work at sea in 2022, he continues to work for the maritime industry with a control systems company in Newton, MA.

Police arrest man in assault, attempted robbery at Totten Pond Road gas station

BY JOSEPH SHARKEY • PUBLIC SAFETY • AUGUST 20, 2026



Waltham Police at Totten Pond Road Shell station. Photo by Joseph Sharkey.

Waltham police responded about 9:42 p.m. Thursday to the Shell gas station on Totten Pond Road for a reported assault and attempted robbery.

A man allegedly punched a female employee in the face and tried to rob the store, police said. The employee ran outside while the man remained inside.

Officers arrived within minutes and took him into custody.

Author



JOSEPH SHARKEY

Joseph Sharkey is an independent news photographer based in Waltham. He grew up in the city and has had a strong interest in public safety and first responders. That passion led him to covering breaking news, focusing on incidents like fires, accidents and major public safety events. His work has been featured on WCVB, WHDH, NBC10 Boston and other local news outlets.

Public Safety Report: Police keep fight from escalating

BY CYD ABNET • NEWS • AUGUST 23, 2026

A prolonged road rage incident prompted a police response last week.

On Aug. 14 at 8:12 p.m., police responded to the intersection of Lowell and Taylor streets after a caller reported two men fighting next to a truck in a possible road rage incident. When police arrived, the caller no longer wanted to speak with officers.

At 8:36 p.m. the same day, police returned to the intersection. One of the men involved in the alleged road rage incident told police that he had been jumped by 10 men. He said that he decided to handle the situation himself because he believed the police wouldn't do anything, so he was at the intersection with a baseball bat waiting for the group to come back.

While waiting, the man saw a truck speeding and approached the driver to ask him to slow down. This prompted a verbal dispute during which the man made derogatory racial comments. Police told the man to call them if he saw the group of men again. They also advised him not to handle incidents like this on his own and to request police assistance instead.

A summary of additional police and fire activity from Aug.12 to Aug. 16 is as follows:

On Aug. 12 at 5:35 p.m., police and fire crews responded to Dunkin' at 859 Main St. An employee thought that a person went into the bathroom to smoke. It turned out the person was just holding a cigarette and did not actually smoke it in the bathroom.

On Aug. 13 at 12:26 p.m., police responded to the post office at 776 Main St. after a caller reported the door was locked and expressed concern. It turned out that only one person was working at the post office that day and had locked the doors while on lunch.

On Aug. 14 at 7:53 p.m., police responded to a residence on Lyman Street. A caller reported seeing kids playing soccer outside and was worried they were unsupervised. Police determined that the children were supervised.

On Aug. 16 at 11:08 a.m., police responded to the intersection of Lexington Street and Trapelo Road. The caller reported seeing more than a dozen kids on minibikes and mopeds and was concerned they were gathering for a meet-up. Police checked Trapelo Road, Metropolitan Parkway and the Fernald property but did not find the group.

On Aug. 16 at 8:59 p.m., police responded to an apartment on Middlesex Circle after a man reported that an acquaintance had taken his phone. The man said he gave his phone to an acquaintance because the latter's phone was dead and he needed to make a phone call. When the man went inside to get a charger for the dead phone, the acquaintance ran off with his phone. Police are still investigating.

All information was obtained from spokespeople with the Waltham Police and Fire departments, [the publicly available police blotter](#) and police reports available at Waltham District Court.

School district boasts best AP performance in five years, gains in English language learning

BY LEA ZAHARONI • EDUCATION • AUGUST 18, 2026

This year 429 students sat for a total of 917 exams. Of those, 353 students earned a qualifying score of 3 out of 5 — a benchmark [associated](#) with greater academic success in college and higher graduation rates.

The total number of tests given, students tested and exams earning qualifying scores were the highest recorded in the past five years, according to Assistant Superintendent Shannon Conley, who presented a wide-ranging review of the 2025-26 school year at the School Committee's Aug. 12 meeting.

For AP language, 76% of test-takers received a qualifying score, while 94% of test-takers qualified in AP literature. All students in AP 3D art and AP drawing earned qualifying scores, which Conley called a highlight of the year.

Across AP history and social studies classes, students took a record-high 373 exams and earned qualifying scores on 75% of them. Derek Vandegrift, the district's director of history and social studies, said this is part of a positive trend in both participation and achievement since the pandemic.

