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Wednesday, December 28, 2022

EBCCS HOLDS HOLIDAY SHOW



East Boston Central Catholic School (EBCCS) presented its holiday show, "It's Beginning To Look A Lot Like Christmas," on December 16. EBCCS Choir singing, "Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer." See Page 7 for more photos.

A world-class recreational campus is coming to East Boston



Pictured at the groundbreaking ceremony are Boston Scores Board Chair Chris Pike, and Salesian Boys and Girls Club officials, the Rev. Jack Janko, president, Joe Steffano, vice president, and Jim Langone, board member.



Salesian Boys and Girls Club Executive Director Michael Triant is pictured with his parents, George Triant and Janet Triant, at the groundbreaking ceremony for the new Salesian Heights Recreation and Education Campus.

By Cary Shuman

The Salesian Boys and Girls Club and Boston Scores held a groundbreaking ceremony Dec. 19 for a newly renovated Salesian Heights Recreation and Education Campus on Byron Street and adjacent areas.

Salesian Club Executive Director Michael Triant welcomed Boston Scores Executive Director John Maconga, legislators, Boston school officials, Salesian board members and supporters to the ceremony.

"All of your support means so much to all of us," Triant told the gathering at the impressive ceremony.

Triant thanked Boston Scores for becoming the Club's partner in building "an incredibly bright future for the children and families we serve every day."

Rep. Adrian Madaro perfectly summarized the sentiments of all in attendance, stating, "What an exciting day for us here in East Boston."

Madaro praised Triant's

leadership of the club, "Mike, you have been a gift to this community, an incredible breath of fresh air to this institution."

Madaro, who grew up on Eagle Hill and was a member of the former Boys and Girls Club on Paris Street, called the partnership between Salesian and Boston Scores "transformative."

"This place [Salesian], particularly as a teenager, became my home away from home," said Madaro. "I came here every single day for after-school programming and activities. My first job was as a camp counselor here."

Madaro said the opening of a new Salesian Heights facility will "allow us to maximize the way we serve young people in this community."

"As I was looking at the renderings, you're seeing how this space will ab-

solutely transform – the parking lot, the fields, this physical building. This is just going to be remarkable."

Madaro said he looks forward to the day when his 19-month-old son will be able to benefit from the new facility and athletic fields [formerly used by the Dom Savio High School sports teams].

"We may be just breaking ground today, but what this will yield long-term, when this facility is fully

See CAMPUS Page 8

TRASH DELAY

Due to the New Year's Day Holiday being observed on Monday 1/2/23, trash will be delayed by one day Capitol Waste Services, Inc.

MassDOT study considers alternatives for Rte. 1A corridor

By Adam Swift

It's still in the early stages, but MassDOT is coming to the end of a study on the best use of the inactive rail line corridor along Rte. 1A and Chelsea Creek.

MassDOT held an online forum last week to discuss two potential alternatives for the corridor stretching from Day Square in East Boston to Bell Circle in Revere. The first alternative is a shared use path for bicycles and pedestrians along the MBTA right of way, and the second is a shared use path combined with a bypass road that could be used by authorized truck traffic.

"Back in 2019, there was a lease proposal that was before the MassDOT board to use an inactive

rail line running along the Chelsea Creek, and based on feedback we received at that public meeting, MassDOT did not lease the parcels," said MassDOT project manager Ethan Britland. "Instead, they initiated the study to look at the rail parcels from a transportation perspective for what could be done in the corridor."

That study should be completed by the end of January, according to Britland.

Once the study is completed, Britland said any further action will depend on the will of the community and stakeholders to move forward and funding for the alternatives.

The two alternatives would both connect into the Mary Ellen Welch

Wu announces confirmation of new members to the ZBA

Special to the Times-Free Press

Mayor Michelle Wu celebrated the confirmation by the Boston City Council of eight new appointees to the Zoning Board of Appeal (ZBA), bringing the new total of confirmed ZBA appointees to 10. Mayor Wu announced a slate of appointees in September and sent their nominations to the City Council for review. The Mayor's appointees live across the City and represent the diversity of Boston, including members who are multilingual, renters in income-restricted housing, homeowners, building trades members, first generation immigrants, and multigenerational Bostonians. Their collective training and experience include city and transportation planning, community development, affordable housing cre-

ation, sustainable development and architectural design, and construction.

As the City's zoning code has not kept up with Boston's growth, the majority of development proposals in the city require zoning relief and must be reviewed and approved by the ZBA. These new ZBA members will work closely with Chief of Planning Arthur Jemison to help advance the Mayor's goal of rebuilding trust with communities through planning-led development while advancing equity, affordability, and resilience across all functions of the City's development review process.

"Thank you to the City Council for confirming these new members, who will play a crucial role in our work to build more housing and address the



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Wu celebrates 2022 graduating class of Immigrants Lead Boston

Mayor Michelle Wu celebrates the 20 immigrant leaders graduating from Immigrants Lead Boston, a program by the City of Boston Mayor's Office for Immigrant Advancement. This year's graduates represent eight Boston neighborhoods, come from 17 countries, and speak 14 languages. The graduation was at Boston City Hall on Friday, December 16.

"As the daughter of immigrants, this program has a special place in my heart," said Mayor Michelle Wu. "These leaders are adding their voices to our communities and I'm thrilled for their leadership. Congratulations and thank you!"

Immigrants Lead Boston is an annual program for Boston immigrants who wish to become community leaders, advocates,

and organizers. Selected residents go through a 12-week course and meet key City of Boston officials and learn how to effectively navigate local government. Graduates join a growing alumni network of immigrant leaders.

"Boston has been the only home I've known since I first arrived in the USA," said one of this year's graduates, Karina Flores Ramirez. "In my neighborhood of East Boston, I envision a community that helps each other and works together to tackle the current obstacles we are facing. I envision a community full of resources for all ages and in all languages, and one where we are assured that we are not alone."

This year's class met with City officials from eight cabinets along with City Council members

and local nonprofits that do advocacy work here in Boston. Participants also proactively reached out to City leaders, participated in community meetings for the first time, and testified at a City Council hearing about how to support newly-arrived migrants in Boston.

"We started this program because immigrants are integral to our communities, but they often don't know what resources are available to them because they didn't grow up here," said Monique Tú Nguyen, Director of the Mayor's Office for Immigrant Advancement. "This program helps close that gap so immigrant leaders have a seat at the table to build a better Boston for all."

During this year's graduation ceremony, participants shared their reflections from the pro-



The 2022 graduating class of Immigrants Lead Boston.

gram and asked the Mayor questions. This year's ceremony also marked International Migrants Day and celebrated how Mayor Raymond Flynn pioneered the Mayor's Office for Immigrant Advancement 35 years ago in 1987 as the Immigrant

Rights Unit.

"During a tough stance on immigration at the federal level, Mayor Flynn created the Immigrants Rights Unit to provide a more compassionate and humane approach towards those in search of a better life," said City Council-

or Ed Flynn. "I'd like to congratulate the Mayor's Office for Immigrant Advancement for continuing this important work and ensuring our immigrant neighbors can fully and equitably participate in all aspects of life."

BCBSMA Foundation announces grants

The Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation announced \$250,000 in grant funding to support nonprofit organizations including Centro Present of East Boston that helps connect new immigrants to resources and services for their health care needs in communities across the Commonwealth.

Each of the 10 organizations receiving funding from the Foundation's Special Initiatives grant program has extensive experience assisting with the health care needs of immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers and migrants. Their work has taken on a new level of urgency with

the recent influx of individuals and families arriving in Massachusetts.

