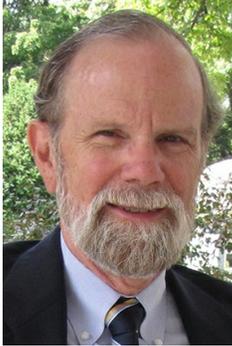


# DENNIS BIDWELL

CITY COUNCIL ★ WARD 2

[www.dennisbidwellcitycouncil.com](http://www.dennisbidwellcitycouncil.com)

July 19, 2017



To neighbors and friends, Ward 2 and elsewhere,

Though we're in the dog days of summer, much is happening in City government and in our neighborhood. *Please read on to learn more about these topics:*

[Pulaski Park Phase 2 Grand Opening, July 21 at 10 am](#)

[Mill River Bench Dedication, Aug 1 at 5 pm](#)

[The City's Stormwater and Flood Control Utility](#)

[Northampton Neighbors Potluck Gathering, Look Park, Aug 16, 4 to 8 pm](#)

[Civility Pledge](#)

[I'm running for reelection](#)

Sincerely,

Dennis Bidwell

[dennis@dennisbidwellcitycouncil.com](mailto:dennis@dennisbidwellcitycouncil.com)

**Pulaski Park Phase 2 Grand Opening, Fri July 21 at 10 am**

# PULASKI PARK PHASE 2 GRAND OPENING

Friday, July 21, 2017 at 1pm

Please join Mayor David Narkewicz for a ribbon cutting ceremony to officially open the City of Northampton's completed Pulaski Park Phase 2 "Overlook" project



The ribbon cutting ceremony will take place at the top of the new public staircase in the back of Pulaski Park. For more information, contact the Mayor's Office at (413) 587-1249, [mayor@northamptonma.gov](mailto:mayor@northamptonma.gov)



## Mill River Bench Dedication, Aug 1 at 5 pm

In the spirit of last year's public investment in a renovated Pulaski Park, Washington Ave. residents Marjorie Senechal and Stan Sherer decided they would like to donate a bench to the people of Northampton, to be located somewhere along the Mill River path. An appropriate location for the new bench was on the swath of land generously donated to the City several years ago by Gail and John Gaustad of Ward Avenue, near the so-called swimming hole between the Washington Ave. path and the Federal St. path.

Thanks to the inspiration and funds from Marjorie and Stan, and to the donated land from the Gaustads, the City's Office of Planning and Sustainability was able to contract for the bench and its installation, along with a plaque acknowledging the generosity of the four donors.

On Tuesday, August 1, at 5 pm, we will have a small event to dedicate the bench and to thank Marjorie, Stan, Gail and John for their civic-minded generosity. I hope that many of you can attend.

I expect the Mayor to drop by, as well as Planning Director Wayne Feiden. Representatives of Friends of Northampton Trails and Greenways (<http://fntg.net>), and the Mill River Greenway Initiative (<http://millrivergreenway.org>), will also be there with information about the work of their organizations.

It's really heartening when folks step up in this way for the benefit of us all. Perhaps others will also be inspired to find a creative way to contribute to the life of the City.

**The City's Stormwater and Flood Control Utility**

As most of you know, back in April a group of opponents of the City's stormwater utility and fees submitted a petition to the City Clerk requesting repeal of the ordinance creating this utility, and requesting that the stormwater fee no longer be collected by the City. Per the City Charter, the City Solicitor reviewed the petition for consistency with relevant provisions of the City Charter. He determined, quite correctly in my view, that the petition submitted was not a proper initiative petition, because the purpose of an initiative is to propose new legislation. The procedure for repealing an existing law, as spelled out in detail in the City Charter, is the referendum process, which gives petitioners 21 days following enactment of an ordinance to submit a referendum petition. This petition was submitted over three years after the Stormwater and Flood Control ordinance was approved by Council and signed by the Mayor. (It's appropriate that the opportunity to petition for repeal of existing law have a short window of opportunity - it wouldn't make sense to make repeal possible after large investments had been made, staff had been hired, etc.)