"In the case of Advanced Placement ... the pandemic and its immediate aftermath were a low point. Beginning in 2023, we started to see a significant rebound. ... That really solidified that the most important factors in students' success are the relationship between student and teacher as well as the rigorous, in-person classroom experience," he said.

In the math department, students had access to new AP precalculus courses, with 95% of test-takers receiving qualifying scores — an unusually strong result for a new course, said Valerie Alfeo, the district's director of math.

On why Waltham added the new course, Alfeo said, "We wanted to make sure that we were being as competitive as the other schools in the commonwealth," adding that the course also lets students take an AP math class as juniors rather than waiting until senior year for calculus.

Vandegrift credited teachers' efforts, as well as students' determination, for this year's achievements. "The work that they have done, and continue to do, in support of student learning is the greatest factor in student success," Vandegrift said. He added that there are no entrance exams or applications to get into AP courses at WHS — "students simply need to choose to take on the challenge."

Both administrators encouraged students to continue to believe in themselves, highlighting the benefits of AP courses beyond high school. "Getting kids taking APs is definitely setting them up for more success when they get to college, because the level of rigor is best preparing them for that," Alfeo said. She added that qualifying scores can eliminate the need for an equivalent class in college, which she said "equates to minimally thousands of dollars."

Conley also noted that 126 students, from pre-K through high school, became former English learners — meaning they gained enough proficiency in the language to no longer need English acquisition services.

About one-fifth of WHS's senior class earned the state's [Seal of Biliteracy](#), recognizing proficiency in a language other than English across a wide range of languages spoken in the community. The credential can strengthen college applications and help students stand out to employers.

The district is also rolling out a new Spanish course next year designed for native and heritage Spanish speakers. More than 300 eighth- and ninth-grade students were assessed and placed into various levels of the new course for the 2026-27 school year. "This expanded pathway will enable many Spanish-speaking students to progress into advanced-level coursework and achieve higher levels of language proficiency by the time they graduate from high school," Conley's presentation stated.



LEA ZAHARONI

Lea Zaharoni is a recent graduate of Brandeis University, where she majored in American Studies and Journalism. She spent most of her time at school working as General Manager of the student radio station WBRS 100.1, which broadcasts live 24/7 on Waltham FM radio. She's also written for Brandeis' student newspaper, the Justice, as well as the Irish Independent in Dublin and Dig Boston. Lea loves exploring new places in town and returning to old favorites, and counts herself very lucky to be a part of the Waltham community.

Senate candidate Moulton makes campaign stops in Moody Street bar crawl

BY ARTIE KRONENFELD • ELECTIONS • AUGUST 23, 2026



Congressman Seth Moulton and supporters at Tempo Bar on Moody Street. Photo by Artie Kronenfeld.

U.S. Rep. Seth Moulton swung by Moody Street bars Tempo and Joco's Bar & Kitchen on Friday as part of a campaign bar crawl.

Moulton, who represents the Massachusetts 6th Congressional District, used the stops to promote his campaign to unseat longtime Senator Ed Markey in the Sept. 1 Democratic primary.

While bar crawls are not his most common outreach tactic, this was not the first one Moulton's done on the campaign trail. Moulton said it's important for him to be accessible and visible to constituents, although he admitted he doesn't get many tough policy questions during a bar crawl. He said the most common question he gets is "Are you Seth Moulton?"

"Sometimes people come up with a lot of policy questions, but tonight... there were a couple of guys who said, 'Tell me why I should care?'" Moulton said. "And that's a question that I think a lot of people are privately asking. Because people are so frustrated with politics."

Moulton emphasized his record of [holding community town halls](#), which he committed to continuing. "If I win this race for the Senate, I will hold more town halls than any other Democrat in the House or the Senate ... in my first year," he said.

Most bargoers approached by the Waltham Times declined to comment on the event because they said they didn't feel strongly about the race or weren't familiar enough with Moulton's candidacy.

After speaking with Moulton's supporters, one bar patron, Newton resident John Walker, said he was convinced to support his senate bid. Walker said he supported Moulton because he was also a veteran and was convinced Moulton would avoid sending troops into conflict without cause.

