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Wednesday, January 20, 2021

Walsh delivers final State of the City

By John Lynds

Four days after being nominated by President-Elect Joe Biden to serve as United States Secretary of Labor in the new administration's cabinet, Mayor Martin Walsh delivered his final State of the City address as Mayor of Boston.

Walsh delivered his address virtually from the new Nubian Square Library in Roxbury and reflected on the work of his administration over the last seven years, the City's collective accomplishments, and the vital work that will continue to expand equity and opportunity in Boston during these uncertain times.

One accomplishment Walsh touched upon and was proud to share was the city's development of the first ever Senior Center in East Boston.

In the fall, city officials

released a set of artist renderings for the first time that depicts what Eastie's first ever Senior Center will look like once construction is completed.

Construction on the future senior center began over the summer at the former Bremen Street branch of the Boston Public Library across from Orient Heights MBTA station.

Throughout August and September, interior demolition took place, and construction started on. Construction work on the senior center will include accessibility upgrades, new HVAC systems, new elevator, window replacements, landscaping, new utilities, new bathrooms, new kitchen, sprinkler system and roof replacement.

The renderings released by the city for the first time show the all glass, 850 square foot addition



Mayor Martin Walsh delivers his final State of the City speech as Mayor of Boston before heading to Washington D.C., to serve as President Joe Biden's Secretary of Labor.

that will house the senior center's main entrance, lobby, elevator and stairwell. The renderings also show the outdoor terrace that is part of the design.

"I'm proud to see construction is underway on the new senior center in Orient Heights, East Bos-

ton," said Mayor Martin Walsh. "In Boston, we are dedicated to making investments that directly benefit in our communities, and this senior center will be vital to increasing services for our older Bostonians."

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New clothing and textile recycling drop box in Eastie

By John Lynds

It's hard to believe that more than 85 percent of clothes wind up in the trash. While it's the norm to recycle plastics, glass, metal and paper--clothes, shoes, and accessories have long been ignored. Studies show that about 10 percent of the nation's landfills are full of discarded clothes and textiles.

Boston Public Works (BPW) announced recently that it now has fourteen drop-off locations around the city for recycling clothing and textiles--this includes East Boston.

The location in Eastie at the city's municipal lot located at 166 London St. accepts everything from pants, shorts, curtains, pajamas, t-shirts, jerseys, sweatshirts, sweaters, jeans, dresses, coats, suits, shoes, blankets, and backpacks.

"Locations were started in municipal lots since they are managed by the City and space is there," said BPW's Brian Coughlin. "We're now working with neighborhood groups to help identify private land that we can use. Also

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The city's new clothing and textile drop box in East Boston is located in the municipal lot on London Street.

Artist picked for mural at new A-7 police station

By John Lynds

The City of Boston has commissioned Colombian-born artist Monika Bravo to create artwork for East Boston's new District A-7 police station that is currently under construction in East Eagle Square at the City Yards.

Bravo, who was born in Bogotá, Colombia and lives in Miami, is a multi-disciplinary artist whose work integrates a wide array of disciplines, from psycho-technologies to immersive sculptural environments.

Bravo was recently awarded the Civitella Ranieri Visual Arts Fellowship, a prestigious

residency program for international writers, composers and visual artists, in Italy.

Before construction began on the new \$30 million state-of-the-art police station in Eastie, Mayor Martin Walsh and the Boston Police released an international Call to Artists to help create art for the new station.

Funded by the City of Boston's Percent for Art program, which sets aside one percent of the City's annual capital borrowing as a budget for the commissioning of long-term public art, Bravo was chosen because her proposal

See ARTIST Page 6

EPA sued by CLF for refusing to investigate discrimination claims as part of the East Boston Substation Project

By John Lynds

Last week the Conservation Law Foundation (CLF), GreenRoots and Lawyers for Civil Rights filed a federal lawsuit against the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The group argues that the EPA failed to investigate discrimination concerns in the ongoing Eversource East Eagle substation project in East Boston.

The groups previously filed a Title VI civil rights complaint against Massa-

chusetts energy officials after they ignored resident concerns and refused to provide translation services at community meetings in Eastie where many non-English speakers, particularly Spanish-speaking residents live.

The group said the EPA declined to act on that civil rights complaint, and the subsequent lawsuit aims to force a proper investigation.

"As a mother raising three sons who use the playground that is so close

to this park I feel it is outrageous and especially frustrating that in this process, in which I and my neighbors would like to have participated and make our voices and concerns heard, we have been shut out by the lack of interpretation or the poor quality of interpretation when it was provided," said Noemy Rodriguez an East Boston resident for the past 8 years and organizer with GreenRoots.

Amy Laura Cahn, Interim Director of the Healthy

Communities and Environmental Justice program at CLF said for years, state energy officials have unlawfully shut out Spanish-speaking Eastie and Chelsea residents from decisions that will impact their communities for generations.

"We rely on the EPA to enforce civil rights laws, which guarantee residents a say in what happens in their communities," she said. "Without action by

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EBMS, local real estate developers distribute second round of funding as part of the new 'Eastie Strong' program

By John Lynds

East Boston restaurants and bars have been

some of the hardest hit small businesses by the COVID-19 pandemic, and the resulting economic downturn that has swept the nation.

While there's been some temporary relief through extended outdoor seating capacity programs as well as local bars able to offer liquor-to-go, some smaller operations are still finding it hard to pay for the necessary components to make outdoor dining a reality.

Luckily, the new partnership between East Boston Main Streets (EBMS) and local real estate developers is providing much needed financial support to local restaurants as they reopened and found their footing during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Eastie Strong, the grant program hatched by EBMS and local real estate developers, announced its second round of awardees as part of the 'Adopt a Patio' program. The Adopt a

Patio provides capital to fund reopening costs related to complying with COVID-19 restrictions. The funds are used to purchase items such as outdoor furniture, umbrellas, and space heaters for the winter.

"We are excited to release our first round of funding and know it will be a lifeline to many of these small and locally owned businesses," said

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Walsh // CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Investments from Massport, through a mitigation struck with the Logan Impact Advisory Committee (LIAG), will help support the programming and operational needs of the newly-renovated center once construction is complete.

The City’s current budget for the design and construction is \$5.43 million and the estimated completion date is fall 2021.

Also in his speech Walsh recognized the health care workers, essential workers, first responders, community partners, residents, small businesses, elected officials, and everyone who contributed to Boston’s COVID-19 response.

Walsh’s speech opened with a short-form documentary highlighting the resilience and strength of Boston’s communities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“We must keep drawing on our strength -- and on each other. Recovery won’t be easy. The virus will be with us for much of the year. The economic impacts will continue as well,” said Walsh. “There will be more hard decisions to make. Whatever happens, I know one thing: Boston will stay true to our values. We believe in keeping each other safe. We believe in caring for those who are vulnerable. We believe justice and opportunity are for everyone.”

Walsh began his State of the City speech by paying tribute to the 1,060 Bostonians lost to the COVID-19 pandemic, and encouraged anyone feeling overwhelmed to reach out to the City through 311, which is able to connect residents to relief resources, mental health counseling, and recovery services. He also

discussed the ways that Boston’s public servants have risen to the occasion this year.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the City has focused on the most vulnerable communities. Mayor Walsh created a COVID-19 Health Inequities Task Force to close racial and ethnic health disparities, and the City provided over six million meals to children, families, veterans, and seniors. Boston Public Schools distributed 40,000 laptops to students, and Boston provided permanent rental vouchers to over 1,000 families with children at risk of homelessness.

At the start of the pandemic, Walsh created the Boston Resiliency Fund. The Fund has raised \$34.1 million for COVID-19 relief efforts in Eastie and across the city. Of that, \$30.3 million has already supported 366 nonprofits

and more than 250,000 Boston families.

Through the work of the Boston Public Health Commission and Boston’s community health centers like East Boston Neighborhood Health Center, the City of Boston continues making COVID-19 testing available for Bostonians, including at free, mobile testing sites.

“We may be hurting, but the state of our city is resilient; the state of our city is united; the state of our city is hopeful; and the state of our city is deep-down Boston strong,” said Walsh.

During his speech, Walsh highlighted the importance of economic recovery in Boston as the City looks forward to helping businesses rebuild from the COVID-19 pandemic.

For seven years, the Walsh Administration fostered one of the most dynamic and resilient economies in the world. In 2020, despite the pandemic, the City of Boston approved \$8.5 billion of new investments, creating a potential

for 35,000 new jobs.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the City of Boston has provided a total of \$26 million in grants, fee waivers and other resources to 4,000 small businesses. The City will continue working with business owners to build back restaurants and bars, stores and salons, gyms and art studios that make Boston’s neighborhoods special, along with the hotels, museums, and theaters that highlight Boston’s diverse communities and cultures and bring visitors to the city.

“I want to say a word to small business owners, You are the soul of our economy, and you sacrificed so much for the safety of our city. I will never forget it,” said Walsh

Walsh also dedicated his speech to Boston and the nation’s urgent work to recognize and dismantle systemic racism. In 2020, Walsh declared racism a public health crisis, and began work on a Health Equity plan to end disparities. Boston shifted millions of dollars from

the Boston Police Department overtime budget into programs for youth, trauma recovery services, and mental health, and reorganized the City government, appointing Boston’s first-ever Chief of Equity. Mayor Walsh signed historic police reforms, led by the Boston Police Reform Task Force. The result is a new model for oversight and accountability.

“The pandemic made it clear: a community crisis demands a community-wide response. So I’m asking all of us to accept this responsibility as our own -- and commit to fighting racism. It’s our deepest moral obligation. And it’s our greatest opportunity for growth,” said Walsh.

Walsh concluded, “I am confident that the operations of City government -- including our COVID response -- will continue smoothly. And I want you to know: the work we have done together for the past seven years has prepared Boston to build back stronger than ever.”

Substation// CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

the agency, the community has no chance to right this egregious wrong.”

In December, despite over a dozen city, state and federal elected officials urging Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Kathleen Theoharides to postpone a Energy Facilities Siting Board (EFSB) hearing on Eversource’s highly controversial plan to build a new substation in East Boston, the state went ahead with its hearing. However, the EFSB delayed the expected vote on whether or not to approve Eversource’s substation due to last week’s snowstorm.

At that meeting the EFSB heard testimony from dozens of Eastie elected officials, residents and activists who have been fighting against placing the substation City Yards in East Eagle Square for years. Ahead of the hearing and on behalf of the neighborhood 16 elected officials sent a letter to Theoharides and urged her to delay the

hearing and vote.

The letter cited serious concerns about the accessibility of the hearing to Eastie residents, to which the COVID-19 pandemic has hit especially hard. The elected officials argued that with Eastie experiencing one of the highest rates of COVID-19 infection in the state the high positivity rate has led to stark economic fallout, including unemployment, food insecurity, and homelessness and holding such an important meeting and vote is unfair--given Eastie’s steadfast opposition to the proposal over the years.

However, the EFSB still went forward with the hearing but Eversource’s plan was condemned by attendees like City Councilor Lydia Edwards.

First proposed in 2014, the project would construct two new underground transmission lines through Boston, Everett, and Chelsea connecting with a new substation in Eastie. The line would

run through environmental justice communities whose density, pollution, and high rates of poverty have left residents exposed to public health crises, including the COVID-19 pandemic. The proposed project would place them at even greater risk, with the high-voltage electric substation across from a playground, in a densely packed residential neighborhood, and in an area on the banks of the Chelsea Creek highly susceptible to catastrophic flooding.

“The EPA has ignored its obligations under Title VI for decades,” said Lauren Sampson, Staff Attorney at Lawyers for Civil Rights, where she coordinates a Race and Climate Justice project. “Although the Trump Administration has tried time and time again to destroy these vital civil rights protections, the law is clear: federal funding cannot be used to support race and national origin discrimination in any form.”

EBMS// CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

EBMS Executive Director Gladys Oliveros.