"Community-based organizations across Massachusetts have stepped up to meet the needs of families entering the United States with limited means, by connecting them with health care and other needed services," said Audrey Shelto, President and CEO of the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation. "As we did when the COVID pandemic first hit, we are investing in the organizations on the front lines that are filling critical gaps and providing the life-sustaining services that these new members of our communi-

ty urgently need."

The Foundation regularly awards Special Initiatives grants, in addition to its major grantmaking programs, to support nonprofits that seek to positively impact health or health care access for Massachusetts residents who have been economically, socially, culturally or racially marginalized.

Centro Presente, a statewide Latin American immigrant organization based in East Boston, is dedicated to the self-termination and self-sufficiency of the Latino immigrant community of Massachusetts will receive \$25,000 in one-year funding.

ZBA//

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

regional affordability crisis, support equitable and resilient neighborhoods, and shift to planning-led development," said Mayor Michelle Wu. "These board members represent the diversity, talent, and expertise of our communities to ensure Boston's growth helps address our greatest challenges."

The ZBA totals 14 members – seven primary members and seven alternates with a range of experience as required by state law – who serve three-year terms. Alternates serve if primary members are unable to attend a ZBA hearing. All members currently serving on the ZBA

were appointed by previous administrations.

Earlier this month, the City Council confirmed both Raheem Shepard and David Aiken to serve on the ZBA. Jeanne Pinado, Alaa Mukahhal and Thea Massouh are still awaiting confirmation by the Boston City Council.

Confirmed Members of Zoning Board of Appeal

At-Large

Giovanni Valencia, West Roxbury (primary seat)

Neighborhood Organization Seats

Norm Stembridge, Roxbury (primary seat)

Shavel'le Olivier, Mattapan (alternate seat)

Sherry Dong, Dorchester (primary seat)

David Aiken, East Boston (alternate seat)

Greater Boston Real Estate Board

Katie Whewell, West End (alternate seat)

Boston Society of Architecture

Hansy Barraza, Roslindale (primary seat)

Building Trades Employers Association

Raheem Shepard, Hyde Park (primary seat)

Building Trades Council

Alan Langham, Dorchester (primary seat)

Dave Collins, Roslindale (alternate seat)

AFSCME AND CROSSROADS FAMILY CENTER'S TOY DRIVE

AFSCME Council 93, which represents tens of thousands of public and private sector workers across Northern New England, as well as more than 1.6 million AFSCME members nationwide, has partnered with Crossroads Family Center in East Boston to help make this holiday season a little brighter for the dozens of families who rely on Crossroads. On December 20, Council 93 leaders and staff delivered several truckloads of toys, diapers, clothing, and other household necessities to the Crossroads Family Shelter just in time for Christmas.



Area families gathered around Santa at Crossroads Family Center to receive gifts provided, in part, by AFSCME Council 93.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

Pursuant to G. L. c. 30A, §18-20

The East Boston Project Advisory Committee, Incorporated

Por la presente se notifica que el martes 27 de diciembre de 2022, a las 6:30 p.m., se llevará a cabo una reunión pública del Comité Asesor del Proyecto East Boston, Inc., (también conocido como PIERPAC) de forma remota a través de Zoom de acuerdo con la extensión del Capítulo 22 de las Leyes de 2022 para permitir audiencias virtuales.

Se publicará un enlace a la reunión con instrucciones para la participación remota en el sitio web de la organización (ebpierpac.org) a más tardar el 23 de diciembre de 2022.

El Comité tiene la intención de examinar en sesión pública la(s) cuestión(es) siguiente(s):

REGULAR MEETING

a. Asistencia 6:30 pm

b. Aprobación del Acta 30 de noviembre 2022 6:35 pm

Nuevos negocios

a. 6:45 pm - Actualización y revisión de la construcción de la Fase II (con comentario público)

b. 6:55 pm - Revisión de los cambios legislativos propuestos a PierPAC

c. 7:05 pm - Revisión del presupuesto operativo propuesto para 2023

Negocio antiguo

a. 8:00 pm - Enmienda al Acuerdo de Operaciones, Seguridad y Mantenimiento (OSM) (continuación del debate)

Aplazamiento anticipado – 8:00 pm

Al concluir su reunión ordinaria de trabajo y antes de levantar la sesión, la Junta, previa moción debidamente hecha y secundada, puede celebrar una Sesión Ejecutiva de conformidad con G. L. 30A.s.21 al concluir la cual, la Junta no reanudará su reunión pública.

SE INVITA AL PÚBLICO Y BIENVENIDO A ASISTIR

Traducción de inglés a español disponible bajo petición a través de Zoom.

Una copia de este aviso e instrucciones para la participación remota también se publicarán en el sitio web de la organización en: www.EBPierPAC.org y también se ha archivado en la División de Regulaciones del Secretario del Commonwealth por correo postal de primera clase al menos 3 días antes de la fecha programada de la reunión.

East Boston Project Advisory Committee, Inc.
By: Louise Montanino, President

NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

Pursuant to G. L. c. 30A, §18-20

The East Boston Project Advisory Committee, Incorporated

Notice is hereby given that on **Tuesday, December 27, 2022, at 6:30 p.m.** a public meeting of the East Boston Project Advisory Committee, Inc., (aka PIERPAC) will be held remotely via Zoom in accordance with the extension of Chapter 22 of the Acts of 2022 to permit virtual hearings.

A link to the meeting with instructions for remote participation shall be posted on the organization's website (ebpierpac.org) on or before **December 23, 2022.**

It is the intention of the Committee to discuss in open meeting the following matter(s):

REGULAR MEETING

a. Attendance 6:30 pm

b. Approval of Minutes November 30, 2022 - 6:35 pm

New Business

a. 6:45 pm - Phase II construction update and review (*w/public comment*)

b. 6:55 pm - Review of proposed legislative changes to PierPAC

c. 7:05 pm - Review of proposed operating budget 2023

Old Business

a. 7:20 pm - Amendment to Operations, Security and Maintenance (OSM) Agreement (continued discussion)

Anticipated Adjournment – 7:30 pm

At the conclusion of its regular business meeting and prior to adjournment, the Board, upon a motion duly made and seconded, may hold an Executive Session pursuant to G. L. 30A.s.21 upon the conclusion of which, the Board will not resume its public meeting.

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ARE INVITED AND WELCOMED TO ATTEND –

English to Spanish Translation available on request via Zoom.

A copy of this notice and instructions for remote participation will also be posted on the organization's website at: www.EBPierPAC.org and has also been placed on file with the Regulations Division of the Secretary of the Commonwealth by mailing same via first class mail at least 3 days prior to the scheduled date of the meeting.

East Boston Project Advisory Committee, Inc.
By: Louise Montanino, President

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Wu announces strategy for inclusive growth and development

Mayor Michelle Wu announced a set of proposals to make substantial changes to Inclusionary Development Policy (IDP) and the commercial Linkage Policy that will enable Boston to support its growing population and ensure the city is a place where families of all income levels can afford to live. These changes will increase Boston’s supply of affordable housing while maintaining the City’s position as an attractive market for real estate development. Mayor Wu’s strategy for inclusive growth will lower barriers to development and create a more predictable development timeline. Together, the package of actions will enable development that allows the city to grow equitably and inclusively.