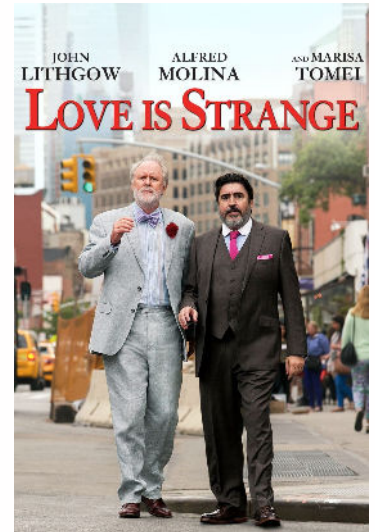
Senior Center this week: ‘Love is Strange’ is movie this week. Plan ahead for a busy September.

BY PRISCILLA ELLIOTT • COMMUNITY • AUGUST 23, 2026



Waltham’s Council on Aging operates out of the William F. Stanley Senior Center at 488 Main St. The spacious, well-equipped center offers guidance on senior issues as well as rich programs for exercise, music, classes and socializing. Check out [the center’s newsletter](#) for a full listing. Call 781-314-3499 with questions and to register for programs.

Movie “Love is Strange,” Friday, Aug. 28, 10 a.m. (subtitled), 1 p.m. (no subtitles). “Love Is Strange” is a gentle and moving drama starring John Lithgow and Alfred Molina as a longtime couple whose lives are unexpectedly disrupted when they lose their New York apartment. As they rely on friends and family for temporary housing, the film explores love, resilience and the power of community with heartfelt performances. This beautifully acted story offers a touching look at relationships and the challenges of change. R/ 1 hour 34 minutes. \$0.50 donation (optional). Please register.



Poster for the film “Love is Strange.”

Planning ahead

Election Day, Tuesday, Sept. 1. Polls are open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Encore Casino trip, Tuesday, Sept. 1, 9:15 a.m. motorcoach will leave from the Sacred Heart Church parking lot. Try your luck with more than 2,800 slot machines. Enjoy 166 table games. It all adds up to an exciting, memorable experience. Casino time: 10 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The cost is \$39 per person, due upon registration. Includes free slot play plus Deluxe Motorcoach Transportation. You must have a current Massachusetts license to participate in the casino’s rewards program. Tour operated by Bloom Tours. Please register.

Flu / COVID shot drop-in clinic, Thursdays at 1 p.m. on Sept. 3, Sept. 24 and Oct. 8. Waiver forms will be available at the front desk after Aug. 24 to complete and bring with you.

Schedule appointments for 2027 Medicare open enrollment, beginning Tuesday, Sept. 8, The annual Medicare open enrollment period runs from Oct. 15 to Dec. 7. During this time, Medicare beneficiaries can select different coverages for the following year.

Sages and Seekers Creating Connections. Tuesdays, 3 to 4:30 p.m., Sept. 15 to Oct. 27. Sages and Seekers is a seven-week program offering a unique opportunity for seniors to connect and share meaningful conversations with students from Waltham High School. adults 60 and older who are

available for the seven, week program. If you are interested, please leave your contact information at the Council on Aging at 781-314-3499. A member of the planning committee will contact you.

Did you know?

The COA provides information on legal services, home care, assistance with nursing homes and assisted living facilities, financial assistance, housing options, medical equipment loans, mental health and substance abuse.

- You can sign up for Meals on Wheels home delivery service. Volunteers to deliver meals are also needed
- Senior parking permits are available for \$5 per year. Show your drivers' license at the COA registration desk.
- Taxi vouchers are available for purchase, six books per month.
- Help with transportation. Medical appointment transportation is available in Waltham only. Grocery shopping routes are on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, call for availability. Limited transportation to the Senior Center is available upon request with advanced notice.

Multi-language programs

Tuesdays at 10 a.m. English as a second language. Classes given by an experienced ESL teacher. Improve your speaking, listening, reading and writing skills while learning practical English for everyday life. Free but please register.

Wednesdays at 10:30–11:30 a.m. Hora del Café. Spanish-speaking coffee hour.

Fridays 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Ugandan Golden Seniors lunch program.