The second round of awardees include: Maverick’s (\$1,500); La Hacienda Restaurant and Bar (\$1,000); La Gran Manzana (\$1,000); La Fonda Colombiana (\$1,000); Toasted Flats (\$1,000); and Tawakal Halal Cafe (\$1,000).

The first round of awards was announced in November and included: Mexicali Sushi Bar (\$1,000); Taco Mex (\$1,000); Rincon Limeño Restaurant (\$1,000); La Casa del Pan Debono (\$1,000); Dirty Water Dough (\$1,000); Pazza on Porter (\$1,500); Mi Pueblo (\$1,000); Pueblo Viejo Puperia & Mexican Grill (\$1,000); and Luna’s Italian and Latin Cuisine Restaurant (\$1,000).

Restaurateurs like Fernando Rosas, who owns La Casa del Pan Debono, said the Eastie Strong grant program has been a lifesaver.

“I appreciate all the help provided by East Boston Main Street throughout the whole past year, especially in the past month,” said Rosas. “La Casa del Pan Debono has been affected tremendously by this pandemic. We are barely making rent or payroll and last month we were having a very tough

time making ends meet. I was one of the many lucky restaurants to receive the grant for \$1,000 and it helped us more than we could’ve ever imagined. We were able to give some bonuses to our employees, pay for our electricity bill and use some for our bi-weekly payroll.”

Stephen Davis of The Davis Companies said his company wanted to find a way to help our tenants as well as contribute to the local restaurant economy which has suffered greatly during the pandemic.

David Grossman of the Grossman Companies, who is spearheading the fundraising component of the program with The Davis Companies, said, “Thanks to East Boston Main Streets we can help our tenants afford a night out while providing a financial lifeline to restaurants and support the overall health of the East Boston economy.”

Other sponsors of the program include: Roseland, MG2; Seyfarth Shaw LLP; Trinity Financial; Volnay Capital; Lend-Lease; Winn Residential; Norfolk Kitchen and Bath; Cranshaw Construction; East Boston Savings Bank; and The Trustees of Reservations.

The program is managed by local consulting

firm, the Novus Group.

According to Oliveros the new initiative also has a second component. While the first is the Adopt a Patio program the other is the “Gift Card Program”. Local real estate developers and sponsors will distribute gift cards directly to tenants for use only at participating local restaurants.

“Over the course of the pandemic, we have discovered many unique challenges that local restaurants face: lack of access to government Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans, decreased revenue from customers, and the need for capital to help cover the cost of creating new outdoor seating,” said Oliveros. “This partnership will help address these problems while encouraging East Boston residents to dine at the many wonderful restaurants operating locally.”

Rep. Adrian Madaro called the new program ‘awesome’ and will be a big boost to the local economy.

“This is a great example of nonprofits and the private sector coming together as a community to help each other out during a very difficult time,” said Madaro.

Drop Box// CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

we are working with BPL, BPS and BFD facilities personnel as we look to expand this service.”

Coughlin said in Boston, about seven percent, or 14,000 tons of all city trash annually are clothes and other textiles.


The city has partnered with HELPSY to offer this new service to Eastie and Boston residents.

“Our goal is to support recycling, responsible handling of overstock

and returns and changing the way the fashion industry thinks of the clothing life cycle,” said the company in a statement. “Ninety-five percent of all clothing, shoes and other textiles can be given a second life--50 percent are reusable, 45 percent are recyclable. Local thrift stores play a necessary role in the resale economy, however they can only handle 10-20 percent of what they receive.”

HELPSY said all collected materials from the bins are sold to national and international retailers, wholesalers and recyclers. This works the same way as any other recycled materials collected from the public.

“Seventy percent of the world buys used clothing,” the company said. “Our buyers sell to countries who pay for the clothes. If banned, the primary economic alternative would be more fast fashion. Reselling used clothes is the best way to give clothes a second life, mitigating their environmental impact.”




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News in Brief

GSCA JANAURY MEETING AGENDA

The Gove Street Citizens Association (GSCA) monthly meeting will be held online (and on phone) via ZOOM. The meeting will be held on Monday, January 25, at 6:30 p.m. Registration is required. If you have not received an invitation to register or have difficulty registering or attending, please go to <https://govestreet.org/zoom>, send an email to secretary@govestreet.org or contact (781) 951-4111. Though the agenda is subject to change, we plan to discuss the following items:

- Attendance Roll Call
- Welcome & Announcements
- Boston Police Updates

- Captain McCormick Office of Neighborhood Services Updates – Lina Tramelli
- Neighborhood Updates – Nat Taylor
- East Boston Transportation Justice Coalition Community Survey – Leo Olsen
- The Davis Companies Update – Natasha Perez
- Project Presentations: 297 Maverick - Richard Lynds, Esq.
- INFORMATIONAL
- Renovate, erect addition, and add roof deck. 168 Gove Street – Richard Lynds, Esq.
- VOTE
- Change occupancy from 4 to 8 units, add vertical addition and roof deck – complete renovation of existing building.

Heffernan, Rodrigues, Michlewitz announce consensus revenue forecast

Secretary of Administration and Finance Michael J. Heffernan, Senate Ways and Means Chair Michael J. Rodrigues, and House Ways and Means Chair Aaron Michlewitz last week announced a consensus revenue forecast for Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22) of \$30.120 billion, representing 3.5-percent growth in state tax revenue over adjusted Fiscal Year 2021 (FY21) projected revenue of \$29.090 billion.

The adjusted FY21 revenue collections estimate incorporates a \$700 million upgrade of projected state tax revenues announced by Secretary Heffernan today, which is based upon current year-to-date revenues and economic data.

The consensus revenue forecast is the basis on which the Baker-Polito Administration, the House, and the Senate

will build their respective FY22 budget recommendations.

Pursuant to Section 5B of Chapter 29 of the General Laws, the three officials above convene every year to establish a joint revenue forecast by Jan. 15. In addition to conferring with each other, the Secretary and Chairs held a public hearing on Dec. 15, 2020 to receive testimony from the Department of Revenue, the State Treasurer’s Office, the Public Employee Retirement Administration Commission, and independent, local economists from area foundations and universities on tax revenue.

“After a tumultuous budget cycle over the last few months, this consensus revenue agreement for Fiscal Year 2022 is a modest and responsible forecast that will allow the Commonwealth to

continue to provide the services our constituents deserve, while at the same time preserving our fiscal health. Despite the pandemic, our revenue intake continues to be better than anticipated, proving the continued resiliency of the Commonwealth’s economy,” said Rep. Michlewitz. “I want to thank Chair Rodrigues and Secretary Heffernan for their continued partnership in these challenging times.”

Additional details:

- Of the forecasted \$30.120 billion in FY22 state tax revenues, an estimated \$1.516 billion is projected to be capital gains tax revenue, of which \$165 million will be transferred to the Stabilization Fund per statute and other long term liability funds for pension and retiree health insurance costs (\$16 million).
- The agreement also includes the following statu-

torily required off-budget transfers that are mandated by current law:

- *\$3.415 billion transferred to the pension fund, a \$300 million increase over the FY21 contribution, which keeps the Commonwealth on schedule to fully fund its pension liability by 2036;
- *\$1.174 billion for the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA);
- *\$1.014 billion for the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA);
- *\$25 million for the Workforce Training Fund.

After \$5.628 billion in off-budget transfers, the Secretary and Committee Chairs agree that \$24.327 billion will be the maximum amount of tax revenue available for the budget in FY22, absent statutory changes.

Pressley urges Biden administration to include ‘Baby Bonds’ in recovery package

Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley and her colleagues sent a letter urging President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris to include the American Opportunity Accounts Act, or “Baby Bonds,” in the next economic recovery package.

When passed into law, this groundbreaking legislation will create a federally-funded savings account for every American child that will make economic opportunity a birthright for every American and substantially close the racial wealth gap.

Staggering wealth inequality in the U.S. has only worsened in the past six decades, especially along racial lines. According to the 2019 Survey of Consumer Finances, the median white family has eight dollars in wealth for every one dollar held by Black families, and the members of the Forbes 400 wealthiest Americans own more wealth than all Black families in the U.S. combined.

Momentum for Baby Bonds is growing across the House and Senate, and recent studies by Colum-

bia University and Morningstar have found that a program like Baby Bonds would substantially close the racial wealth gap among young adults in America.

“By investing in Baby Bonds, along with critical income support measures like rental assistance, SNAP, and the child tax credit, we can ensure that struggling families not only weather this economic crisis, but also have the resources to bounce back from future ones as well,” the lawmakers wrote. “On the heels of historic Democratic victories in Georgia just last week, now is the time to act to ensure people can not only survive, but thrive.”

The lawmakers continued: “The impact would be transformative: at a cost of approximately \$60 billion annually, less than 10 percent of what we currently spend to subsidize wealth-building through the tax code, we can give every American a stake in our economy and agency over their future. We can also begin to address persistent inequities: re-

cent studies by Columbia University and Morningstar have found that Baby Bonds would substantially close the racial wealth gap.

“When it comes to racial justice, we cannot afford to wait. As we emerge from this dark period of our nation’s history, Baby Bonds is exactly the type of universal, race conscious program necessary to build our economy back better.”

If adopted into the next economic relief package, the American Opportunity Accounts Act, or “Baby Bonds,” would give every child an “American Opportunity Account” at birth seeded with \$1,000 that grows every year between a \$0 and \$2,000 depending on family income, until the age of 18. Kids growing up in the poorest households would have accounts of \$50,000 to spend on eligible wealth-building activities, disproportionately benefiting Black and Brown children most harmed by the expansive racial wealth gap.

‘Massachusetts School Choice Week’ recognized

For the sixth straight year, the last week of January has been officially recognized as “Massachusetts School Choice Week” by the state’s governor.

This year, Gov. Charles Baker’s proclamation for the Week recognizes that every Massachusetts student deserves an effective education and the importance of parents exploring and identifying the best school option for their children.

More than a dozen other governors, as well as hundreds of county, city, and town leaders, have officially recognized Jan. 24-30 as School Choice Week. Nationally, more than 33,000 safe celebrations have been planned for the Week, which is transforming into a virtual extravaganza this year due to COVID-19.

Massachusetts’ par-

ents, schools, and other organizers have planned 436 events and activities to celebrate choice and spark conversations about the diverse and innovative learning opportunities that help children succeed. Nationally, schools of every type – traditional public, public magnet, public charter, private, online, and homeschool – will participate in the Week through online fairs and rallies, drive-in events, statewide photo and essay contests, and more.

“We are excited about Gov. Baker’s proclamation and Massachusetts families joining in the national celebration of students, teachers, and learning,” said Andrew Campanella, president of National School Choice Week. “Families can use School Choice Week to start a conversation about school plans for next year,

or to show their gratitude for their current school and teachers.”

National School Choice Week shines a spotlight on effective K-12 education options for children. As a not-for-profit effort, the Week focuses equally on traditional public, charter, magnet, online, private, and home education options. Every January, participants plan tens of thousands of events and activities — such as school fairs, open houses, and student showcases — to raise awareness about school choice across all 50 states. Year-round, National School Choice Week develops resources and guides to assist families searching for schools or learning environments for their children. The effort is nonpolitical and does not advocate for legislation.

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State DPD reports first confirmed case of COVID-19 variant

Officials from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health on January 17 announced that the first case of the COVID-19 variant B.1.1.7 has been detected in Massachusetts, coming from a Boston woman who had travelled to the United Kingdom.

This is the same variant initially discovered in the United Kingdom.

The individual developed symptoms in early January and tested positive for COVID-19. A genetic sample was sent to an out-of-state laboratory as part of the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) established surveillance process to identify COVID-19 variants. The State Public Health Laboratory was notified last evening of the

results.

The individual is a Boston resident, a female in her 20s. She had traveled to the United Kingdom and became ill the day after she returned. She had tested negative prior to leaving the UK. The individual was interviewed by contact tracers at the time the initial positive result was received, and close contacts were identified. She is being re-interviewed by public health officials now that the variant has been identified as the cause of illness.