“We are using every tool that the City has to urgently address Boston’s housing crisis,” said Mayor Michelle Wu. “By directing public and private resources from development toward our shared vision of a Boston for everyone, we are taking necessary steps to ensure Boston remains a place that current residents, families and future generations can call home. I’m grateful to this team and our partners for their work to continue prioritizing affordability for residents in our city’s continued growth.”

Inclusionary Development Policy (IDP)

Under an Inclusionary Development Policy (IDP), developers of market-rate residential developments are required to support the creation of affordable housing in exchange for zoning relief. Under the current IDP, developments with ten or more units in need of zoning relief support the creation of income-restricted housing through on-site units, off-site units, or through payment to an IDP Fund managed by the Mayor’s Office of Housing. The IDP requirements were last updated in December 2015. In January 2021, the Massachusetts State Legislature approved a Home Rule Petition that allows Boston to codify inclusionary development into the zoning code. The Mayor’s proposed changes are aimed at directing a larger share of resources from development toward the Administration’s vision of a Boston for everyone.

The Mayor’s proposed changes to IDP include: Lowering the threshold from 10 to seven units, and, for rental projects,

increasing the proportion of the project that is income-restricted from 13% to 20% of the project, while also deepening affordability requirements. In an innovative approach, 17% of the project will be income restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, and an additional 3% of the project will be offered at market rents and reserved for people with housing vouchers. Federal Housing Vouchers usually pay a landlord Fair Market Rents at 100% of Area Median Income. As a result of the updated policy, voucher holders will have more options, as voucher holders generally have incomes less than 30% of Area Median Income. Additionally, with Boston’s Small Area Fair Market Rents, landlords who rent to eligible households may be able to get higher Fair Market Rents depending on their zip code. Between the voucher units and traditional IDP units, the resulting affordability will be 55.5% of Area Median Income.

For homeownership projects, on-site IDP requirements will be increased from 13% to 20% in IDP Zone A & B (the top third and middle third of citywide neighborhood median values), while holding affordable requirements at an average of 90% of Area Median Income. The Mayor is using new authority to incorporate the IDP into zoning, therefore assuring that all developments with seven or more units help to meet Boston’s affordable housing needs. The effective date for the new rules will be determined based on the BPDA Board, Zoning Commission, and City Council approval processes, but it will not affect any projects currently under review.

“Expanding the supply of affordable housing in the city is critical to both long term economic success and advancing equity goals; the Samuels & Associates team supports the Mayor’s efforts to identify multiple strategies to address this challenge,” said Abe Menzin, Principal and Executive Vice President of Samuels and Associates. “The process for considering changes to the city’s Inclusionary Development Policy continues to be thorough and based on analysis of the many complex factors that determine affordability and economic feasibility. Though it is an increasingly difficult time to build and finance housing proj-

ects, we are committed to working with the city on creative solutions to advancing housing affordability goals.”

“Boston’s housing crisis has many dimensions and requires many solutions but at the end of the day we desperately need more revenue to help renters and would-be homebuyers access safe, stable housing,” said Joseph Kriesberg, President of the Massachusetts Association of Community Development Corporations. “So we are very pleased that Mayor Wu is taking these critical steps forward to provide more funding and more affordable homes for our city’s residents. These efforts, combined with her prior commitment to invest ARPA funds in housing and her proposal to the Legislature to create a transfer tax on high-value properties, will help thousands of families across our city. MACDC and its members will continue to partner with the Mayor and our City Council to take further steps to address this crisis while we also collectively advocate with our state legislature and new Governor to make the additional investments we so clearly need.”

Linkage Policy

The changes to the Linkage Policy include lowering the threshold and exemption from 100,000 square feet to 50,000 square feet, increasing the total linkage fee over two years to \$30.78 per square foot for lab space, and to \$23.09 for other commercial uses, up from \$15.39. Sixteen percent of the fees will support job training and job preparedness programs, while the remaining 84 percent will support the creation and preservation of affordable housing. The increase in the fees will be phased in over two years. Projects with both lab and office space will be considered on a pro-rata basis. Linkage funds are used to support the creation and preservation of affordable housing, as well as to support the job training and job readiness needs of Boston’s residents.

“Mayor Wu’s proposed increase to the linkage fee is an important step in the effort to address Boston families’ housing needs,” said Symone Crawford, Executive Director, Massachusetts Affordable Housing Alliance. “Linkage has been and will continue to be a vital resource for building new affordable homes in Boston. MAHA and our allies have been advocating for

an increase in linkage for years and this proposal shows that Mayor Wu is listening.”

These IDP and Linkage recommendations are based on research completed by RKG Associates (IDP) and by Karl Seidman Consulting Services/ConsultEcon, who were hired to examine each policy and the financial impacts on development, as well as feedback from the IDP Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). Next, the Administration will conduct a public engagement process to hear input from residents.

“The City needs to increase and diversify its housing stock in order to serve the residents that are living here now and to meet the demands of our growing population. The changes that the Mayor is recommending allow the supply of housing to increase while generating critical resources for the production of affordable housing,” said Sheila Dillon, Chief of Housing. “The funds generated through these policies will allow the City to acquire, preserve, and develop housing that will provide stable, affordable housing for generations.”

“The Mayor recognizes that in order for our economy to thrive, every Bostonian needs the opportunity to participate,” said Amy Nishman, president of the Job Training Alliance. “The non-profit job training community will use these resources to prepare and upskill our residents to meet employer demand.”

In addition to proposing changes to create more affordable housing, Mayor Wu is also implementing changes to incentivize new development through a predictable, efficient, and values-based approach. These changes build on the executive order signed by Mayor Wu in October to speed the development of predominantly affordable housing in the City.

“Boston’s workforce is the backbone of our region’s economy. As that workforce grows, we need to increase both our market and workforce housing supply and deed-restricted affordable housing,” said Chief of Planning Arthur Jemison. “The Mayor’s agenda will ensure that development occurs through a transparent and swift development review process so that we can support our city’s most urgent needs.”

The City will launch a process to review proposed changes to Article 80 in order to make it more timely and predictable for projects that meet the City’s goals of resilience to climate change, affordability for residents, and equitable growth across neighborhoods. Under the new regulatory approach, the BPDA will develop a “scorecard” for projects. Projects that meet these goals may be eligible for streamlined review, focused community engagement, and simplified mitigation and community benefits. Projects which innovate in these three areas could possibly

receive consideration for tax relief and infrastructure support. The reforms will also create new, predictable regulatory milestones for Article 80 review. These changes will be studied and canvassed with the community in the first quarter of 2023 with implementation targeted for the new fiscal year. Aspects of the changes, such as the scorecard, will be offered for public comment and discussion.

“The program the Mayor announced today is carefully crafted to advance the housing and sustainability agenda she campaigned on,” said Matt Kiefer of Goulston & Storrs. “The details of implementation will really matter, but combining higher IDP and linkage with meaningful permitting efficiencies and possible public support for development is potentially path-breaking. In essence, the Mayor is saying to the development community, ‘we’ll be expecting more public benefit from you, and we’ll also be making it easier for you to deliver it.’”

As part of this agenda for shared growth through development, the BPDA is also examining other changes to the Article 80 process that will make development review more timely, predictable, and transparent. The changes also include operational and procedural changes to the Boston Civic and Design Commission (BCDC) to streamline the design review process.