Here is the full schedule for this week

Monday, August 24

9:00 Walking Group Veterans Field
9:30 Poker
9:30 Exercise Class
10:00 Knitting
10:45 Exercise Video
12:00 Zumba
1:00 Whist
1:00 Rummikub
1:30 Chair Volleyball

Tuesday, August 25

9:00 Crochet
9:00 Tai Chi - Adv.
9:30 Bridge Lesson
10:00 Tai Chi- Beg.
10:00 English as second language
11:00 Zoom Book Club
11:00 Mah Jong
11:15 Tai-Yo-Ba
11:30 Ukulele Group
1:00 Bridge Game
1:30 Chair Exercise
5:00 Country Line Dance

Wednesday, August 26

9:00 Walking Group Veterans Field
9:00 Blood Pressure
9:00 Quilting
9:00 TRIAD Services
9:30 Exercise Class
10:00 Veterans Services
10:00 Jay Higgins
10:30 Hora del Café
10:45 Exercise Video
11:00 Meditation
**12:00 Lunch: Stuffed Shells w/
Tomato Sauce /Tomato Pasta Salad
w/ Chicken**

Thursday, August 27

9:00 Walking Group Veterans Field
9:00 Keep It Moving-No Class
9:00 Conv.Spanish
9:30 /10:45 Exercise Video
10:00 Conv. English
10:00 Painting
10:00 Mah Jong
10:15 Strength Class
11:00 Mah Jong
11:15 Tai-Yo-Ba
12:30 Cards - Spades
1:00 Cribbage/Canasta

Friday, August 28

9:00 Ceramics (no teacher)
9:30 Poker
10:00 Movie w/captions
11:00 Ugandan Golden Seniors
12:30 Cards – Spades
1:00 Bridge: No Instructor
1:00 Movie: Love is Strange

The week ahead: Waltham Common block party marks end of summer

BY ARTIE KRONENFELD • GOVERNMENT • AUGUST 23, 2026



The city will hold a community block party on Waltham Common Saturday, Aug. 29, between 5 to 9 p.m. Billed as a family event, the celebration will feature free food and entertainment, including puppets, music and a laser show.

The city will also hold a few government meetings this week. Here's a rundown of meetings scheduled from Aug. 24 through 28.

Tree removal hearing

The city's tree warden will hold a public hearing to discuss the removal of nine Norway maple trees, one silver maple and one honey locust for a variety of health and safety reasons.

The Department of Public Works will host the meeting at 10 a.m. on Monday at 167 Lexington St. The city has asked that anyone with a complaint submit it in writing before the hearing to kthompson@city.waltham.ma.us.

Zoning Board of Appeals

The ZBA will hear a request from private homeowners to construct a single-story garage on their Wimbledon Circle property. The board will also consider extending the timeframe for 2023 variances [granted at 1122–1130 Main St.](#)

The board will meet at 7 p.m. on Tuesday at the Arthur Clark Government Center.

License Commission

The Licence Commission will meet on Wednesday at 7 p.m. in the public meeting room of the Clark Government Center at 119 School St. The agenda will be posted Monday on the [Licensing Department page](#) of the city's website.

Waltham artist brings intricate paper art to library

BY STEVE MILMORE • ARTS & CULTURE • AUGUST 18, 2026



Aaron Needle's artwork is built layer by layer, with careful cuts, intricate patterns and images from another era.

For the Waltham artist, bringing those elements together is especially meaningful because a rare condition affecting his vision makes the work all the more challenging.

Needle is displaying his work at the Waltham Public Library through the end of August. His detailed compositions combine historical imagery, hand-cut paper and richly patterned marbled backgrounds.

In 1991, Needle was diagnosed with a rare, permanent condition called blepharospasm. The symptoms include painful nerve spasms around both eyes, dry eyes and light sensitivity. Together, they affect Needle's visual field and can make taking stairs and walking in sunshine difficult.

"With the issues I have with my vision, bringing individual elements together to create a cohesive work of art is very satisfying," Needle said. "There's something very therapeutic about it."

Needle's art journey started with designing handmade greeting cards and eventually developed into sophisticated, large-scale works requiring hours of careful cutting and layering.

His interest in fine art began even earlier, after taking an honors art history class during his senior year at Newton North High School.

"I learned to appreciate the significant contribution artists have made to cultures from prehistory to the present," he said.

His pieces feature a central image surrounded by elaborate borders made from multiple layers of paper. Using an X-Acto knife, Needle can cut through up to eight layers at once to create intricate patterns with precise symmetry.

Trade cards, a form of advertising popular in the late 19th century, are used at the center of many of his compositions. Many are works of art in their own right. Needle uses ornate borders to complement and enhance the historical images, combining vintage material with modern artistry.

“A common criticism I hear from people is that I should simply create a pattern from the marbled paper — without putting an image in the center,” Needle said. “To me, that’s like asking Andy Warhol not to include images of Campbell’s soup cans. I view trade cards as integral to the finished piece. And I believe the fact that marbled paper and trade cards flourished during the same era contributes to the sense of harmony in my art.”