Surveillance testing for the B.1.1.7 variant has been ongoing at the Massachusetts State Public Health Laboratory in collaboration with clinical diagnostic laboratories and academic partners.

Surveillance consists of genomic sequencing on portions of COVID-19 positive specimens.

To date, the CDC has reported 88 cases from 14 states in the United States.

Given the increased transmissibility of this variant and the number of states and other countries that have found infected cases, the Department expected the variant to arrive in Massachusetts eventually. The public health risk-reduction measures remain the same. Individuals must continue to wear masks or face coverings while out in public, maintain 6-foot social distancing, stay home when you are sick, and get tested if you have symptoms or are identified as a close contact.



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JOE BIDEN NEEDS OUR PRAYERS

With President Joe Biden taking the oath of office this week, America is ready to recover -- both physically and psychologically -- from the four years of “carnage” that has been left behind by the previous presidential administration.

It is fair to say that no incoming President ever has faced more challenges than those that are awaiting Joe Biden:

-- Washington, D.C. looks like a war zone for the inauguration, with 30,000 U.S. troops fortifying the city in the wake of the mob that stormed the Capitol two weeks ago. Similar threats of violence by anarchist, right-wing groups loom all across the country.

-- The COVID-19 pandemic is killing thousands of Americans each and every day, seven days a week, filling our hospitals to overflowing and overwhelming our healthcare system.

-- The nation's economy is in tatters, even more so than during the Great Depression, with record-high unemployment, hunger, and small business failures.

-- America's reputation in the world never has been lower in our entire history. Both friend and foe view us as an unreliable and unstable nation, rather than the moral and powerful leader that we have been since our founding.

-- And last but not least, the Russians have breached our national security with a massive cyberattack, the full scope of which still is to be determined.

The one saving grace for our country is this: No incoming president in the past 50 years has had more experience, and is better prepared for the job, than Joe Biden. The same too, goes for his key Cabinet members. They will be able to hit the ground running to get us back on track.

Still, the task ahead for Joe Biden is daunting -- and he will need all of the prayers we can send his way.

LET'S GO, TAMPA BAY!

It's okay to admit it, Pats' fans -- we were rooting for Tom and Gronk in their playoff game for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers this past Sunday against the New Orleans Saints.

It has been jarring to see No. 12 playing in a Tampa Bay uniform this season -- it's like seeing your long-time ex- with someone else.

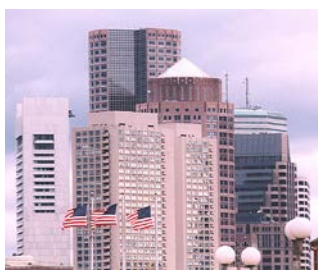
But with the Patriots' dismal season relegating the Pats to the bottom third of the NFL (where they are destined to remain for a while), Tom and Gronk's play-off run with the Bucs has given us something to cheer about.

True, both are only shadows of their former selves. Brady threw a lot of off-target passes and Gronk had trouble getting open. On the other hand, they connected for a key first-down deep in New Orleans territory late in the game that led to the Bucs' clinching score.

Although it was nowhere as dramatic as that amazing catch that Gronk made late in the 2019 AFC championship game in Kansas City that propelled the Pats to another Super Bowl, it still was a vintage Brady-to-Gronk clutch play that brought a smile to the face of every New England fan. (We should note too, that Gronkowski played a huge role in the Tampa Bay running game with his blocking, just as he did with the Pats for a decade.)

Tampa Bay will face a stiff challenge in Green Bay this Sunday. The Bucs smoked the Packers in their regular-season meeting earlier in the year, but Aaron Rodgers and Co. are playing at an unreal level right now.

Let's go Bucs -- we want to see Tom and Gronk in the Super Bowl!



Forum



EVERYBODY CAN USE A SHOT IN THE ARM

GUEST OP-ED

Thank you, Boston

By Mayor Martin J. Walsh

On January 12, I held my final State of the City, which was broadcast live from Boston's newest civic treasure, the completely rebuilt Roxbury branch of the Boston Public Library in Nubian Square.

2020 was a tough year. 2021 is a year for healing as we keep each other safe; get through this final stretch of the pandemic; and build a recovery that moves all our neighborhoods forward.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, we have lost 1,077 Bostonians to COVID-19. They are loved and missed and their families are in my heart. COVID has affected all of us and it has hit some harder than others. Black, Latino, and immigrant communities faced the biggest impacts. Inequities in health, housing, and work opportunities caused more illness and job loss in these communities. Older Bostonians and those with disabilities face the highest risk and the most isolation. Most students have been out of classrooms since March, and families have struggled with childcare.

While 2020 was a year of struggle, it was also a year that brought out the best in our city. We saw nurses, doctors, and medical staff gearing up and

going into battle to save lives and provide comfort. We saw EMTs on the frontlines of a pandemic, helping over 4,000 COVID-19 patients. Firefighters brought recovery coaches to calls, to help those struggling with addiction. Police officers took 800 guns off the street, keeping us safe no matter the risk. Essential workers and City employees answered the call, day after day. Residents stepped up to help each other in a thousand different ways. The heroes are all around us.

As a City, we came together. We built a field hospital in five days. We created a Health Inequities Task Force to address health disparities across race and ethnicity. We've provided over six million meals to children, families, veterans, and seniors. We got 40,000 laptops to students. We got permanent rental vouchers to over 1,000 families with children at risk of homelessness. And, we created the Boston Resiliency Fund, providing over \$30 million to help 250,000 households in need. And in 2020, despite the pandemic, we approved \$8.5 billion of new investment in our city, creating a potential 35,000 new jobs.

In 2021, we will continue that work. One of our

next priorities is getting students safely back into Boston Public Schools. We will also continue to support small businesses, renters and homeowners, and those in recovery; push even further towards meeting our climate goals; and invest in Boston's parks and civic spaces that give our residents more opportunities to come together, safely.

We also need to address all the ways systemic racism hurts people in our city. The urgency of this work has never been more clear. Last summer, George Floyd's murder sparked a long-overdue reckoning with racism. I thank Black Bostonians for the way you made your voices heard. And I thank everyone who joined the movement -- Black, white, Latino, Asian, and indigenous peoples standing together. I'm asking all of us to accept this responsibility as our own and commit to fighting racism. It's our deepest moral obligation -- and it's our greatest opportunity for growth.

We have tough days ahead of us. But we've been knocked down before, and we always get back up. In 2021, Boston will rise up again. We will leave no one behind, and our city will be stronger than ever.

As you might know, President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris have nominated me to be Labor Secretary in their administration. I have accepted this honor. If confirmed by the US Senate, I'm not going to Washington alone. I'm bringing Boston with me. This city is not just my hometown, it's my heart. I believe in Boston. This is the city that welcomed my immigrant parents. This is the city that picked me up when I needed a second chance. This is the city where I fought side by side with you for marriage equality, immigrant rights, addiction treatment, criminal justice reform, education funding, and good middle-class jobs.

Every minute of every day in this job, I spent listening to you, learning from you, working with you and working for you. I will never forget it, and I will forever be grateful. We may be hurting now, but the state of our city is resilient; the state of our city is united; the state of our city is hopeful; and the state of our city is deep-down Boston strong.

Boston, thank you.

Mayor Martin Walsh is the current Mayor of Boston and has been nominated for President Joseph Biden's cabinet as Secretary of Labor.

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We reserve the right to edit for length and content.

SEND US YOUR NEWS

The Times encourages residents to submit engagement, wedding and birth announcements, news releases, business and education briefs, sports stories and photos for publication. Items should be forwarded to our offices at 385 Broadway, Revere, MA 02151. Items can also be faxed to 781-485-1403. We also encourage readers to e-mail news releases and photos to deb@reverejournal.com

JPNA members vote down two projects from January meeting

By John Lynds

The Jeffries Point Neighborhood Association (JPNA) board released voting results for two development projects that were presented to the group earlier this month.

First, JPNA members voted 23 to 18 in opposition to a project at 156 Webster St. There, developer Aaron Daigneault proposed to change occupancy of the home from a three-family to a four-family dwelling.

“It is a property that I would like to legalize the occupancy from three to four units,” said

Daigneault at the meeting earlier this month. “When I bought it there were a lot of problems with the property and I have, over the years, taken care of most of the issues.”

Daigneault said he recently upgraded the building with all new electrical service and all new tankless hot water heaters.

Daigneault admitted to JPNA that he had begun this work without a building permit.

“I only had the electricians and plumbers pull permits and I was cited for that (by the city),” he said. “Now I have three of the four that passed on the

city’s rental registration program. The fourth unit cannot be passed until I certify its occupancy (to a four family).”

While JPNA rejected the proposal by a slim margin, there seems to be evidence that the building once had a legal occupancy of four units based on a permit request application submitted by a contractor in 1974.

The second project at 42 Everett St. was voted down 28 to 11 by JPNA members. There, developer Sunrise Bay, LLC proposed a gut rehab of the existing structure, extending living space into the

basement, and changing the occupancy to six units.

Attorney for Sunrise Bay, Richard Lynds, said his client had made changes to the original proposal after hearing from abutters and the JPNA Planning and Zoning Subcommittee.

“We did make two presentations to the Planning and Zoning Subcommittee,” said Lynds. “We’ve also presented this at an abutters meeting. During the last subcommittee meeting we provided an updated plan showing the project has been reduced from a proposed seven unit building to a six unit

building. Those changes were reflected in the most updated set of plans. We are performing complete gut rehab for the entire building. As a result, it would require upgrades to the life safety in the entire building. We are proposing a rear addition and the extension of living space into the basement. This would change the occupancy from its current use, which is a three family dwelling, to the proposed use of a six unit dwelling.”

Lynds said the units would be a mix of studios, one, two and three bedroom units and is intended for homeownership upon

completion.

“So these would be individual condominium units,” he said.

There were some concerns at the meeting over shadows the building’s rear addition would cause to neighboring yards. However, Lynds said the project’s shadow study shows that shadows being cast in the winter would be the same as they are now and would be minor in the summer.

Those in support of the project liked the fact it stayed within the city’s height zoning rules.

Pressley calls on President-Elect Biden to extend eviction moratorium on first day in office

Last week, Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley (MA-07) joined colleagues in leading a group of 63 lawmakers in sending a letter to President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris urging them to immediately prioritize the nation’s housing and homelessness crisis by using executive action to extend and strengthen the national eviction moratorium for the duration of

the pandemic.

The letter comes as the Biden-Harris administration announces a \$1.9 trillion emergency relief package that calls for \$30 billion more in rental assistance and extends eviction protections.

“Our nation continues to be in the midst of a public health and economic crisis, with countless families in Massachusetts and all across the country at risk of

eviction,” said Congresswoman Pressley. “With the pandemic worsening daily, we have a moral and collective responsibility to use every tool available to provide relief and support to our communities. While I was encouraged to see President-Elect Biden call for Congress to extend the eviction moratorium as part of his rescue plan, he must also take executive action to extend and strengthen the eviction

moratorium for the duration of the pandemic. Doing so would help prevent a nationwide eviction tsunami that would disproportionately harm our most vulnerable neighbors. We must act with the urgency this crisis demands.”

In the letter, the lawmakers asked the incoming administration to:

- Extend and strengthen the national eviction moratorium for the remainder

of the COVID-19 public health emergency by executive action;

- Ensure rental assistance funding is targeted to those who are most vulnerable; and;
- Work with Congress to expand housing assistance to provide stability for millions of underserved renters.

The national eviction moratorium – extended by Congress last month in the latest COVID-19 re-

lief bill – is set to expire on January 31, 2021. That bill also included \$25 billion in rental assistance.

The letter has been endorsed by the National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC), the Downtown Women’s Center, The People Concern, the Koreatown Youth and Community Center (KYCC), People Assisting The Homeless (PATH), and the Little Tokyo Service Center.