Next Steps

With these recommendations, the Boston Planning & Development Agency and the Mayor’s Office of Housing are kicking off a process that will include public hearings and a public comment period on each policy, before submitting recommended zoning amendment language to the BPDA Board, for an initial vote on each policy. For the Linkage Policy, the Zoning Commission will then take up the proposed zoning amendment. For the IDP, the BPDA vote would be followed by a City Council review and vote, followed by a vote of the Zoning Commission. BPDA is hosting a website for both the IDP and the Linkage Policy that includes draft and/or final studies, housing and housing market data, background information on each policy, announcements about upcoming public hearings (the first public meeting for Linkage is Jan. 11; the first public meeting for IDP is Jan. 21), and an opportunity to provide comments.

BPDA will seek input from the community and other stakeholders on proposed changes to the development review process. The BPDA plans to share a draft scorecard in February 2023, host information sessions in March 2023; and implement the scorecard, as well as other new policies, by July 2023.

This announcement builds on Mayor Wu’s initiatives to address housing

affordability in Boston issues which includes filing a Home Rule Petition relative to real estate transfer fees and senior property tax relief, signing an Executive Order designed to speed up affordable housing production, signing an Executive Order relative to affirmatively furthering fair housing, convening a Rent Stabilization Advisory Committee to inform future legislative proposals, hiring the City’s first Chief of Planning, announcing an action plan to best utilize the City-owned land described in the Public Land for Public Good: Citywide Land Audit, and launching Welcome Home Boston, a historic investment in affordable homeownership in Boston.

About the Inclusionary Development Policy

Boston’s Inclusionary Development Policy (IDP) was created by Executive Order in 2000. The current policy requires that market-rate residential developments with ten or more units in need of zoning relief support the creation of income-restricted housing through on-site units, off-site units, or through payment to an IDP Fund managed by the Mayor’s Office of Housing. The IDP requirements were last updated in December 2015. In January 2021, the Massachusetts State Legislature approved a Home Rule Petition that allows Boston to codify inclusionary development into the zoning code. Through 2021, almost 3,600 on-site and off-site income-restricted units have been created through the IDP and the fund has supported the construction or preservation of nearly 2,500 additional income-restricted units.

About the Commercial Linkage Policy


The Linkage Policy began in 1983, with the approval of Article 26 of the Boston Zoning Code, which sought to balance large-scale commercial development with needed residential construction. In 1986, the City of Boston launched the Neighborhood Housing Trust (NHT) to manage housing linkage funds and expanded Article 26 to include job training as an element of the linkage policy, now managed through the Neighborhood Jobs Trust (NJT). The Neighborhood Housing Trust has collected \$227 million in funds since its inception. These funds have supported the creation of over 7,000 new income-restricted units and preserved almost 6,000 existing income-restricted units. The Neighborhood Jobs Trust has received over \$55 million in Linkage funds to support Boston’s education and workforce development efforts, with almost \$3.5 million disbursed in 2021 alone. The 2021 Home Rule Petition also gave the City of Boston the power to more readily make changes to the Linkage policy without seeking further state approval. The City increased linkage fees with this new flexibility in March 2021.

Real Estate Transfers

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10 Geneva Street LLC	Geneva Street LLC	10-A&B Geneva St	\$1,520,000
Evans, Evan	21-23 Lexington St LLC	21-23 Lexington St #201	\$599,000
Hollerbach, John	Lewis 3rd, Donald	44 Waldemar Ave	\$717,000
Townsend, Cole W	Tarbi Jr, Frank J	124-128 Marion St	\$925,000
Eagle Meridian LLC	Uguys Development LLC	197 Brooks St	\$2,515,000
Noe Jr, Robert	Centura Bay LLC	208-210 Everett St #2	\$565,000
Salvatelli, Cameron	Halpert, Albena D	212 Princeton St #1	\$479,000
Haggerty, Sean P	231 Maverick Street LLC	231 Maverick St #1	\$550,000
Jpoint Development LLC	SFL Maverick Dev LLC	284 Maverick St	\$412,500
Abdul, Samad A	340 Meridian Street LLC	340 Meridian St #2	\$660,000

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NEW NAME, NEW ERA FOR MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES IN EAST BOSTON

The ribbon-cutting ceremony last week for the new Community Behavioral Health Center (CBHC) of North Suffolk Community Services (formerly-known as the North Suffolk Mental Health Association), located at 14 Porter St., represents a new era for providing services to individuals of all ages in our community who are in need of mental health, addiction, and recovery support treatment, as well as for persons with developmental disabilities.

The mental health and drug treatment challenges facing our country today are staggering. More Americans than ever are dying of drug overdoses, fueled by the ever-increasing prevalence of the deadly substance fentanyl, the potent synthetic opioid that is being mixed with heroin, cocaine, benzodiazepines, or methamphetamine, among others, by drug dealers.

In addition, the stresses of everyday life, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, have created what some refer to as the Age of Anxiety, fueling a huge increase in substance abuse of all kinds, including the worst of them all that still reigns supreme, alcohol.

The CBHC at 14 Porter St., which is set to open on January 3, substantially expands local access to routine, urgent, and crisis treatment for mental health conditions and substance use disorders. The facility will offer an accessible front door to mental health care and treatment for substance use disorders with same-day evaluations and referrals to treatment; adding more evening and weekend hours; enhancing timely follow-up appointments; and offering more peer support and evidence-based behavioral health treatment – including medication-assisted treatment (MAT) – both in-person and via telehealth -- as part of a statewide network of 25 newly designated CBHCs rolling out in early 2023.

North Suffolk also will deliver 24/7 community-based mobile crisis intervention and stabilization as an alternative to overwhelmed hospital emergency departments, for individuals of all ages in East Boston, Chelsea, Revere, Winthrop, and Charlestown.

It is fitting that the new facility will make its home at 14 Porter Street, a site that once was known as the East Boston Relief Station, an affiliate of what was then the Boston City Hospital, that provided health care and hospital services to neighborhood residents until 1970.

This is a new era confronting both mental health professionals and the people of our community, and we are pleased that the newly-named North Suffolk Community Services is stepping up to meet this challenge with the opening of the Community Behavioral Health Center.

ENJOY A HAPPY -- AND SAFE -- NEW YEAR’S EVE

The end of one year and the start of another provides all of us with an opportunity for reflection. We are a year older -- but have we become any wiser?

Alfred Lord Tennyson’s “Ring Out Wild Bells,” which was published in 1850, offers timeless advice about the lessons we hopefully have learned from the past that we can use to guide our future. We quote some of the lines from that poem here:

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true....
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,
Ring in redress to all mankind.
Ring out a slowly dying cause,
And ancient forms of party strife;
Ring in the nobler modes of life...
Ring out the want, the care, the sin,
The faithless coldness of the times;
Ring out, ring out thy mournful rhymes,
But ring the fuller minstrel in....
Ring in the love of truth and right,
Ring in the common love of good.
Ring out old shapes of foul disease...
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;
Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

As always, we urge all of our readers to ensure that they celebrate the New Year safely and take care that their friends and loved ones do so as well. No one ever died by having a friend take their keys away if they have had too much to drink.

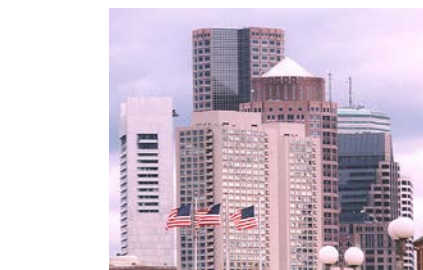
We wish all of our readers a Happy and Healthy 2023.

Your opinions, please

The Times welcomes letters to the editor. Our mailing address is 385 Broadway, Revere, MA 02151. Our fax number is 781-485-1403.