For more than 10 years, Needle has also worked as a gallery attendant at the Rose Art Museum at Brandeis University, where he is surrounded by artwork and exposed to a variety of artists and styles.

Needle’s work has been exhibited at several local venues, including the Belmont Media Center and the Newton Free Library. He also sells his pieces at local craft shows.

“Though it’s made of all paper, I don’t describe my artwork as collage, but rather a ‘work of paper,’” Needle said. “If a person isn’t familiar with marbled paper, I tell them it’s the same kind of paper used to line the inside covers of old books.”

His current exhibition at the Waltham Library offers visitors a chance to see how layers of paper, historical images and carefully cut patterns can transform a sheet of paper into a piece of art.



BEN HOFFMAN • AUGUST 19, 2026 AT 5:49 PM

Very impressive cousin! Careful with the x-acto knife!

[Reply](#)



CLARE MOSCHELLA • AUGUST 19, 2026 AT 10:18 AM

Happy to say I have THREE of Aaron’s artwork hanging in my home. Whimsical, colorful, intricate... interesting!! Always garners positive comments from family and friends. GREAT article and well deserved!

[Reply](#)



ELEANOR ROFFMAN • AUGUST 19, 2026 AT 10:17 AM

I am familiar with Aaron’s work and so pleased to see that it is being recognized by the Waltham Times. Thank you

[Reply](#)



DAVID NEEDLE • AUGUST 19, 2026 AT 9:47 AM

There have been many articles written about my brother Aaron’s artwork over the years, but none has captured the essence of what he does and what drives him to do it this well. Great job Steve.

[Reply](#)

Waltham-born author to talk about new book on the erosion of the American dream

BY CYD ABNET • COMMUNITY • AUGUST 20, 2026



An author with Waltham roots is returning to discuss his new book about the American dream at the Waltham Museum.

Charles J. Whalen's "Fighting for the American Dream: From Blue-Collar Kid to Maverick Economist, The Battle to Defend Working Families" provides a first-person perspective on the erosion of the American dream through the lens of a career memoir. In the book, Whalen describes his experiences in the throes of the U.S. economy, paired with a scholar's examination of the economy and society. The text also touches on work ethic, the immigrant worker experience and the role of faith and personal philosophy in the working world.

Whalen is a research fellow at the University at Buffalo and worked at the Congressional Budget Office and Business Week. "Fighting for the American Dream" is his ninth book.



Waltham-born economist and author Charles J. Whalen. Courtesy photo.

Growing up in Waltham: A crash course in economics

Whalen grew up in Waltham, attending Plympton Elementary School and graduating from Waltham High School in 1978. He says that growing up in Waltham with blue-collar parents gave him a firsthand perspective on working-class issues.

"It allowed me to see the fact that the U.S. economy has undergone several major transformations over time," Whalen said, referencing Waltham's agrarian, industrial and post-industrial history. "That helped me understand how the economy is always changing and shifting, but it also gave me my appreciation for the struggles of working families."

Whalen believes the American dream is central to Waltham because of its blue-collar background.

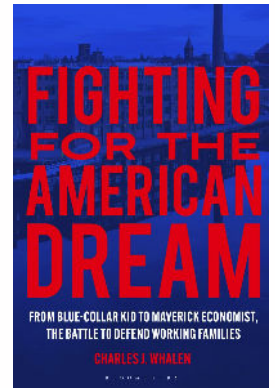
"Working people don't usually have aspirations of great wealth. Their sense of the American dream is a modest one. They want steady work. As they become more skilled, they want their quality of life to get better. Since the 1970s, that's not what we see," Whalen said.

Through stagnant wages, waning benefits, unstable schedules and layoffs, Whalen argues that the American dream has become out of reach. Despite earning a bachelor's degree in labor relations from Cornell University and a doctorate in economics from University of Texas Austin, Whalen has experienced this instability in his own career. He said there were many times he was out of a job despite the career stability that an advanced degree is often expected to provide.

“All I could find were short-term contracts. There were a lot of hard landings. My own career difficulty gave me more empathy for workers,” Whalen said.

Connecting with readers through common struggles

Whalen hopes readers will relate to his experiences and learn from them. More than a dozen lessons Whalen has learned throughout his career are laid out in “Fighting for the American Dream,” but he wants readers to draw their own meaning from the book and spur a wider discussion about the economy. He hopes greater exposure to and understanding of these ideas will serve as a small step on the way to healing the American economy.