With the announcement by stormwater utility opponent John Riley that he will be running for Mayor against Mayor Narkewicz, who is seeking reelection, it is likely that the Mayoral race will have as one of its defining issues the matter of the City's stormwater utility and fee. I think it's a good thing that this simmering issue will be debated openly, with opportunities to get the facts out and to correct misinformation that has been disseminated.

As Chair of the City Council's Committee on Public Works and Utilities, I intend to be a vigorous defendant of the stormwater utility, despite its imperfections. (Which complicated ordinance is ever perfect, or satisfies everyone?) As we move into the fall, I will be using this newsletter to provide detailed, factual information on the transparent process that created the utility proposal, how the utility is operated, where the dollars are spent, why the stormwater utility was necessary three years ago and why it's even more important now, and a look at the possible consequences should this utility ever be repealed and \$2 million of City revenue removed from our budget.

### **Northampton Neighbors Potluck Gathering, Look Park, Aug. 16, 4 to 8 pm**

Northampton Neighbors, our recently created Living-In-Place organization, will be having a picnic in Look Park's Willowbrook Pavilion on August 16, from 4 to 8 pm. Come to chat and hang out, eat and enjoy. It's free. Bring a friend! Bring a grandchild! Bring a partner! Meet new people and see neighbors and friends.

Northampton Neighbors will provide some simple grilled food. Bring something else to share-a side dish or dessert-and drinks.

[More information here.](#)

Ward 2 residents have shown particular interest in Aging-In-Place, and in the work of this group. Please consider dropping by to learn more.

### **Civility Pledge**

City Council last week approved on first reading, upon the recommendation of the Human Rights Commission, a resolution "Supporting the Culture of Civility in the City of Northampton." The resolution invites all members of the Northampton community to join in a civility pledge signifying an intention to not demean other people.

I must admit to initially thinking this might be political correctness taken a big far. But, after hearing from members of the Human Rights Commission about reported increases here and around the country of name-calling and language that demeans people based on who they are and where they are from, and learning more about

possible plans to roll the pledge out into the schools and elsewhere, I was supportive.

Here's the Pledge:

*As a member of the Northampton community, I acknowledge that bias incidents and acts of hate destroy the fabric of our community, threaten the personal and collective safety of residents and visitors to our city and can escalate into criminal activity. I pledge to support a civil Northampton by refraining from disparaging other people based on who they are and by attending to those who are the targets of such acts as part of a community effort to neutralize bigotry and support people who are marginalized and disenfranchised.*

And here's the [complete Resolution](#).

## I'm running for reelection

I am running for reelection to City Council as your Ward 2 councilor. At this point it appears that no one else will be running, but there's still time to take out papers and return them to the City Clerk.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my first term as City Councilor from Ward 2. I am pleased with what I've been able to contribute in my first two years and, if reelected, I expect to have even more of an impact in the future. It's a fascinating and surprisingly complicated job that I feel privileged to take on.

Here are areas where I've concentrated so far, and where I expect to deepen my involvement in the years ahead:

- Prompt response to constituent requests and input
- Educating and involving the public in local government through my newsletter and meetings
- Focus on infrastructure issues, including support for our critical stormwater utility
- Downtown and business issues, where I'm proud to represent the interests of our local small businesses
- Supporting our Public Schools
- Acting locally to address the climate change crisis
- Supporting our network of vital non-profit organizations
- Pushing Northampton to assume a leadership role on key national and state issues

Please put November 7, Election Day, in your calendar. (If there is a Preliminary Election, it would be on September 19.)

As we move into the fall I'll be scheduling house parties and other ways to reach out to talk with Ward 2 constituents. Stay tuned.

For more information on my campaign, to become involved, or to make a modest financial contribution if you are so inclined, please go to my webpage,

[www.dennisbidwellcitycouncil.com](http://www.dennisbidwellcitycouncil.com).

**Dennis Bidwell City Council Ward 2**  
**413-584-2732 | [dennis@dennisbidwellcitycouncil.com](mailto:dennis@dennisbidwellcitycouncil.com)**  
**[www.dennisbidwellcitycouncil.com](http://www.dennisbidwellcitycouncil.com)**  
**19 Forbes Avenue**  
**Northampton, MA 01060**