Letters may also be e-mailed to editor@eastietimes.com.

Letters must be signed. We reserve the right to edit for length and content.



Forum

By Dr. Glenn Mollette

You can lose about one pound a week if you try. If you don’t try you won’t lose any.

If you need to save some money then you need to pay yourself first. If you have a paycheck coming in then set a goal for \$500 a month if possible. Whatever the amount is will grow if you are faithful each week and month of setting money aside. You can always find a place to spend money. Even if you don’t need it, you have it just in case you might.

What do you want to accomplish in 2023? If you do not have a goal of some kind, you will accomplish nothing. Maybe your goal is to just enjoy each day. Enjoy your food. Enjoy your family and friends. Make the best of each ay. These are good goals.

Be good to yourself in 2023. Love others as you love yourself. If you

don’t love yourself, it’s almost impossible to love others. Recently we have heard of people committing suicide. They had given up on themselves but wanted to hurt or kill others before they killed themselves. It’s tragic when an individual’s so hates themselves that they wanted to hurt others. If they loved themselves more then they wouldn’t have had so much venom and hate for others.

One of the tools of the devil is to bring your life down to where you hate all the things you’ve done. He brings it up to you often so you can feel horrible about your life’s mistakes. People often have trouble forgiving themselves so they begin to binge drink, take drugs and hurt themselves to try to deal with their life’s pain. God has forgiveness and hope for all. People don’t always forgive but God forgives. As God forgives you then

you must work on forgiving yourself, loving yourself and forgiving and loving others. You see, that’s a great formula. God forgives us, loves us and we are to forgive and love ourselves and then offer this same forgiveness and love to others.

In 2023 you might do something different. Maybe you want to embark on an adventure, change careers or just do better with all you have been handed. Often, all we need to do is focus on what we already have to do to do it a little better.

My prayer for our nation in the year ahead is that we might see politicians work together to accomplish worthy goals that will benefit our country. I hope Ukraine can overcome Russia but other countries need to step up to the plate. America cannot fight everyone’s war physically or financially. We must get con-

trol of our border. Our nation is being overtaken by millions of undocumented immigrants. Who are these people? Do they all really have noble intentions in America? We must bring back our jobs from China in 2023.

Throughout this year may you a continuation of what we talk about and pray for during the Christmas season. May it be ongoing every day and may we share it with all along the way, Peace on earth and good will to all people. May you first experience it in your life so you can extend it to others.

Glenn Mollette is the publisher of Newburgh Press, Liberty Torch and various other publishing imprints; a national columnist – American Issues and Common Sense opinions, analysis, stories and features appear each week in over 500 newspapers, websites and blogs across the United States.

National Grid encourages income qualified customers to enroll in heating assistance and bill help programs

As colder temperatures take hold, National Grid is reminding Massachusetts customers to take advantage of energy programs that can help them pay and manage their energy bills.

The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), commonly referred to as Fuel Assistance, provides eligible households with help in paying a portion of winter heating bills. Enrollment for LIHEAP is free and open through April 30, 2023, and covers energy usage from November 1, 2022, to April 30, 2023.

LIHEAP is open to both homeowners and renters, including households whose cost of heat is included in rent, and eligibility is based on household size and the gross annual income of every household member 18 years of age or older. Household income cannot exceed 60% of estimated state median income. This program provides assistance through a fixed benefit amount for the cost of the primary source of heat, which includes, but is not limited to: electricity, oil, natural gas, propane, kerosene, wood and coal.

“National Grid recognizes that high energy bills can be a real challenge for many customers – especially as we get into the colder months,” said Helen Burt, Chief Customer Officer at National Grid. “The LIHEAP program can provide much needed assistance to customers who are struggling to keep up with their energy costs. We also encourage customers to look at options in our Winter Customer Savings Initiative, to consider a payment program, or see if they are eligible for rate discounts.”

To apply for LIHEAP:

- Apply online at <https://www.toapply.org/MassLIHEAP>

- Visit and apply at an agency in your area.

For more information concerning LIHEAP:

- Visit <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/learn-about-low-income-home-energy-assistance-program-liheap>.

- Customers may also call the Cold Relief Helpline at (800) 632-8175.

National Grid recognizes increased bills pose challenges for many customers. This fall, the company launched its Winter Customer Savings Initiative, which is designed to help customers reduce their energy use and lower energy costs, manage their energy bills and payments, and help them secure available energy assistance if they need it. The company recently donated \$1 million combined last month to three Massachusetts branches of the United Way and to the Massachusetts Good Neighbor Energy Fund to assist customers with high winter energy bills.

Along with LIHEAP, National Grid has several programs dedicated to helping income-qualified families and customers needing special assistance meet their energy needs. Programs include but are not limited to:

- Discount Rates where qualifying income-eligible customers may receive a discounted rate on electric and gas service, as well as no-cost energy efficiency upgrades.

- The Massachusetts Good Neighbor Energy Fund is available to any Massachusetts residents who, because of temporary financial difficulty,

cannot meet a month’s energy expense and is not eligible for state or federal energy assistance

Furthermore, several bill help options and payment plans are available for customers in need of assistance. Customers may enroll in programs such as the Budget Billing Plan, which spreads monthly payments out more evenly throughout the year to offset periods of high energy usage.

National Grid remains committed to providing customers a variety of energy-saving tips and billing options to help offset the increases in this winter’s energy prices. Customers in need of billing assistance or additional support can visit ngrid.com/heretohelp to learn more.

About National Grid: About National Grid: National Grid (NYSE: NNG) is an electricity, natural gas, and clean energy delivery company serving more than 20 million people through our networks in New York and Massachusetts. National Grid is focused on building a path to a more affordable, reliable clean energy future through our fossil-free vision. National Grid is transforming our electricity and natural gas networks with smarter, cleaner, and more resilient energy solutions to meet the goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

For more information, please visit our website, follow us on Twitter, watch us on YouTube, like us on Facebook and find our photos on Instagram

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CITY PAWS

What we learn from dogs

By Penny & Ed Cherubino

The change from one year to another is a time of reflection on the past and hope for the future. We’ve been thinking about the lessons we learned from the special dogs we’ve known and the people they’ve brought into our lives.

Show Your Love

We should all emulate the greetings a dog gives to someone they love. Think about how disappointing it is to come home when your dog isn’t there. No matter what the reaction of others in the home is, you can count on your dog to greet you with glee and make you feel welcome. Perhaps we should greet the family with a hearty “welcome home.”

Use All Your Senses

Dogs are great role models for us when it comes to using all our senses. Their world is

made richer by the sights, sounds, aromas, tastes, and textures around them. They pay attention to all incoming data.

On the other hand, we often ignore the richness on offer while distracted by our busy minds or addiction to our devices. In the year ahead, watch the dogs in your life and learn to pay attention to what they’re investigating in the sensory world. See if you can notice and enjoy some of what they do.

Trust Your Instincts

We learned this lesson from our first dog, Sassy. She was a great judge of people. Her official title around our office was Vice President for security and morale. Security went beyond barking when the mailman arrived.

Sassy had three approaches to most people. Some of the best people we ever knew were greet-

ed with exuberance and treated to cuddles and kisses. Most people, she welcomed politely.

However, she raised her hackles and growled at visitors in a few instances. In one case, it was a client who eventually proved to be an unethical person. Another example was a person at a hiring interview. In the end, other staff members voted with Sassy against this hire.