“We need to understand what the root problems [with the economy] are and recognize that worker-centered and worker-focused strategy is the way forward,” Whalen said. “If I can get people talking about these issues then I think the book will be a success.”

Whalen will be at the Waltham Museum at 25 Lexington St. on Aug. 27 at 6:30 p.m. and will speak about the book, his experiences in Waltham and a discussion on economic issues. “Fighting for the American Dream” will be out Sept. 3 and is available for preorder on [Amazon](#), [Bloomsbury Publishing](#) and [Barnes & Noble](#).

CORRECTION: Charles Whalen’s talk was erroneously described as taking place at the Charles River Museum of Industry & Innovation. The correct location is the Waltham Museum. He worked at Business Week, not Business Insider, and “Fighting for the American Dream: From Blue-Collar Kid to Maverick Economist, The Battle to Defend Working Families” is his ninth book.

Author



CYD ABNET

Cyd Abnet is a Waltham native who recently graduated with a degree in Environmental Science from Clark University. She began her journalism career with Clark’s student newspaper where she covered topics from on-campus protests to competitive chess scandals. In her free time you can find Cyd enjoying Waltham’s numerous natural wonders.

Comments (1)



STEVE ETKIND • AUGUST 21, 2026 AT 10:50 PM

Great to read about how Living in Waltham affects one’s life. Also great to see that author of article went from Waltham to Clark University. I did the same thing 50 years ago.

Reply

Fifth annual Moody Street Car Show draws hundreds downtown

[walthamtimes.org/2026/08/18/fifth-annual-moody-street-car-show-draws-hundreds-downtown](https://www.walthamtimes.org/2026/08/18/fifth-annual-moody-street-car-show-draws-hundreds-downtown)

Linda Haas, Joseph Sharkey

August 18, 2026



Moody Street was transformed into a kaleidoscope of vivid colors and swirls of humanity as dozens of gleaming automobiles lined the street, drawing hundreds of spectators on Saturday afternoon. Classic, custom and specialty vehicles were parked at an angle on both sides of the street, each one polished by its proud owner to a high sheen and many with their hoods flung open to expose the mechanical innards.

Moody Street was closed to traffic for the afternoon between Pine and High streets, as hundreds of spectators strolled along, taking photos, peering under the hoods and admiring the upholstery.

Restaurants and bars were filled with visitors stopping in to rest and order cold drinks and snacks.

Local dignitaries, including Mayor Jeannette A. McCarthy, state Rep. John Lawn and several city councilors were seen in the crowd throughout the afternoon, posing for photos and chatting with residents.

On her Facebook page, Ward 8 Councilor Cathyann Harris thanked the volunteers and sponsors, including the Waltham Chamber of Commerce, Village Bank, Glenna Gelineau, Eagle Glass, Connors & Connors Law, Tempo, the Downtown Waltham Partnership, Councilor-at-large Randall J. LeBlanc, Ward 3 Councilor Bill Hanley, Ward 9 Councilor Robert G. Logan and state Rep. John Lawn.

ZBA discusses new state policy that will make variances easier to get

BY ARTIE KRONENFELD • GOVERNMENT • AUGUST 20, 2026



The Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) convened on August 18, 2026.

Following new changes to statewide legislation, the Zoning Board of Appeals is starting to consider its cases under a more permissive lens.

The ZBA discussed these changes at its Tuesday meeting. Under the new regulations, petitioners requesting a variance from a local zoning code no longer have to rely on the shape, topography or soil of their property to make their case or prove that building without the variance would create a “substantial hardship.”

Instead, ZBAs can consider a wider range of factors, such as financial hardship, the feasibility of alternative designs, and whether the project will contribute to local needs such as housing before it balances “practical difficulties” that the variances could fix against potential harms to the neighborhood.

These changes were championed by the Real Estate Bar Association [to expand housing production across the state](#). [In July](#), Governor Maura Healey signed them into law as a part of the [2027 state budget package](#).

Williams Street townhouses return to the ZBA

Last September, [the board voted 4–1](#) to approve zoning variances so property owner Robert Kaitz could build four townhouses at 20 Williams St. Kaitz has not yet visited the City Council to get a special permit for the project.