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS ENERGY FACILITIES SITING BOARD NOTICE OF SITING BOARD MEETING

EFSB 14-04A/D.P.U. 14-153A/14-154A

NSTAR Electric Company d/b/a Eversource Energy

The Energy Facilities Siting Board (“Siting Board”) will hold a remote Siting Board meeting using Zoom videoconferencing on **Monday, February 1, 2021, at 1:00 p.m. to approximately 8:00 p.m. (with a 1-hour break at 5:00 p.m.), and, if necessary, resuming on Tuesday, February 2, 2021, at 9:00 a.m.** These meetings are a continuation of the Siting Board meeting held on December 16, 2020, and scheduled for December 17, 2020, but postponed due to severe weather. The purpose of the Siting Board meeting is to listen to comments and vote on whether to approve, approve with conditions or amendments, or reject a Tentative Decision issued by the Siting Board on February 28, 2020 that recommends approval of a Project Change that NSTAR Electric Company d/b/a Eversource Energy (“Eversource” or “Company”) submitted to the Siting Board on November 15, 2018 in connection with the Mystic-East Eagle-Chelsea Reliability Project (“Project”). The Siting Board previously approved the Project in its December 1, 2017 Final Decision in EFSB 14-04/D.P.U. 14-153/14-154 (“Final Decision”). The Project includes two new 115-kilovolt (“kV”) underground electric transmission lines in Everett, Chelsea, and East Boston, Massachusetts, as well as a new 115/14-kV substation (“Substation”) in East Boston. The end of this Notice describes backup dates and notification procedures, should severe weather require meeting postponement.

As approved in the Final Decision, the Substation would have been located on the eastern side of a larger parcel of land owned by the City of Boston (“City Parcel”) in the Eagle Hill neighborhood of East Boston. The Project Change would relocate the proposed Substation approximately 190 feet, from the east side of the City Parcel (“Original Site” at 338 East Eagle Street) to the northwest corner of the City Parcel, adjacent to Condor Street (“New Substation Site” at 0 Condor Street). The two 115-kV transmission lines would connect to the Substation at the New Substation Site and would no longer be routed under Condor and East Eagle Streets. A map below shows the relative locations of the approved Original Site, the proposed New Substation Site, and the City Parcel.

Public Access and Opportunity for Public Comment

Pursuant to Massachusetts Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §§18-25, 980 CMR 2.04(1), Governor Baker’s March 10, 2020 Declaration of Emergency, and the related March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, the Siting Board will conduct a remote Siting Board meeting using Zoom videoconferencing to hear public comments, deliberate, and vote on the Tentative Decision. The Tentative

Decision is available at: <https://fileservice.eea.comacloud.net/FileService.Api/file/FileRoom/11869244>. Additional information, including a transcript of the December 16, 2020 Board meeting, in both English and Spanish, is available at: <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/mystic-east-eagle-chelsea-reliability-project>.

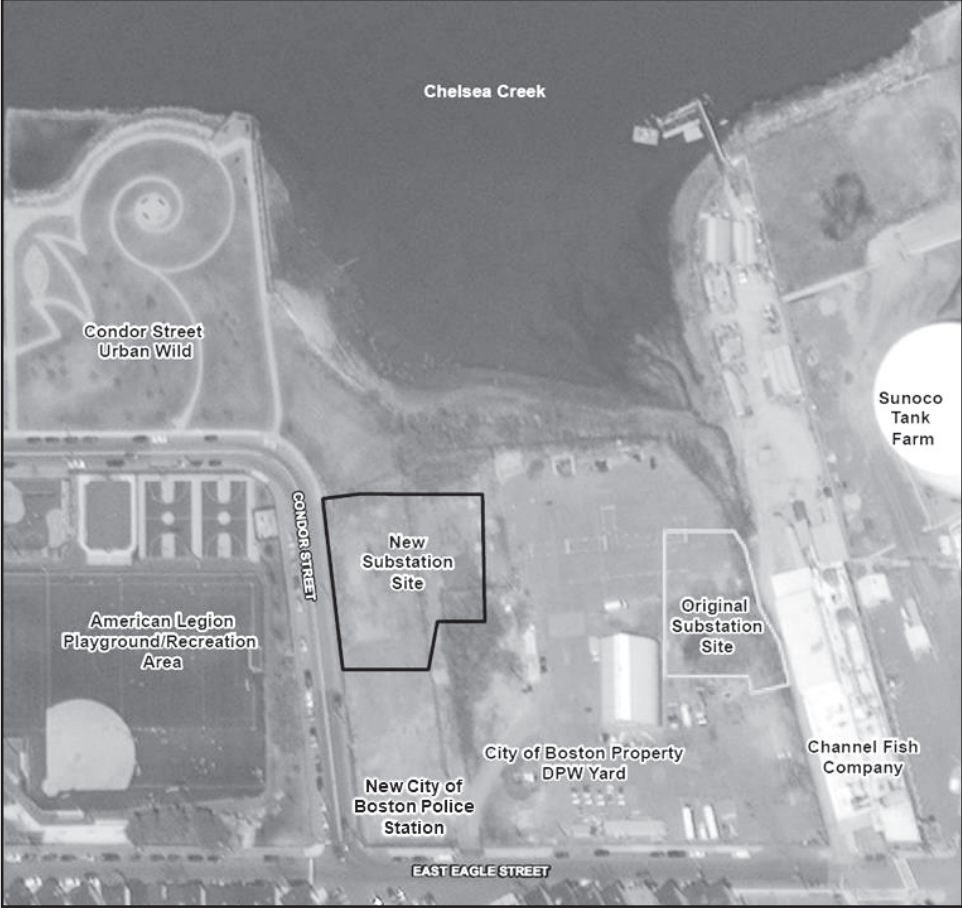
Due to the Covid-19 State of Emergency, the Siting Board meeting will be conducted using Zoom videoconferencing. In order to accommodate additional attendees, the Zoom platform will be configured to allow up to 500 attendees. Simultaneous English-to-Spanish and Spanish-to-English interpretation will be provided (see instructions below). Attendees can participate by clicking (or entering) the following link: <https://zoom.us/j/99513786137> from a computer, smartphone, or tablet. No prior software download is required. For audio-only participation, attendees can dial in at **1 646 558 8656 and enter Meeting ID 995 1378 6137**. Please note that dial-in participants will only hear live audio of the actual speaker without interpretation.

If you previously signed up to comment and have not commented, you will be invited to comment in the order you signed up. If you have not signed up to comment, and wish to comment at the Board meeting, please send an email to Geneen.Bartley@mass.gov with your full name, email address, and mailing address by Thursday, January 28, 2021. If you anticipate commenting by telephone, please leave a voicemail message at 617-305-3529 with your full name, telephone number (the one you will use to dial in) and mailing address by Thursday, January 28, 2021. Additional commenters may be allowed during the meeting, at the discretion of the Siting Board Chair. Previously submitted written comments are online at: <https://eeaaonline.eea.state.ma.us/DPU/Filteroom/dockets/bynumber/EFSB14-4A>, where all other materials in the Project Change docket can be accessed.

The Siting Board will record the upcoming Board meeting and make the recording available on YouTube at: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UcKIPIj6xxSKww-Kr26IEZVTA/videos>.

Public Accommodation and Language Access

Upon request, materials in this proceeding may be available in a format accessible by people with disabilities (such as Braille, large print, electronic files, or audio format). Reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities are available upon request. Include a description of the accommodation you will need, including as much detail as you can. Contact the Siting Board’s ADA coordinator with your request, at Melixza.Esenyie2@mass.gov.



Approved Original Substation Site and Proposed New Substation Site in East Boston

As noted above, interpretation services in English-to-Spanish and Spanish-to-English will be provided via Zoom videoconferencing at <https://zoom.us/j/99513786137>. After joining the meeting on Zoom, ALL attendees should select a preferred language (English or Spanish) to hear the Interpreter translate into that language (as needed). Press the globe icon and then choose the desired language. If you do not select a language, you will hear the speaker without interpretation. For audio-only participation, attendees can dial in at **1 646 558 8656 and enter Meeting ID 995 1378 6137**. Please note that dial-in participants will only hear live audio of the actual speaker without interpretation.

Interpretation in additional languages may be available upon request. Include in your request the language(s) requested, and how many persons will require interpretation services. Provide a way to contact you if we need more information. Please provide as much advance notice as possible, no later than **Thursday, January 21, 2021**. Contact the Presiding Officer with your request (see contact information below).

Severe Weather Notification and Alternative Dates

If there is severe weather, any postponement will be announced on the Zoom link <https://zoom.us/j/99513786137> and on the EFSB website [\[tails/mystic-east-eagle-chelsea-reliability-project\]\(https://www.mass.gov/service-details/mystic-east-eagle-chelsea-reliability-project\).](https://www.mass.gov/service-de-</p></div><div data-bbox=)

If there is a snow emergency on **Monday February 1, 2021** that necessitates postponing the meeting, then **BOTH** days of the meeting (February 1 and 2) will held on the following backup dates:

Monday February 8, 2021, 1:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Tuesday February 9, 2021, 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

If there is a snow emergency on just **Tuesday February 2, 2021**, then the backup day will be on **February 9, 2021 at 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**

Any person desiring further information regarding this Notice, may contact the Presiding Officer at the telephone number, or email below:

Joan Foster Evans, Presiding Officer (617) 305-3525 or

Joan.Evans@mass.gov

For technical assistance with Zoom issues, before or during the meeting, call or text (857) 200-0065.

Para obtener ayuda en español, comuníquese con mauricio.diaz@mass.gov o (617) 305-3664 [Spanish]

欧洲食物安全委员会会议的中文通知可在 <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/mystic-east-eagle-chelsea-reliability-project> 的下拉菜单中找到。” [Chinese]

Thông báo về Cuộc họp EFSB bằng tiếng Việt có tại <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/mystic-east-eagle-chelsea-reliability-project> bằng menu ngôn ngữ thả xuống [Vietnamese]

Weekly COVID positive test rate decreases in Eastie

By John Lynds

Last week, the cumulative COVID-19 positive test rate in Eastie went up slightly while the weekly positive test rate dropped.

According to the latest data released by the Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC), Eastie residents testing positive for COVID last week increased 3.4 percent, but the weekly positive test rate decreased 10.6 percent.

Of the 31,864 Eastie residents tested for COVID, 18 percent overall were found to be positive for the virus, a 3.4 percent increase from the 17.4 percent reported two Fridays ago.

However, 2,591 Eastie residents were tested and 10.1 percent were positive--a 10.6 percent decrease from the 11.3 that tested positive two Fridays ago.

Citywide 50,439 residents were tested and 7.6 percent were COVID positive--a 14.6 percent decrease from the 8.9 percent testing positive two weeks ago.

At a press briefing last week Mayor Martin Walsh reminded residents about extending Boston's temporary pause on re-opening, Last Tuesday the Mayor announced that he would extend the pause on Phase 3 of reopening for at least another three weeks, until January 27.

"This is an effort to slow the spread to protect hospital capacity and avoid a more severe shutdown later on," said Walsh. "This is not about targeting specific sectors as the cause of viral spread, but instead, an effort to reduce overall activity happening outside people's homes."

Boston's Office of Economic Development has been reaching out to dif-

ferent sectors to let them know about the extensions and answer any questions.

To find a complete list of industries and activities that will remain closed, and those that are allowed to stay open, visit [Boston.gov/Reopening](https://www.boston.gov/Reopening).

Walsh said in another three weeks, the City will re-evaluate the situation.

"If the metrics have moved in the right direction we'll lift these restrictions," said Walsh. "If the metrics get worse, we'll have to put in place more restrictions."

However, he added he is hopeful that he will be able to lift these restrictions, but he is taking a cautious approach and doing what he feels is right for Boston.