Self Care

Naps are a way of life for dogs. When they’re tired, they find a cozy spot and doze. When we’re tired, we try to push through and accomplish more. Perhaps we should build some naptime into our days as a better way to be productive.

Exercise is essential to dogs, and so is stretching. How many times a day do you see your companion doing a downward dog?



Poppy likes to cuddle up with a friend after a good play session and nap.

When they get up from a resting position, they stretch. We are encouraged to stretch by trainers and physical therapists. Learn from your dog and take moments each day to give your body a relaxing stretch.

One way or another, dogs ask for what they need. Poppy jumps up with one of us when she wants a good massage and cuddles. She knows we

can’t resist giving her the touches she craves. Your dog may lead you to the door when they need to go out. Now think, how often do you let those around you know what you need right at that moment?

Be Thankful for Dogs

We’ll end with wise words from one of our all-time favorite dog people, author and animal activist Roger Caras who wrote,

“Dogs have given us their absolute all. We are the center of their universe. We are the focus of their love and faith, and trust. They serve us in return for scraps. It is without a doubt the best deal man has ever made.”

Do you have a question or topic for City Paws? Send an email to Penny@BostonZest.com with your request.

Baker signs executive order to establish Massachusetts Cyber Incident Response Team

Governor Charlie Baker signed an executive order to establish the Massachusetts Cyber Incident Response Team (MA-CIRT). Led by the Secretary of the Executive Office of Technology Services and Security (EOTSS), MA-CIRT is established with the mission of enhancing the Commonwealth’s ability to prepare for, respond to, mitigate against, and recover from significant cybersecurity threats. The Governor signed the executive order as Massachusetts and other jurisdictions confront an overall increase in cybersecurity threats to websites and networks.

“State governments and other organizations across the country are increasingly being targeted by bad actors aiming to disrupt operations and compromise information systems,” said Governor Charlie Baker. “This executive order will further strengthen the Commonwealth’s policies, procedures, and resources required to prevent potential threats and appropriately respond to attacks on government infrastructure and services. As state governments expand their digital footprints, moving more services online and allowing for a more connected workforce, it’s critical that we make the necessary

investments to protect this critical technology infrastructure from acts of terrorism and criminal, organized crime, and gang activity.”

“Cybersecurity attacks threaten Commonwealth technology networks and the continuity of essential government services we provide to the constituents we serve,” said Lt. Governor Karyn Polito. “With the establishment of MA-CIRT, the Baker-Polito Administration continues to invest and prioritize the delivery of effective and reliable government services to the people of the Commonwealth.”

“With my background in public safety, I know the importance that leadership buy-in plays in swift, organized, and effective response to an external threat,” said Secretary of Technology Services and Security Curt Wood. “The Baker-Polito Administration is once again leading from the front on government cybersecurity and I thank Governor Baker, Lt. Governor Polito, and my fellow leaders in cybersecurity and public safety for their partnership on the issuance of this critical executive order that will serve the Commonwealth for years to come.”

Under the direction of the EOTSS Secretary, the formation of MA-CIRT convenes cybersecurity

and public safety experts from across state government as required members, including leadership representatives from:

- The Executive Office of Technology Services and Security
- The Commonwealth Security Operations Center
- The Executive Office of Public Safety and Security
- The Commonwealth Fusion Center
- The Massachusetts State Police Cyber Crime Unit
- The Massachusetts National Guard
- The Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency

The Executive Order reinforces Massachusetts as a leader in cybersecurity enhancement efforts through a variety of strategies. To prevent against attacks and increase the Commonwealth’s cybersecurity resiliency, the Order underscores the need for preparing for and marshalling a coordinated response, mitigation, and recovery effort from significant cybersecurity threats or incidents. Additionally, the Order:

- Requires MA-CIRT to review cybersecurity threat information and vulnerabilities to make informed recommendations and establish appropriate policies to manage

the risk of cyber incidents for executive department agencies and all other state agencies served by EOTSS.

- Requires MA-CIRT to develop and maintain an up-to-date Cyber Incident Response Plan, which will guide the actions of the Commonwealth’s key public safety and information security and technology teams, state agency resources, and security professionals in responding to and minimizing the impact of significant cybersecurity threats to Commonwealth systems. The Plan is required to be submitted annually to the Governor for review and approval.

- Empowers the EOTSS Secretary to serve as MA-CIRT lead, with the approval of the Governor, to direct MA-CIRT in response to a significant cyber incident.

- Requires the routine exchange of information related to cybersecurity threats and reported incidents between the Commonwealth Fusion Center and the Commonwealth Security Operations Center.

- Requires EOTSS and MA-CIRT to consult with the Massachusetts Cyber Center and assist the Center with efforts to foster cybersecurity resiliency through communications, collaboration, and out-

reach to state agencies, municipalities, educational institutions, and industry partners.

- Requires executive department agencies to comply with protocols and procedures established by MA-CIRT and all related policies, standards, and Administrative Directives issued by EOTSS.

- Requires Commonwealth executive department agencies and other state agencies served by EOTSS to identify and report significant cybersecurity incidents and coordinate efforts to mitigate and prevent further damage from cyber incidents.

- Requires all executive department personnel to annually complete the EOTSS approved security awareness training program administered by the Human Resources Division.

- And strongly encourages other governmental entities throughout the Commonwealth not served by EOTSS to report cybersecurity threats or incidents to the Commonwealth Security Operations Center.

In 2021, Congress recognized the increased cyber threat posed to state and local governments by establishing a \$1 billion State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program as a part of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs

Act. The four-year grant program requires 80% of funds go toward assisting municipalities in enhancing their cybersecurity posture. This new federal program compliments the various support for municipal cybersecurity efforts offered by the Baker-Polito Administration, including: the Municipal Cybersecurity Awareness Grant Program, Free Cybersecurity Health Check Program, and the Community Compact IT Grant Program, which was established by Governor Baker’s Executive Order 554 in 2015.

EOTSS was established in 2017 as the Commonwealth’s lead technology and cybersecurity agency via Article 87 government restructuring legislation filed by Governor Baker and approved by the Legislature. Its mission is to lead initiatives to modernize the Commonwealth’s IT infrastructure assets, continually strengthen government cybersecurity operations and standards via the consolidation of infrastructure and cybersecurity operations for the Commonwealth into a centrally managed state agency and leverage innovative technology solutions to offer user-friendly digital services to its constituents.

Study // CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Greenway at its southern end and travel to Bell Circle in Revere to the north.

The bypass road alternative would see the road end at Tomasello Way, and have just a shared use path to Bell Circle.

Brittland said the goal with either alternative is to increase safety, provide environmental benefits, and address equity issues in the communities it travels through.

While Brittland said there are not a lot of good connections for the path to connect to once it gets to Bell Circle.

“We just wanted to try to bring the shared use path as far as possible,”

he said. “We often build pieces in segments and connect later, and also, along the shared use path, we do assume that Suffolk Downs will be building out a lot of their infrastructure. There are opportunities in the future to potentially connect into whatever Suffolk Downs is going to do.”

Ned Codd, a consultant on the study, said both alternatives were evaluated relative to the major categories of safety, connectivity, resilience, and equity.

“We also looked at the feasibility of the alternatives relative to the cost and permitting challeng-

es,” said Codd.

Codd said both of the alternatives would raise the level of the water’s edge to 16 feet above existing mean sea level to address 2070 projections for sea level rise and storm surge. However, he said the shared use-only alternative would create more park and green space.