On Tuesday, Kaitz requested the ZBA modify its previous ruling to accommodate a change in how the Building Department has been enforcing zoning regulations.

Waltham’s zoning code requires a minimum amount of “living area” on the first floor of residential buildings, which clashes with the developer’s plan to put parking garages on the first floor of the buildings. Kaitz’s attorney claimed the Building Department has not historically enforced this part of the code.

According to Kaitz’s team, the department has begun denying other building permits for violations of this ground-floor living area code, so Kaitz requested the board grant an additional variance to exempt the townhouses from the rule.

The board voted unanimously to grant the variances.

Additionally, the ZBA:

- Approved variances for private homeowners on Gregory Street who plan to renovate their deck and outdoor pool in a way that will encroach into zoning-mandated setbacks, as a result of the unusual shape and significant slope of their lots.
- Granted variances to a landscaping business at 110 Felton St., so it could encroach into a side yard setback to build a roof over an existing loading deck in order to protect its materials from the weather.
- Signed off on a change of use for [a building at 102 Clematis Avenue](#). Its owners plan to turn it from an indoor hockey training facility into a badminton and pickleball court.

Author



ARTIE KRONENFELD

Artie Kronenfeld is a Waltham-based reporter who enjoys writing about policy and administration that affect people’s everyday lives. Previously hailing from Toronto, they’re a former editor-in-chief of the University of Toronto’s flagship student paper The Varsity. You can find them during off-work hours playing niche RPGs, wandering through Haymarket and making extra spreadsheets that nobody asked for.

Once spicy, now sweet, Pixel seeks her forever home



Meet Pixel, a smart, sweet 5-year-old tuxedo beauty looking for a peaceful, patient forever home.

Pixel takes a little time to open up, but once she feels safe, her wonderful personality truly shines. She shows affection in the sweetest ways, from giving her favorite humans little licks and staying close by to adorably calling out when they leave the house.

Pixel may not be a big fan of petting, but she absolutely adores her daily brushing sessions—a perfect way to build trust while keeping her gorgeous coat looking its best. She’s also a clever girl who has learned “sit” and “paw” for treats.

You would never guess Pixel’s story from the gentle girl she is today. She was found abandoned in the basement of an apartment building, and when she first arrived in foster care, she was understandably hissy and skittish. But with patience and love, her nervousness has gradually melted away. These days, her foster family can’t remember the last time she hissed.

For a cat who started out a little spicy, Pixel is surprisingly gentle and forgiving. If you accidentally bump into her or even step on her tail, she seems to understand it was an accident and quickly brushes it off.

Pixel is looking for a forever home where she can keep growing in confidence at her own pace. Give this special girl the patience and understanding she needs and you’ll be rewarded with a fiercely loyal and affectionate companion for life.



THE CAT CONNECTION

The Cat Connection is an all-volunteer 501(c)(3) nonprofit no-kill organization whose primary mission is to rescue abandoned, abused, unwanted, stray, neglected, and injured cats, and to facilitate their adoption into responsible permanent homes. This includes special needs cats and kittens with conditions that will require a specialized approach to adoption.

Waltham home sales Aug. 10–13, 2026

BY NEWSROOM • HOME SALES • AUGUST 17, 2026



	Sale Date	Address	Sale Price	BR/Baths	Size	Type
	8/10/2026	61 Parmenter Rd Unit 1	\$820,000	3/2.5	1730 sf	condo
	8/10/2026	95-97 Central St	\$649,482	4/2	2245 sf	2-fam
	8/13/2026	17 Washington Ave Unit 4	\$870,000	3/2	1847 sf	condo
	8/13/2026	66 Ash St Unit 1	\$888,000	3/4	2688 sf	condo
	8/10/2026	79 Cedarwood Avenue	\$920,000	3/1.5	1536 sf	1-fam
	8/10/2026	11 Autumn Ln	\$1,025,000	3/1.5	1274 sf	1-fam
	8/13/2026	53 Hiawatha Ave	\$936,000	3/3	1815 sf	1-fam

ADVERTISEMENT



Support local news!

Unbiased. Trustworthy.
Waltham-focused news & information.

While our news is free to readers, it is not free to produce. Help keep it flowing! Thank you. Your support matters.

Waltham Times



Events Calendar

August 23-September 19

For the latest and complete listings, see WalthamTimes.org/events.