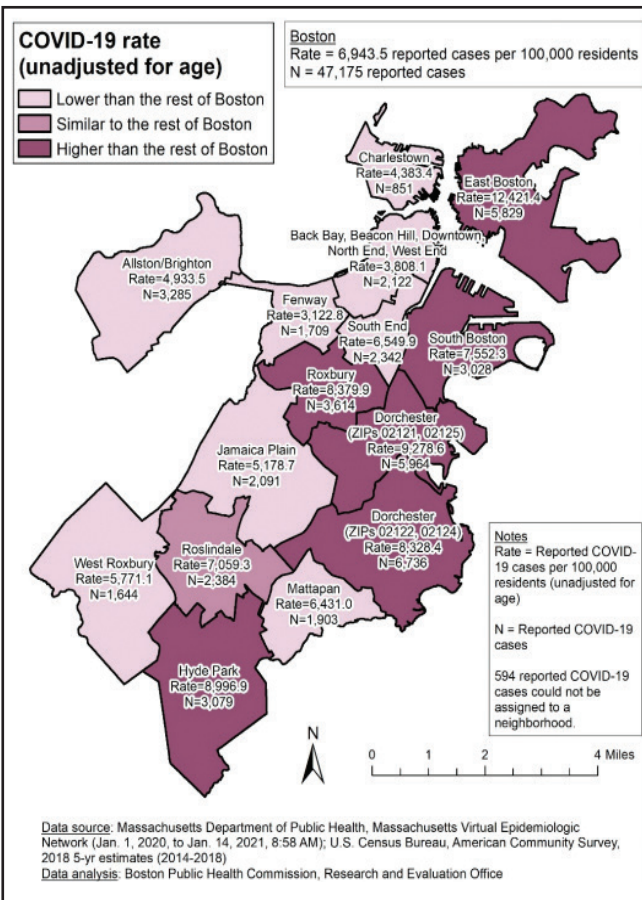
Eastie's infection rate rose by 5.9 percent according to the data released by the BPHC last Friday. Eastie's COVID infection rate went from

1,172.6 cases per 10,000 residents to 1,242.1 cases per 10,000 residents. The citywide average is 694.3 cases per 10,000 residents.

An additional 326 Eastie residents contracted the virus and there are now 5,829 confirmed cases, up from the 5,503 reported two weeks ago.

The statistics released by the BPHC as part of its weekly COVID19 report breaks down the number of cases and infection rates in each neighborhood. It also breaks down the number of cases by age, gender and race.

Citywide positive cases of coronavirus increased 3.8 percent percent last week and went from 45,844 cases to 47,607 confirmed cases in a week. Thirty more Boston residents died from the virus last week and there are now 1,082 total deaths in the city from COVID.



On Friday the BPHC released its weekly COVID-19 statistics by neighborhood that tracks infection rates and COVID testing results in Boston neighborhoods.

Artist // CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

considered three key qualities of Eastie in their applications. Her proposed art at the station will in-appropriate Eastie's deep history with immigrant communities, its geographic location and how that has put it on the front lines of climate change, and its strong neighborhood identity and close-knit community.

Before choosing Bravo, an Artist Review Committee composed of representatives from the Boston Art Commission and local arts professionals representing Eastie reviewed applications using criteria including experience, past work, knowledge of materials and their durability, experience working with

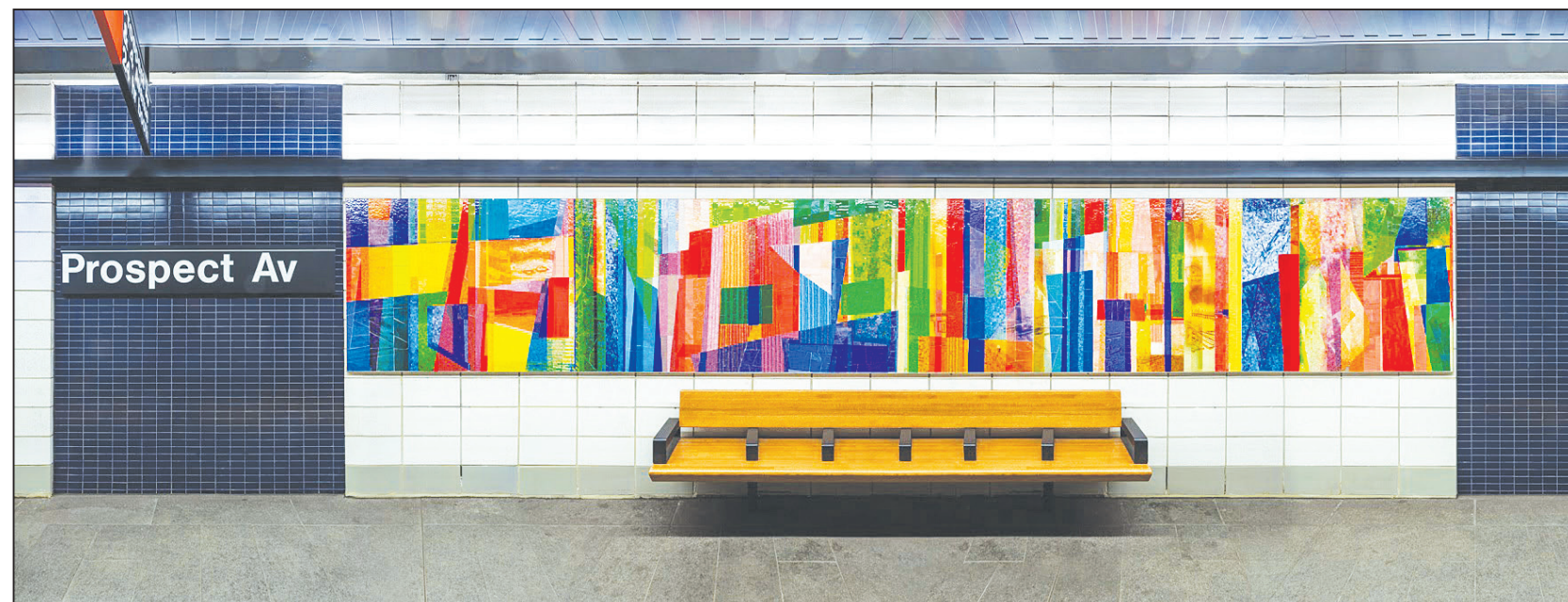


Photo of Duration 2017 by Monika Bravo inside Prospect Av Train Station in Brooklyn. Bravo has been commissioned to create public art at the new District A-7 police station currently under construction.

multiple stakeholders, responds to the goals and how well the artist community values

"For the East Boston police station, I aim to create a mesmerizing environment that invites the audience to mutual participation, to an experience of synthesis, a communion," said Bravo. "Its source resonates with the roots and origins of all the historical elements that relate to its new location."

The City of Boston celebrated the groundbreaking of the new Eastie police station in October 2019.

A total of \$450,000 was set aside and budgeted for the public art project. Bravo expects to finish the project in two years.

"The East Boston police station is the first new station in Boston in a decade," said Mayor Walsh. "Bringing public art into this space is a great way to highlight the interconnected roles art, education, and public safety play in making our City a more welcoming and vibrant place

for residents and visitors."

For over two decades the residents and police officers in Eastie have awaited the construction of a new police station at the City Yards across from American Legion Playground.

In 2019, Mayor Martin Walsh and Police Commissioner William Gross joined elected officials and the community to break ground on the new police station at the City Yards.

The project will create a more efficient and better station for police and replace the aging District A-7 station on Meridian Street near Maverick Square.

The station will be roughly 27,000 sq. ft. with an entrance on the corner of Condor and Trenton Streets. There will be parking in the rear of the station for 50 vehicles and the building will be LEAD Silver Certified.

Bravo has an impressive resume of public art commissions that include: An interval of time, 2020 for the Landmarks Public Arts program at University of Texas, Austin and Duration for the Metropolitan Transport Agency (MTA) Arts design subway in New York.

Bravo has exhibited her work both nationally and internationally at the Rubin Museum of Art; 56th Venice Biennale representing the Vatican City-State at the Pavilion of the Holy See; The New Museum in New York; Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía; Museo de Arte del Banco de la República; and the Museo de Arte Moderno Bogotá, The 5th Seoul International Media Art Biennale, Seoul Museum of Art, South Korea, CAB in Spain, Site Santa Fe and Stenenser Museum of Oslo, Norway.

Whos Your Valentine?

Who does Grammy love?!

CHARLIE

XOXOX

Let Everyone know who your Valentine is with a photo and message...

Published Feb. 10 & 11

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Loy, James K	80 Everett Street LLC	80 Everett St #1	\$640,000
Centura Bay LLC	226 Lexington Street RT	226 Lexington St	\$800,000
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Mccarthy, Suzanne	Lasprilla, Luis S	112 Moore St	\$620,000
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Zahlaway, Ashley	Accorsini, Scott	845 Saratoga St #2	\$570,000
Mcdonald, Ryan	12 Trenton Street LLC	12 Trenton St	\$680,000
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OBITUARIES

Nicholas “Nicky” Santoro

A kind and gentle soul
and a true blue friend

Our beloved Nicholas “Nicky” Santoro passed away on January 16 at the age of 57, after a courageous and brief battle with cancer, surrounded by loved ones who will continue to honor his memory forever.

Nicky was a lifelong resident of East Boston and a 1981 graduate of East Boston High School. Anyone who knew Nicky knew he was passionate about three things: Family, Friendships, and Sports. Nicky had an uncanny ability to find happiness in everyday activities that some might take for granted. He loved spending time with family and friends while cheering on his favorite sports teams. As an avid sports fan, he often traveled across Massachusetts supporting his favorite local championship teams. He enjoyed dining out with friends and family and traveling to hidden gems throughout New England.

Nicky was a kind and gentle soul. He was a true blue friend. His pleasant personality was contagious to everyone he met. Nicky could put a smile on a stranger’s face with his open and care-free spirit. He will truly be missed. Nicky is survived by his beloved mother, Roseanne, Uncle Dickie, Great Aunt Edith and adoring brothers: Richard “Dickie” and his wife, Lori and Derek and his wife, Regina. He will forever be #1 Uncle to Tyler, Dylan, Isabella and Lil Derek and



his fur niece and nephew, Lucky and Rosie. He also leaves behind adoring cousins Maureen, Kelly and Michael Hanley and many devoted friends who were like family. Rest in peace dear Nicholas. We will love you forever.

Family and friends will honor Nicky’s life by gathering for a Memorial Funeral Mass at Saint Anthony of Padua Church, Revere on Saturday, January 23 at 11 a.m. Because of Nicky’s love for the youth of East Boston, memorial donations may be made in his name to the Salesians Boys & Girls Club of East Boston, 150 Byron Street, Boston, MA 02128. You may also donate online at www.salesianclub.com.

All services will be held in accordance with Phase-2 of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts phased reopening plan due to COVID-19. Capacity will be limited. Face coverings are required to be worn and social distancing measures are encouraged. To send an online condolence please visit www.ruggieromh.com

Gerald Maiullo, Sr.

Of East Boston

Gerald J. Maiullo, Sr. of East Boston passed away on January 14.

The devoted father of Danielle Maiullo, Lorri Maiullo and Gerald “Jerry” Jr., all of East Boston, he was the dear brother of Carmella Tiso, Mary Lascola and the late Carmine and Lucielle and cherished grandfather of Ariana, Rebekka, Michael and Alana. Family and friends honored Gerald’s life by gathering at the Ruggiero Family Memorial Home,



East Boston on Monday, January 18 before leaving in procession to the Most Holy Redeemer Church, East Boston MA 02128, for a Funeral Mass. Committal services were private.

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State DPD reports first confirmed case of COVID-19 variant

Officials from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health on January 17 announced that the first case of the COVID-19 variant B.1.1.7 has been detected in Massachusetts, coming from a Boston woman who had travelled to the United Kingdom.

This is the same variant initially discovered in the United Kingdom.

The individual developed symptoms in early January and tested positive for COVID-19. A genetic sample was sent to an out-of-state laboratory as part of the US Centers for Disease Control and

Prevention’s (CDC) established surveillance process to identify COVID-19 variants. The State Public Health Laboratory was notified last evening of the results.

The individual is a Boston resident, a female in her 20s. She had traveled to the United Kingdom and became ill the day after she returned. She had tested negative prior to leaving the UK. The individual was interviewed by contact tracers at the time the initial positive result was received, and close contacts were identified. She is being re-in-

terviewed by public health officials now that the variant has been identified as the cause of illness.