“Relative to connectivity and vehicular access and mobility, the principal feature of alternative two is the provision of a two-lane bypass road that we have assumed is limited to authorized vehicles only, including heavy trucks,” said Codd.

That bypass road would

provide a more reliable connection for some trucks traveling to and from Logan Airport.

“This bypass road would be less subject to congestion and variabilities in travel time and would be more reliable and faster than a highway connection, mostly during peak periods in the peak-demand direction,” Codd said.

Estimates show the bypass road would carry roughly 42 to 67 trucks in each direction during peak hours. That number represents about 35 percent of the Rte. 1A current truck traffic, and about 2 percent of total traffic,

Codd said.

The bypass alternative also provides potential future access for public transportation.

Both alternatives would improve safety, although Codd said the second alternative would create pedestrian and bike conflicts with the traffic from trucks on the bypass route nearby.

When it comes to equity, Codd said the first alternative would be better for path users since users would be separated from all truck and vehicle traffic. The second alternative, he said, would benefit East Boston residents by taking more truck traf-

fic off Rte. 1A.

“Both alternatives provide better neighborhood connections for environmental justice communities, but alternative one (shared use path only) would provide better recreation and access to natural resources for environmental justice communities.”

The shared use path would have a lower capital cost, coming in at roughly \$71 million, while the path with the bypass road would have a price tag about 50 percent higher at \$106 million.

EASTIE FARMS HOLDS A HOLIDAY PARTY HONORING THE WINTER SOLSTICE

DEREK KOUYOUJIAN PHOTOS

Eastie Farms held a Holiday Party honoring the Winter Solstice, an ancient human milestone as the end of the year when crops were to be sowed and preparations for the Winter would be put into action. It was noted though, in the midst of the shortest day of the year that from here on the days will only get longer amounts of sunlight until Summer. It was a subtle sense of optimism to help endure the cold weather and darker days ahead.

In 2020, after some time of planning and organizing, Eastie Farm began with neighbors banding together and buying an abandoned property lot on Summer Street in East Boston to be used for

Community farming. Later, they did the same to the property plot at 6 Chelsea Terrace from the City Of Boston, which had up until then was also misused property full of trash and debris.

After clearing out the plot, a Greenhouse designed by Gabriel Cira Architects was shipped from The Netherlands in pieces and assembled on the plot. 3 wells were dug 400-500ft deep and they generate enough thermal energy to provide heating for the greenhouse.

Now the Greenhouse is central to Eastie Farms' educational services, a venue for events, and a spot to grow produce year round.



Arellys Rojas and Site Manager Sebastian Tabares performed a Lakota and Quecua eagle song called Aguila (eagle in Spanish)



Massachusetts Commissioner Of Agriculture John Lebeaux.



Volunteer Joel Nguherimo and Greenhouse Manager Will Hardesty-Dyck.



Volunteer coordinator and community liaison Roberto Gomez thanked everyone for their support.



Moirra McCrave, Ayesha Mehrotra, Joel Seidner, and Silva, Irish Wolf Hound and "Farm Donkey" notable figure.



Mark Belzowski and Theresa Strachila.



Joanne Hillman and Janet Kilderry.



Produce being grown by members.



Board Members Rudi Seitz, Claire Corcoran, Acting President Nadia Salim, Rick Cresta, and Executive Director Kannan Thiruvengadam.



Freyja Moondancer and Chris McDonald.



The Greenhouse at Eastie Farms was filled with staff, volunteers, and residents who support the urban farming mission.



Eastie Farms Executive Director Kannan Thiruvengadam and Program Manager Heather O'Brien (2nd from right), Massachusetts Commissioner Of Agriculture John Lebeaux (3rd from left) and Deputy Commissioner Ashley Sears Randall, Massachusetts Department Of Agriculture Urban Agriculture Coordinator (and East Boston resident) Rose Arruda, and Fernando Roses from Pandebono Restaurant who provided catering for the event.

Congratulations to the staff of the East Boston Neighborhood Health Center

for helping us win The Boston Globe's *Top Places to Work* for an eighth time. We are proud to be a team that delivers compassionate, high-quality care to our community.

EAST BOSTON NEIGHBORHOOD HEALTH CENTER

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EAST BOSTON CENTRAL CATHOLIC SCHOOL HOLDS HOLIDAY SHOW

Photos by Marianne Salza

East Boston Central Catholic School (EBCCS) presented its holiday show, “It’s Beginning To Look A Lot Like Christmas,” on December 16. Students sang cheerful, Christmas songs, welcomed Santa Claus, and enacted a Nativity scene. The choir -- which was featured throughout the concert --

performed recently at the Eastie Elves fundraiser, and Orient Heights tree lighting; and soon will be singing at MassPort.

“The kids are fabulous,” said Ron Pardi, music teacher. “Our sign says, ‘A tradition of excellence;’ and I would like to add: a school of performing arts. There is no school in the community that does what we do here.”



Callie Vitale, Allen Maria, and Janelle Avila, 3rd grade, dancing to “Rocking Around the Christmas Tree.”



Paul Baglio, Amen Seid, and Augustus Nowak, kindergarten, singing, “Holly, Jolly, Christmas.”



Oscarly Lara, Pre-K Cherub, singing, “Jingle Bells.”



Francesca Mazzone, Maya Bond, and Alexander Lopez, 2nd grade, dancing to “Here Comes Santa Claus.”



Gia Allen, Adriana Puerta, and Kelsey O'Connor, 7th grade members of the Choir, singing, “Winter Wonderland.”



Vivian Burke, Bodhi Lanzilli, Sherezade Tabarez, Miya Nguyen, Oscarly Lara, and Joseph Baglio, Pre-K Cherubs, singing, “Calypso Carol.”



Camila Villatoro, Kevin DelCid, and Natalia Vargas, 1st grade, singing, “Mary’s Boy Child.”



Samantha Rose, Vittoria D’Antonio, and Aurora Placeres, Pre-K Angels, singing, “Me and my Teddy Bear.”



Grade 8 performing the Nativity to “When a Child is Born.”



Angels, Cherubs, and K-2 singing, “Jingle Bells.”



8th graders, Peter Rosa, as Joseph, and Sophia Varon, as Mary, with Nyla Taylor, Arianna Salmoran, and Jaslene Brooks-Tome, as angels.



Members of the Choir singing, “Santa Claus is Coming to Town.”



Santa Claus making his grand entrance.

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(ex: Oui)

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Russer Canadian Maple Ham \$6.99/lb

Margherita Genoa Salami..... \$7.99/lb

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Sahlen's Italian Style Hot Ham \$7.99/lb

Produce

Sweet & Juicy Large Honeydew..... \$3.99

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Tangy Limes..... 59¢

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Fresh Crisp Celery Hearts..... 2/ \$5.00

Bakery

Freshly Baked Ciabatta Bread 2/ \$7.00

Home-style Blueberry Muffins 4 pk..... \$5.49

Assorted Brownies 4 pk..... \$4.99

The Cookie Factory Apricot Drop Cookies 8pk \$4.99

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"while supplies last"

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News in Brief

2022 DECK THE WINDOWS HOLIDAY DECORATING CONTEST WINNERS

The East Boston Chamber of Commerce held their 2022 Deck the Windows holiday decorating contest over the weekdays of December 1 and 9. Businesses participated by decorating their storefront windows with decorations of the season and by having their decorations photographed and submitted to the Chamber. From the many decora-

tions, three winners were chosen (first, second, and third place) as the best decorated windows by an East Boston business in 2022. Certificates will be awarded to the three winners along with a congratulatory letter from the East Boston Chamber of Commerce. Additionally, the 1st place winner will receive the following: \$1,000 (One Thousand Dollars) gift certificate to advertise their business on any El Planeta channels including print, web or social networks; promotion on Orale con Veronica on Radio Super 99.9 FM

and \$250.) The 2nd place winner will receive \$100 prize, and 3rd place winner will receive \$50.