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
Free kids jiu jitsu classes						
12:00 pm - 3:00 pm 'Clear the Shelters' open house at The Cat Connection 1:30 pm - 3:00 pm Guided history walk along the Mass Central Rail Trail		12:00 pm - 2:00 pm Whittemore Elementary free back-to-school event at Global Thrift 4:30 pm - 6:00 pm Waltham Fields Community Farm: Mobile Outreach Market (Mercado de Verduras) 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm Concert on the Common: American Legion Band	7:00 pm - 8:00 pm License Commission meeting	10:00 am - 4:00 pm Thursday Tours of the Golden Ball Tavern Museum 2:00 pm - 6:00 pm Back to school with The Village Bank 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm Fighting for the American Dream: An evening with author and Waltham native Charles Whalen	6:30 pm - 8:30 pm Kabbalat and Kugel	9:30 am - 2:00 pm Waltham Farmers' Market 12:00 pm - 5:00 pm Global Thrift bin sale 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm Tomato talk & taste workshop
30	31	1	2	3	4	5
		4:30 pm - 6:00 pm Waltham Fields Community Farm: Mobile Outreach Market (Mercado de Verduras)	12:00 pm - 1:30 pm Waltham Rotary Club lunch meeting 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm Board of Survey and Planning meeting 7:00 pm - 10:00 pm School Committee meeting	10:00 am - 4:00 pm Thursday Tours of the Golden Ball Tavern Museum 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm Minutemen Toastmasters of Waltham		9:30 am - 2:00 pm Waltham Farmers' Market
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
9:00 am - 10:30 am Coffee social at the Café		4:30 pm - 6:00 pm Waltham Fields Community Farm: Mobile Outreach Market (Mercado de Verduras)	5:30 pm - 6:30 pm Parks-Recreation Board meeting 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm Opening celebration at the Rose Art Museum	10:00 am - 4:00 pm Thursday Tours of the Golden Ball Tavern Museum 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm Board of Library Trustees meeting 7:00 pm - 10:00 pm Conservation Commission meeting	Rosh Hashanah at Temple Beth Israel	
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Rosh Hashanah a... 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm Second Sunday open house tours at the Golden Ball Tavern Museum	10:00 am - 11:00 am Babywearing tour of Gore Place 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm Historical Commission meeting 7:30 pm - 10:00 pm Waltham City Council meeting	10:00 am - 4:30 pm Waltham Clothing Exchange fall season 4:30 pm - 6:00 pm Waltham Fields Community Farm: Mobile Outreach Market (Mercado de Verduras)	12:00 pm - 1:30 pm Waltham Rotary Club lunch meeting 5:00 pm - 6:00 pm Board of Health meeting 7:00 pm - 10:00 pm School Committee meeting	10:00 am - 4:00 pm Thursday Tours of the Golden Ball Tavern Museum 10:00 am - 11:00 am Traffic Commission meeting 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm Minutemen Toastmasters of Waltham	7:00 pm - 8:00 pm Boston-built furniture tour of the Gore Mansion	9:30 am - 2:00 pm Waltham Farmers' Market 4:00 pm - 6:00 pm Waltham Open Mic

Printing generously donated by



713 Main Street, Waltham, MA 02451

781-899-3180

Minuteman Press locations are full-service design, print and marketing centers serving the entire business community from small businesses to Fortune 500 companies. Our customers are wide-ranging and include local organizations, government groups, non-profits, professional sports teams, businesses, entrepreneurs, consumers, and more. At Minuteman Press, we can produce anything you can put a name, image, or logo on!

The advertisement has a dark blue background with a large, faint clock face. In the top left is the 'The Waltham Times' logo. The main text reads 'It takes many hands to deliver trusted local news. Won't you add yours?'. A golden retriever dog is the central figure, wearing a black baseball cap with 'Waltham Times' on it and holding a red octopus toy. There are two QR codes: one in the top right and one in the bottom left. The bottom right has a red button that says 'GIVE TODAY'. The bottom left has a red button that says 'SUBSCRIBE'. The bottom right has a red banner with white text: 'Get the latest Waltham news, FREE in your inbox'.

The Waltham Times is Waltham's local news publication, currently available online only. This printed compendium of articles is produced by volunteers for readers who prefer hardcopy. We aim to have an official printed edition of The Waltham Times in the future, dependent of raising sufficient revenue through donations, grants and advertising to cover the cost of printing.



P.O. Box 540109 | Waltham, MA 02454

WalthamTimes.org | info@walthamtimes.org