Surveillance testing for the B.1.1.7 variant has been ongoing at the Massachusetts State Public Health Laboratory in collaboration with clinical diagnostic laboratories and academic partners. Surveillance consists of genomic sequencing on portions of COVID-19 positive specimens.

To date, the CDC has reported 88 cases from 14 states in the United States.

Given the increased transmissibility of this

variant and the number of states and other countries that have found infected cases, the Department expected the variant to arrive in Massachusetts eventually. The public health risk-reduction measures remain the same. Individuals must continue to wear masks or face coverings while out in public, maintain 6-foot social distancing, stay home when you are sick, and get tested if you have symptoms or are identified as a close contact.

National Guard personnel prepare to deploy to Washington, D.C.

At the request of the federal government and the National Guard Bureau, Gov. Charles Baker late last week approved an order that will activate up to 500 Massachusetts National Guard personnel for deployment to Washington, D.C., where they will support the District of Columbia National Guard during next week’s inaugural activities. These personnel are expected to deploy to our nation’s capital in the coming days.

In Massachusetts, the Baker-Polito Administration remains in constant communication with lo-

cal, state, and federal law enforcement officials to monitor intelligence and safeguard the Commonwealth. The Administration is not aware of any specific threats to Massachusetts at this time and continues to work with partner agencies to maintain the multi-layered security plans in place to protect residents and centers of government.

Out of an abundance of caution and in the wake of the violence at the nation’s capital, Governor Baker signed an additional order activating up to 500 members of the Massachusetts

National Guard to support state and local law enforcement within the Commonwealth. The order makes Guard personnel available in the event that municipal leaders require assistance to maintain public safety while protecting the exercise of First Amendment rights. National Guard personnel are deployed only at the request of, and in coordination with, the communities seeking support.

The Massachusetts National Guard’s diverse and highly-trained members have a track record of success supporting civil-

ian authorities during and after emergencies, and its units frequently train side-by-side with state and local first responders, making them well-suited for in-state operations. Personnel drawn from the Guard’s military police units undergo federally-accredited police training and receive additional instruction on Massachusetts police training standards. When assisting a local police department, they use that department’s policies, radio frequencies, etc., whenever possible.

Treasurer Goldberg and state legislature move forward on investment equity

State Treasurer Deborah B. Goldberg announced the inclusion of pension fund diversity benchmarks in the final version of H.4887/S.2842, An Act enabling partnerships for growth.

Treasurer Goldberg, who is the Chair of the Massachusetts Pension Reserves Investment Management Board (PRIM), strongly advocated for the amendment and worked directly with Representative Chynah Tyler and Senator Paul Feeney, who filed the bill. The Massachusetts State Legislature approved the Act last week. It was signed by Gov. Charles Baker Thursday night.

The amendment will increase the diversity of

investment managers that manage the approximately \$80 billion Massachusetts Pension Reserves Investment Trust Fund (PRIT) to at least 20 percent. In addition, it will also advance the diversity of consultants contracting with PRIM to at least 20 percent.

“Our goal is to help level the playing field and increase access for minorities, women, and disabled investment managers and consultants,” stated Goldberg. “In doing so, we seek to ensure that opportunities with the state pension fund will enhance economic equity in the business community for generations to come.”

In its 2019 Survey of Consumer Finances, the

Federal Reserve Board found that the median net worth of a black American family stood at \$24,100, in comparison to that of a white American family at \$142,500. Business development that combats barriers for communities of color is an effective tool to reduce and reverse the negative impacts of the racial wealth gap.

PRIM will be required to take affirmative steps to increase diversity and to report to the legislature on its progress. This effort must include consideration of whether current investment policy discourages the use of minority investment managers through quantitative or qualitative restrictions, including, but not limited to,

the number of years, track record, and minimum assets under management. Research in this space shows that these requirements severely limit the number of diverse managers that meet the policy’s criteria, without a demonstrable impact on returns.

Working with the Legislature and PRIM Board, Treasurer Goldberg has made important progress to strengthen diversity within investments, businesses, and our economy. Goldberg has supported and proposed many policies that ensure sustained value for the fund, while fostering long-term growth.

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FROM THE GOVERNOR’S DESK

BAKER SIGNS SAFE PATIENT ACCESS TO EMERGENCY CARE ACT

On Friday, Gov. Charles Baker and Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito participated in a ceremonial signing of S.2931, An Act to ensure safe patient access to emergency care.

Named in memory of Laura Levis, Baker and Polito were also joined by Laura’s husband, Pete DeMarco, members of her family, and Sen. Pat Jehlen.

“I signed ‘Laura’s Law’ to safeguard against future tragedies occurring just steps away from hospital emergency departments,” said Baker. “In the wake of her tragic passing, Laura’s husband, Pete, undertook an exhaustive effort to honor her legacy and protect others from similar fates. After months of collaboration and hard work with legislators, including Senator Jehlen and Representative Barber, I am proud to sign Laura’s Law and celebrate her memory in a meaningful way.”

The new law would implement minimum criteria and standards that ensure safe, timely and accessible patient access to the entrances of Massachusetts hospital emergency departments. These regulations will require that entries must be clearly marked, easily accessible and properly monitored by security when appropriate. Additionally, the Department of Public Health will convene a working group on patient access to hospital emergency rooms or departments to report on and make recommenda-

tions to inform these policies. In 2016, Laura Levis died of an asthma attack outside of an area hospital when she was unable to locate an accessible entrance to the emergency room.

STATE AWARDS ANOTHER \$78.5 MILLION IN ADDITIONAL GRANTS TO BUSINESSES

The Baker-Polito Administration announced \$78.5 million in awards last week to 1,595 additional small businesses in the third round of grants through the COVID-19 Small Business Grant Program administered by the Massachusetts Growth Capital Corporation.

To date, the Administration has awarded close to \$195 million in direct financial support to 4,119 small businesses out of a \$668 million fund set up to support small businesses across the Commonwealth.

Additional grants will be announced in the coming weeks for thousands of additional businesses.

“Understanding how significant the need for financial assistance is, we’ve taken important steps to ensure these resources are directed toward the businesses that have historically been at a disadvantage even before the pandemic, or are located in communities, especially Gateway Cities, that have suffered disproportionately because of this virus,” said Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito. “I’m grateful for the partnership

with MGCC to provide this important assistance, and I look forward to the coming weeks when we can award even more support for the economic sectors that are most in need.”

Representing key industries that have been especially impacted during the pandemic, restaurants and bars, personal care, retail, and health care businesses received the highest number of individual grants this round. These industries have been particularly hard hit during the pandemic. Other grant recipients include women owned businesses, businesses in Gateway Cities, businesses in underserved markets and businesses that have previously received no other forms of financial assistance.

The new Grant Program Application Deadline was Friday night, Jan. 15.

BAKER-POLITO ADMINISTRATION RE-FILES UNEMPLOYMENT LEGISLATION

The Baker-Polito Administration re-filed unemployment insurance legislation initially filed last month. The Governor’s legislation aims to sustain unemployment benefits and provide an estimated \$1.3 billion in unemployment insurance relief to the Commonwealth’s employers over two years. In addition to a two-year unemployment insurance tax schedule freeze, the legislation also proposes financing measures designed to ensure the solvency of the Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund and that federal bor-

rowing that has occurred is repaid in a responsible and affordable manner.

The main provisions of this legislation include:

1. Short Term Employer Tax Relief through a two-year tax schedule freeze. Current Massachusetts unemployment legislative statute requires the employer tax schedule to increase from schedule E to schedule G. This would cause an average per employee tax increase from \$539 to \$866 – a nearly 60-percent increase over the previous year. Remaining on schedule E for 2021 and 2022 slows annual employer contribution growth from \$539 average per employee costs in 2020 to \$635 in 2021 and \$665 in 2022.

2. Authorization for the issuance of special obligation bonds for the

purposes of repaying federal advances. In order to fund the unprecedented increases in demand on the unemployment system in Massachusetts as a result of COVID-19, the Commonwealth has received federal cash advances. Through the issuance of bonds, the Commonwealth will be able to ensure positive trust fund solvency to enable the continued payment of benefits. The utilization of capital markets also allows Massachusetts to avoid paying punitive federal tax increases on employers regardless of their experience rating if federal advances are not repaid by November of 2022. Bonds issued will be supported by an unemployment obligation assessment and will not be general obligations of the

Commonwealth.

3. Establishes an employer surcharge on contributory employers. In 2020 all federal advances taken to pay benefits are interest free. However, interest on federal advances will begin to be charged beginning in January of 2021. The first interest payment is due in the Fall of 2021 and it cannot be paid from the state unemployment trust fund, per federal law. To fund interest payments on repayable advances, the legislation also establishes a separate fund to house surcharge proceeds. The passage of this provision authorizes the Department of Unemployment Assistance to make this assessment but does not require the surcharge if interest is waived through future federal legislation.

LOCAL STUDENTS EARN ACADEMIC HONORS

CURRY COLLEGE ANNOUNCES FALL 2020 DEAN’S LIST

Curry College congratulates roughly 1,000 students who were named to the Fall 2020 Dean’s List. To earn a place on the list, full-time undergraduate students - those who carry 12 or more graded credits per semester - must earn a 3.3 grade-point-average (GPA) or higher.

Christopher Manta of East Boston

Kayla Elliott of East Boston

Brenda Mata of East Boston

About Curry College

Founded in 1879, Curry College is a private, four-year, liberal arts-based institution located on 131 acres in Milton, Mass. Curry extends its educational programs to a continuing education branch campus in Plymouth, Mass. Curry offers 28 undergraduate majors, as well as graduate degrees in business, accounting, education, criminal justice, and nursing, with a

combined enrollment of over 3,700 students. The student body consists of approximately 2,000 traditional undergraduate students, and 1,700 continuing education and graduate students. Approximately 1,575 of its students reside on the Curry campus. The largest majors are business management, communication, nursing, criminal justice, and education, and the college is also internationally known for its Program for the Advancement of Learning (PAL). The College offers a wide array of extra-curricular activities ranging from 15 NCAA Division III athletic teams to an outstanding theatre program. Visit us on the web at www.curry.edu.

gree from Concordia University, Nebraska in the Fall of 2020.

Undergraduates earning a degree from Concordia were eligible for distinction or high distinction honors. The top 10% of graduates with the highest GPA in their respective colleges were designated as graduating with high distinction. An additional 15% were designated as graduating with distinction.

About Concordia University, Nebraska

Concordia University, Nebraska, founded in 1894, is a fully accredited, coeducational university located in Seward, Nebraska, which currently serves more than 2,500 students. Concordia offers more than 100 undergraduate, graduate and professional programs in an excellent academic and Christ-centered community that equips men and women for lives of learning, service and leadership in the church and world. For more information, visit cune.edu.

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NEWS FROM AROUND THE REGION

STREET TO BE NAMED IN HONOR OF JOSH KRAFT

CHELSEA - The Chelsea City Council voted unanimously to name a street in honor of former Jordan Boys and Girls Club Executive Director Josh Kraft.

Councilor-at-Large Leo Robinson sponsored the motion that will name an area between Maverick Street and Congress Avenue adjacent to the club, "Josh Kraft Way."

"Josh Kraft came to Chelsea and helped affect Chelsea youths in a positive, uplifting manner," said Robinson. "He was able to deliver a state-of-the-art Boys and Girls Club facility to Chelsea that has benefited our youth in so many ways. His leadership of the club was exceptional. The naming of this street is a fitting honor for a someone who was outstanding leader in our community for many years."

Kraft served as the founding executive director of the Chelsea-based club for 15 years, leading the way for the construction of the new \$11.2 million clubhouse on Willow Street. He is stepping down as the president of the Boys and Girls Clubs of Boston after a distinguished 30-year association with the organization.

Mark Robinson, chair of the JGBC Breakfast Series, said of Josh Kraft Way, "What a great and deserving honor!"

Robinson added, "Josh's legacy is beyond his leadership and the Chelsea Clubhouse. His positive impact on the lives of hundreds of children who passed through The Willow Street Clubhouse and their families is generational for it will multiply to the thousands for years to come. The Boys and Girls Club of Chelsea would not have happened without Josh

and Chelsea will forever be the beneficiary."

John Montes, program director at the JGBC, had the opportunity to work with Kraft at the local club for 20 years. He said he is excited that there will be street named in honor of Kraft.

"This is an amazing tribute to Josh," said Montes. "He has done so much for this community that I could not think of anyone more deserving of this honor."

Josh Kraft is the son of New England Patriots owner Robert Kraft and the late Myra Kraft. Josh is the president of the New England Patriots Foundation.

CHELSEA FUNERAL FUND ALMOST DEPLETED

CHELSEA - With five requests to the Chelsea Funeral Fund since Dec. 30, including one of Jan. 11 for a COVID-19 death, Father Edgar Duarte of St. Luke's Church warned the City Council that it is in danger of being depleted very soon if no action is taken.

The Funeral Fund was established originally in June to help residents provide a burial for unexpected deaths during the COVID-19, and many from community organizations and City government have referred those in need of funeral money to Father Edgar and the Fund. Families are able to access \$1,700 for referrals, and Father Edgar most of the time donates his services to officiate over the burial.

Father Edgar said there had been 12 families that have been helped at a cost of \$20,000 since COVID-19 hit, but he said there has been a major uptick in requests since the end of 2020 and the Fund is in danger of running out of money.

"The objective of the fund is to help residents provide a dignified burial of their dead in the worst of times," he said. "One issue that concerns me now is since Dec. 30 the number of referrals has been increased greatly in a short time."

He said there were two referrals last week, and two the previous week. On Monday, La Colaborativa Director Gladys Vega sent over another referral for a 60-year-old man that recently died of COVID-19.

"At this time, the Fund was started with \$22,000 and is left with \$8,000," he told the Council. "With this man referred today, it will be left with a little over \$6,000. We are very concerned that at this pace and with the increased mortality rates because of COVID-19, our Fund will dry up before our regular fundraising efforts can replenish the Fund."

Father Edgar and Councilor Judith Garcia put an order before the Council to provide \$25,000 of City funds to help replenish the Funeral Fund.

That effort was moved to a Second Reading at the City Council on Monday night, with much support from Councilors - including Councilor Damali Vidot.

Vidot said after having spent an hour talking about a \$300,000 project to beautify the downtown, things like this just seemed so much more important.

"There are dire needs out there like this," she said.

"We have a responsibility to help Father Edgar, who is doing the Lord's work literally," she said. "I feel what he has done is immeasurable and we should support him."

Garcia said the Fund is quickly getting depleted, and compared to other expenditures for COVID-19, it's a very small amount.

NEW SUPERVISORS



Congratulations to the CPD's newest Patrol Sergeants - Star Chung (First Asian American Female Sargent), Paul Marchese (son of CPD Officer Ed Marchese - Ret.) and Jay Guido (son of former Revere Police Chief Jim Guido - Ret.). "The City is extremely lucky to have such great new supervisors," said Chief Brian Kyes.

LIFE-LONG EVERETT RESIDENT CELEBRATES 90 YEARS

EVERETT - For 90 years, Grace Harris has been representing her City with the utmost faith and...well, grace.

Living in her childhood home on upper Broadway since she was 5, Harris celebrated her 90th birthday at the Glendale Methodist Church on Sunday, and then with a small ceremony at her long-time home on Broadway Monday.

She turned 90 on Monday, Jan. 11.

"On Sunday they had a party for me at church and we all stayed six feet away from each other," said Harris. "We had some cake, and I am so grateful that I got many cards from all my friends and family. My cousin came up from Rhode Island on Monday with his wife, and my nephew was here too."

Harris grew up in Everett, living on Reed Avenue until she was 5. At that time, the family moved to a home in the 900th block of Broadway that her grandfather had owned.

She attended the old Lafayette School, the Parlin and graduated from Everett High School. For most of her working life, she was a professional underwriter for John Hancock in the insurance industry. Her father was a US Postal Service worker in

Boston for his entire life, and her aunt worked at the State House.

"Everett has always been a good city to live in," she said. "Living on Broadway, it was always easy to get the bus out of here and get to work in Boston."

The joy of her life, she said, has been music.

Since a very young age, Harris has sang in the Glendale Methodist Church choir, and still continues to do that to this day. She always has enjoyed going to Symphony Hall in Boston and taking in the many concerts performed there as well.

"I just sang a solo of 'Silent Night' for Christmas at another church," she said. "I started into music just on my own. I started out in the choir when I was very young. I still love music a lot and I like classical and jazz."

Harris said she also has traveled extensively to England, Spain and Italy. One place she never got to go, though, was France. She hopes that maybe she can make it there in the next few years.

"I always wanted to go to France, but never made it there," she said. "In Italy, I remember riding the gondola and they played guitar and sang. In England, I went up the Thames to Windsor Castle."

Her caregiver, Linda Gaffney, said she is a "saint" and loved by many in Everett at her church

and within her circle of friends.

City Councilor Gerly Adrien also said she has been blessed to know Harris, and wished her a Happy Birthday this week as well.

"Happy Birthday, Grace, who has been blessed to be on this earth," she said. "May God continue to bless her and give her great strength. I know she is loved by so many, including Everett resident Linda Gaffney. Thank you everyone for making her feel very special for her birthday."

LEGISLATURE APPROVES CHARTER CHANGE

EVERETT - The Charter Change Home Rule Petition that would make the mayor a voting member of the School Committee passed both the state House and Senate on Jan. 5, and as of Tuesday was still waiting for Gov. Charlie Baker's signature - though it was seen as something he would not object to.

Mayor Carlo DeMaria said he was happy to see that the matter had passed the Legislature and he awaited action from the governor.

"After carefully reviewing the petition, the Massachusetts Legislature passed the home rule petition and found that the City did not make any

See REGION Page 11

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Region

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errors in the process used to submit the petition for consideration,” he said. “The Legislature also found that the proposal did not set any new precedent in the Commonwealth. I’m awaiting the Governor’s action on the bill that is now on his desk for signature.”

The matter was quite controversial in Everett with many on the School Committee opposing the change, and Supt. Priya Tahiliani ardently opposing the change. The mayor had been a member of the Committee already, but without a vote.

Tahiliani this week said she looks forward to collaborating with City Hall on getting the schools reopened and getting the COVID-19 vaccine available to teachers and educators in Everett. She said it was a new year and she looks forward to working anew, but did not want to comment on the Charter Change.

School Committee Chair Frank Parker didn’t wish to comment either.

The matter was filed by State Rep. Joe McGonagle on Dec. 14 and spent much of the month in the House. On Jan. 4, a substitute bill was filed and some housekeeping amendments were made to the language. It passed and was enacted in the House and Senate on Jan. 5 – which was the last day of the session and the last day to act on it.

The governor has until Thursday night to sign the Home Rule.

LeBLANC
TAKES OVER
FUDDRUCKERS

LYNN - It is a classic hometown success story. A high school student begins working at a nationally known and highly regarded restaurant in her backyard.

The industrious, young lady continues her employment there and becomes the popular general manager of that restaurant. During her successful career in the industry, the opportunity arises where she can purchase the restaurant - and she does just that.

Congratulations, Saugus resident Adrienne LeBlanc, on becoming the owner and operator of Fuddruckers, home of the world’s greatest hamburgers.

LeBlanc took over ownership of Fuddruckers on Route 1, Saugus, on November 30. She had been the manager of the restaurant for 20 years.

“My boss [Jim Boland] just threw it around that he was retiring, so it was definitely a thought, and then it became an offer, and then it became real,” said LeBlanc.

What’s it like to own such a well-known restaurant that has become a Route 1 landmark?

“It feels absolutely amazing, a great accomplishment,” said LeBlanc. “I’m very excited. It’s a new chapter in my life.”

LeBlanc, 38, attended Saugus High School, Class of 2000. She graduated from computer technology school while maintaining her association with Fuddruckers.

She is the daughter of lifelong Saugus residents Dave and Carol LeBlanc. She has an older brother, David LeBlanc, a Saugus High graduate who works for a medical technology corporation.

Adrienne said her 3-year-old son, Axton,

was an inspiration in her determination to succeed in her field. “He’s the real reason why I did this – I’m trying to build a future for him,” she said proudly. “This is just an amazing opportunity. A woman-owned business in the restaurant industry is not common, especially before the age of 40. So it’s an amazing opportunity that I have.”

Adrienne praised Jim Boland, the former owner of Fuddruckers. “Mr. [Jim] Boland is an amazing man. He taught me everything that I know,” said Adrienne. “I couldn’t have asked to work for somebody better in my life. He was definitely a godsend to me. I wouldn’t have this opportunity without him.”

Adrienne is a true model for young women in the restaurant industry. She is excited to welcome and serve customers to her own restaurant.

“And I will always have the world’s greatest hamburgers,” reported Adrienne.

CAGGIANO TAKES
OATH OF OFFICE
FOR NORTHEAST
VOCATIONAL

REVERE - Anthony Caggiano received his oath of office as Revere’s representative on the Northeast Regional Vocational School Committee at a ceremony last week at City Hall.

City Clerk Ashley Melnik administered the oath to Caggiano in the socially distanced ceremony held inside the Council Chambers.

Caggiano was elected to the position in November. Revere is one of 12 area communities that has students attending Northeast, which is located in Wakefield.

“I’m very happy and looking forward to serving on the Committee,” said Caggiano. “There are a lot of challenges ahead.”

Caggiano has had an association to the school for many years. His mother, Marie Sardella, was an administrative assistant at Northeast while his stepfather, Louis Sardella, was the director of the special needs. Caggiano’s triplets – sons Anthony, Andrew, and Alexander – are graduates of Northeast.

Caggiano attended Revere High School (Class of 1976) and is a graduate of North Shore Community College and Suffolk University.

Long-time friend and Taft Street neighbor Gerry D’Ambrosio attended Caggiano’s inauguration ceremony.

“I’ve known Anthony for 45 years,” said D’Ambrosio, a prominent attorney. “He’s been committed to the city and the youth of the city. He’ll make for a great Vocational School Committee member.”

Caggiano is one of six new members of the Northeast Regional School Committee. He will participate in the first meeting of the new year Thursday. The Committee meets on the second Thursday of each month.

CONCERNED
OVER RATS

REVERE - Councilors George Rotondo and Arthur Guinasso both expressed their concerns about rodents making their way from the former site of the Sozio’s appliance store on Squire Road

on to other nearby properties.

The landmark Sozio’s store was destroyed in a five-alarm fire in February, 2018. The store was demolished and the property sits vacant.

“The motion [to contact Inspectional Services and investigate the matter] speaks for itself,” said Rotondo.

Guinasso indicated that “there’s a lot of burrows in and about the Verizon and the old Sozio site and area residents are reporting that they’re [rodents] there and inundating the neighborhood.”

“The least the property owners can do is to close these burrows and put the necessary ingredients inside to rid the area of these rodents,” said Guinasso. “I want to make sure that the safety and health of the residents who live there are taken care of.”

Last week, the Council unanimously approved the motions to request Revere Inspectional Services to investigate the rodent situation at the former Sozio site.

BONCORE PRAISES
TOWN EMPLOYEES
FOR COVID WORK

WINTHROP - On Jan. 5, the Winthrop Town Council convened remotely for its first meeting of 2021, where it heard updates impacting the community.

State of the Town Address

Council President Phil Boncore opened the meeting with his annual State of the Town Address, in which he summarized the town’s achievements of the past year.

Unsurprisingly, the bulk of his address had to do with how the town confronted an unprecedented health crisis. He applauded the efforts of municipal workers in combating the pandemic and the continuity of services provided to the community. His full speech is available on the Town Council web page.

COVID Update
DPH Director Meredith Hurley delivered her usual public health update. As of Jan. 5, Winthrop had 1,404 confirmed cases of the virus, with 32 deceased and 143 in isolation. Winthrop remains a high-risk community with a 5.9 percent positive rate. The previous two weeks had seen 73 new cases for every 100,000 people.

Winthrop residents count for 67 percent of the individuals who have visited the town’s Stop the Spread testing site. This program will be extended until March 31. Testing will be fully indoors by the third week of January, and will be available by appointment only. The location and date are to be determined.

Vaccines are already being administered in the state, with a priority on first responders, long term care facilities and healthcare workers. The general public may not have access to the vaccine until the summer. Town Manager Austin Faison also mentioned the “new aggressive variant” of the virus.

“This is going to be a hard time,” he said.

Schools are open and Supt. Lisa Howard is making a presence at all locations. The School Committee voted 4-3 to hold their first meeting of February in person. The Council was likewise split on whether or not to resume in-person meetings.

(See separate article in this issue.)

Committee Reports
The Finance Committee discussed the FY21 budget, the new position of town planner, and recommended to transfer \$20,000 from the Town Council reserves for pest control. Council voted to approve the transfer.

The Citizens Advisory Committee on Finance welcomed new members and elected Karin Chavis as its chairperson. The committee is “optimistic, ready and willing” to affect change.

The Public Safety Committee and the Capital Assets Committee held a joint meeting on Dec. 30 in which it evaluated new sites for the public safety building. The two sites being considered are the little league ballfield and the 7th hole of the golf course. Current occupants of these spaces object to their use. The matter was tabled until more exploration could be conducted.

The Public Safety Committee also discussed the idea of the town council resuming in-person meetings. Locations other than the Harvey Room at Town Hall were considered.

The Miller Field Committee and the School Building Assistance Committee met to discuss the future of the tennis court project. The project will include four new courts, improved drainage, improved intersections, safer sidewalks, and additional parking. It should be completed by mid-June.

Other Updates
The council unanimously appointed Council Peter Christopher as the new Council Vice President.

The Town Council authorized Town Manager Faison to sign the North Suffolk Resilience & Sustainability Agreement, which will allow it to collaborate with neighboring towns and cities in its efforts to produce more environmentally friendly development.

The town has made an offer to an individual for the newly created position of Town Planner.

There are immediate openings on the following committees: the Airport Hazards Committee, Commission for Diversity,

Inclusion and Community Relations, and the Winthrop Planning Board. In addition, Winthrop Public Schools is hiring for numerous positions.

COUNCIL DIVIDED
OVER IN-PERSON
MEETINGS

WINTHROP - The Winthrop Town Council met on Jan. 5 for its first meeting of the new year. A motion on the agenda asked the town manager to develop a plan that would allow the body to resume in-person meetings when deemed safe to do so by health experts.

Councilor DeMarco voiced his support of the motion, citing that if it’s safe enough for children to return to school, then it should be safe enough to convene in person. At last week’s meeting, he added that he’d like to work toward meeting physically on Feb. 2.

Council Vice President James Letterie agreed with resuming in-person sessions as soon as possible. Councilors would always have the option of attending virtually.

“We just asked kids and staff to go back to school and they’ve done an incredible job,” he said. “It’s hard to ask a six year old to do something we’re not willing to do.”

“I feel perfectly safe,” he continued. “We should get it done.”

However, some councilors balked at the idea of having a timeline.

Councilwoman Barbara Flockhart noted that children were sent back to school because studies bore out that they were suffering academically at home.

“Council is functioning perfectly fine,” she said. “It seems unreasonable to take an additional risk to return early to in-person meetings.”

“School and council are two very different things,” said Councilor Peter Christopher. “I can’t think of anything that has hindered my participation by being on Zoom.”

He added that managing a meeting in which some attend in person and some attend on Zoom would be “logistically much more difficult to manage.”

Councilor Stephen Ruggiero said he didn’t know “what the benefit to the public would be.”

In fact, some feared that a switch away from Zoom would actually hurt the community, aside from the obvious risk of exposing them to the virus. Four callers urged council to persist with remote meetings.

“I’ve never listened to more meetings in my entire adult life since this pandemic, so I hope you continue with Zoom,” said resident Colleen Murphy.

“I’ve never seen so many people so active and participating in local government,” said Wendy Millar Page. “The amount of participation is because of Zoom.”

“You’re going to lose a lot of people,” said first-time caller Jenn from Precinct 6. “For people to be involved and heard, this is a much better route.”

Jenn also cited the town money that would be “wasted” on electricity, heat, internet and other resources required to host a group in a building.

“We should be looking for ways to save money, not spend money,” she said. “Whether you all sit in one building is irrelevant.”

“Going back in person right now seems foolish and pointless,” said Resident Heather Graziani, adding that there should always be a remote participation option even when in-person meetings resume.

“Having small children, there’s no way I could make it to a meeting,” she said.

Councilor Letterie admitted that the surge in public participation seen over the past year is likely due individuals becoming more accustomed to virtual meetings, and said he would like both councilors and the public to be able to attend meetings virtually.

Town Manager Austin Faison reminded the council that state-mandated limits on indoor gatherings will govern how many people can assemble for the council meetings.

When put up for a vote, council voted unanimously to approve the motion.

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Former Eastie resident and District A-7 civilian employee indicted on overtime fraud charges

By John Lynds

Last week federal authorities indicted an East Boston native and former longtime District A-7 civilian employee with overtime fraud while she was working at District A-1 between 2014 and 2018.

Marilyn Golisano, 68, who once worked at District A-7 in her hometown for years before becoming a clerk for the Boston Police’s detectives unit, was indicted on one count of embezzlement from an agency receiving federal funds, six counts of wire fraud and one count of aggravated identity theft.

According to the indictment, the investigation revealed that Golisano, who handled the overtime paperwork for her unit, submitted dozens of false and fraudulent overtime slips on which she had forged the signatures of at least three different Boston Police supervisors.

During the period of the alleged fraud, Golisano’s

overtime compensation from the BPD more than doubled, increasing from just over \$15,000 in 2016 to \$26,000 in 2017 and to over \$33,000 in 2018. This increase occurred despite the fact that Golisano’s duties did not change, her rate of pay did not significantly increase and no significant new overtime hours were approved by her supervisor.

It is alleged that during several overtime shifts that Golisano claimed to be working in downtown Boston, she was actually miles away from Boston according to her cell-phone’s geolocation records.

A look at public payroll records for the Boston Police show that in 2013 Golisano had a base pay of \$48190.52 and received \$1,151.44 in overtime. The following year her base pay increased to \$49,563.87 but her overtime shot up to \$15,126.47 for 2014.

In the years that followed Golisano’s overtime

increased to \$14,745.98 in 2016, \$25,857.85 in 2017, and a whopping 33,663.66 in 2018.

“Rather than working in service of her community, Ms. Golisano did a disservice to taxpayers and to the reputation of her colleagues in law enforcement,” said United States Attorney Andrew E. Lelling. “The vast majority of law enforcement officers serve their communities honorably and with selflessness but, in those instances where public servants cross the line, we will not hesitate to get involved. I applaud the Boston Police Department for their commitment to rooting out corruption, and for their dedication to protecting the City day in and day out.”

Boston Police Commissioner William Gross said as a result of an investigation, information was uncovered by the Boston Police Department’s Anti-Corruption Unit regarding alleged payroll/overtime abuse by Golisano.

He said the FBI and United States Attorney’s Office became involved with the criminal investigation into the allegations.

“The allegations and behavior alleged in today’s indictment is very troubling and in no way reflect the attitudes of the hard-working employees of the Boston Police Department,” said Gross. “I hold my employees to the highest standards and expect them to obey all laws. News of these indictments send a strong message that this type of behavior will not be tolerated or ignored and can damage the trust that all my members of the department have worked so hard to build with the communities we serve.”

The charge of theft of government funds provides for a sentence of up to 10 years in prison, three years of supervised release and a fine of \$250,000 or twice the gross gain or loss. The charge of wire fraud provides for a sentence of up to 20 years in prison, three years of su-

pervised release and a fine of \$250,000. The charging statute for aggravated identity theft provides for a mandatory sentence of two years in prison to be served consecutive to any other sentence imposed, up to one year of supervised release and a fine of up to \$250,000. Sentences are imposed by a federal district court judge based upon the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

“The public needs to know that they can trust law enforcement officials to be honest and trustworthy. Golisano’s alleged fraud and forgery undermines the public’s trust. The DOJ OIG will continue to hold those accountable who try to steal and cheat,” said Russell W. Cunningham, Special Agent in Charge of the Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General Washington Field Office.

Special Agent in Charge of the FBI Boston Division Joseph R.

Bonavolonta alleged that for years Golisano forged her supervisor’s signature and submitted scores of fraudulent overtime slips for work she did not do, cheating taxpayers out of tens of thousands of dollars.

“Her self-serving actions have not only eroded the morale of her hard-working co-workers at the Boston Police Department, but have the potential to undermine the public’s trust in civil servants,” said Bonavolonta. “We would like to thank the Boston Police Department for bringing this matter to our attention, and for their shared commitment in rooting out public corruption.”

The details contained in the indictment are allegations. The defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

FRESH AND LOCAL

Local honey

By Penny & Ed Cherubino

The need to restock our supply of local honey caused us to make both our first and last visit to a local farmers market during 2020. The jars in our pantry had dwindled down to one. That led us to take a walk to the market and see if we felt shopping there could be safe, if Foppema’s Farm was there, and if they had a supply of our favorite honey. With positive answers to all our concerns, we were soon resupplied.

Over the years, honey has become our sweetener of choice for many reasons. The local honey we buy is less processed. Buying honey from a local orchard is another way

of supporting the local foodshed and has a lighter environmental footprint. Most of all, we prefer the taste.

If you would like to take a deep dive into understanding honey, we recommend reading the chapter on it in “On Food and Cooking: The Science and Lore of the Kitchen” by Harold McGee. He scans 10,000 years of honey history, explains honey creation from the bee gathering nectar, the beekeeper’s care of the hives, and processing the product. In his best scientific mindset, he clarifies the differences between honey and other sweeteners.

He explains why honey can be a better choice for

baking. “It can be substituted for sugar—1 measure of honey is considered the sweetening equivalent of 1.25–1.5 measures of sugar, although the amount of added liquid must be decreased because honey does contain some water. Because it is more hygroscopic, or water attracting, than table sugar, honey will keep breads and cakes moister than sugar will, losing water to the air more slowly, and even absorbing it on humid days. Thanks to its antioxidant phenolic compounds, it slows the development of stale flavors in baked goods...”

Crystallized Honey

Some people wonder if crystallized honey is safe

to eat. It is. Crystallization is a sign that your honey is not only safe, but also has not had some of its flavor and goodness removed. Solidified honey will quickly liquify when you spread it on toast or spoon it into a hot cup of tea. If you’re mixing it into a cold drink, just melt a bit in hot water or microwave just as much as you plan to use. But, leave your main supply in its unadulterated crystallized form.

Honey Is Not for Everyone

The website Healthline.com has warned, “Note that you should not give honey to children under the age of 1. This is because raw, unprocessed honey has a risk for bot-

ulism in infants. Also, some people who have a severe allergy to pollen can experience a serious allergic reaction known as anaphylaxis after eating honey. This can cause extreme difficulty breathing. Others may experience allergic reactions such as itching or swelling of the mouth, throat, or skin.”

Fortunately, we’ve had only positive results from adding honey to our diet. Friends, knowing we are big honey fans and wanting to keep us supplied, have added new samples of local honey to our pantry. All of them are hits with us.

However, our final visit to our local farmers market last fall was to buy a



To take a deep dive into understanding honey, read the chapter on it in “On Food and Cooking: The Science and Lore of the Kitchen” by Harold McGee.

few extra jars to tuck away for the winter. While we are extremely happy that this area has more and more choices for local honey, we wanted to have plenty of our favorite on hand.

Do you have a question or topic for Fresh & Local? Send an email to Penny@BostonZest.com with your suggestion.

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