The Chamber would like to thank each and every business in East Boston for their decorating, beautifying, and demonstrating the spirit of the holidays in our community.

Congratulations to:
1st Prize winner – Taco Mex at Maverick Square
2nd Prize winner – Mario Real Estate Century 21 on Bennington Street
3rd Prize winner – La Chiva Restaurant at Day Square

La Cámara de Comercio de East Boston llevó a cabo su concurso de decoración navideña Deck the Windows 2022 durante los días de semana del 1 y 9 de diciembre. Las empresas participaron decorando los escaparates de sus tiendas con decoraciones de la temporada y fotografiando sus decoraciones y enviándolas a la Cámara. De las muchas condecoraciones, se eligieron tres ganadores (primero, segundo y tercer lugar) como las ventanas mejor decoradas por una empresa de East Boston en 2022. Se otorgarán certifi-

cados a los tres ganadores junto con una carta de felicitación de la Cámara de Comercio de East Boston. Comercio. Además, el ganador del 1er lugar recibirá lo siguiente: un certificado de regalo de \$1,000 (mil dólares) para anunciar su negocio en cualquiera de los canales de El Planeta, incluidos medios impresos, web o redes sociales; promoción en Orale con Veronica en Radio Super 99.9 FM y \$250.) El ganador del 2do lugar recibirá un premio de \$100, y el ganador del 3er lugar recibirá un premio de \$50.

La Cámara quisiera agradecer a todos y cada uno de los negocios en East Boston por decorar, embellecer y demostrar el espíritu de las fiestas en nuestra comunidad.

Enhorabuena a:

Ganador del primer premio: Taco Mex en Maverick Square

Ganador del segundo premio: Mario Real Estate Century 21 en Bennington Street

Ganador del 3er premio - Restaurante La Chiva en Day Square

Campus // CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

renovated and the fields are open, and we see these renderings become a reality – it’s just game-changing for youth and families in East Boston,” said Madaro.

Sen. Lydia Edwards said she benefited educationally and socially from attending after-school programs during her childhood experience “all over the world.”

“After-school programs are where you feel safe, where you can get your homework done, and where you have a second family of mentors – it’s where you can literally eat a good healthy meal,” said Edwards.

The senator thanked Boston Scores for the community garden that will be part of the overall project.

“To see the community garden, the greenspace, a place where we’re going to breathe easy and also grow beautiful things, that’s speaks to the heart of the neighborhood and to true investment,” said Edwards.

City Councilor Gabriela Coletta called the celebratory event “an historic groundbreaking in our community.”

“A world-class recreational campus is coming

to East Boston – that is absolutely incredible,” said Coletta with vigor.

Coletta, who remembered playing kickball as a child at the old fields in East Boston, said, “Now what’s going to happen in these fields is that these kids are going to have an incredible experience with their friends and their community, and it’s going to be a safe space.”

“I’m so grateful to Boston Scores for your investment and a shout-out again to the leadership of the Salesian’s team,” continued Coletta. “Michael, you are a pillar in this community. You serve hundreds of kids every single day, and thank you again to the staff for everything you do.”

“Access to open space is so vital to the health and wellness of communities and our children, and this is exactly what we’re celebrating today,” concluded Coletta.

Dr. Tommy Welch, Region 1 school superintendent, said he is a resident of East Boston and has children in the elementary schools.

“I, too, am looking forward to using these facilities,” said Welch. “What an amazing community resource this will be for



State Sen. Lydia Edwards, State Rep. Adrian Madaro, and City Councilor Gabriela Coletta join Boston Scores and Salesian Boys and Girls Club leaders in the groundbreaking ceremony for the new Salesian Heights Recreation and Education Campus.

our students and our families in East Boston.”

Noting the excitement of the recent World Cup soccer tournament and the camaraderie experienced by families watching the games across the globe, Welch said, “The way I see this resource and partnership is one that will provide space for our stu-

dents and our families to come together from all socio-economic and cultural backgrounds – seeing this as a place that can truly serve as a community hub for many of our residents, not just in East Boston, but beyond.”

Maconga, the leader of Boston Scores, which provides after-school soccer and enrichment pro-

grams, said, “I just want to add my own appreciation for the partnership with Salesian Boys and Girls Club. We’ve really been welcomed into East Boston. The way we’ve been embraced to make this investment, to be a deeper part of the community, just feels so good. It feels right for us. We’re super excited to be part-

nering with the Club, and making this really historic investment, one that we know will serve youth for generations to come, and this facility will become an important part of their childhood, of their development, and their inspiration to make the world a better place.”

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A SHORT STORY ABOUT GROWING UP WITH AN UNFAIR ADVANTAGE.

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As one of the last American children to contract polio, Jeffrey Galpin grew up in a world of iron lungs and body casts, alone with his imagination. His story would be dramatic enough if it was just about his battle with this dreaded disease. But Jeffrey Galpin did more than survive polio. He went on to a list of achievements in medical research—including being the principal investigator in applying the first gene therapy for HIV/AIDS. Dr. Galpin actually credits his own incurable condition for giving him the focus that made him so passionate in his research. His story leaves us with two of the most contagious messages we know. Don't give up, and remember to give back. If Dr. Galpin's story inspires just one more person to make a difference, then its telling here has been well worth while.



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OBITUARIES

Gaetano Iantosca

Proprietor of Logan Glass Company,
East Boston



morning at 8:30 before leaving in procession to Immaculate Conception Church, 133 Beach Street, Revere for a Funeral Mass at 10 a.m. Services will conclude with Gaetano being laid to rest at the mausoleum in Woodlawn Cemetery. To leave an online condolence, please visit www.ruggieromh.com.

Gaetano Iantosca of Malden, formerly of East Boston, passed away on December 21.

The proprietor of Logan Glass Company in East Boston, he was the devoted father of Philip, Christina, Gaetano and Danielle; dear brother of Mario, Carlo, Hugo and the late Maria, Erminio and Bruno and also survived by his loving grandchildren, nieces and nephews.

Family and friends will honor Gaetano's life by gathering at the Ruggiero Family Memorial Home, 971 Saratoga St. (Orient Heights) East Boston, today, Wednesday, December 28 from 4 to 7 p.m. and again on Thursday

Sumner Tunnel open this holiday weekend

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) is announcing the Sumner Tunnel will be open during the weekend of Friday, December 30, to accommodate the expected high volume of holiday vehicular traffic. Scheduled weekend closures as part of Phase 1 of the Sumner Tunnel Restoration Project will resume during the weekend of Friday, January 6. Phase 1 of the Sumner Tunnel Restoration Project work requires scheduled weekend closures of the Sumner Tunnel for 36 weekends between June 2022 and May 2023, (excluding holiday weekends.) To sign up for project updates, email alerts, and the latest information on the Sumner Tunnel project so that you can stay up to date as the project unfolds: Sign up for project updates. For more information on traffic conditions, travelers are also encouraged to: · Dial 511 and select a route to hear real-time conditions. · Visit www.mass511.com, a website which provides real-time traffic and incident advisory information and allows users to subscribe to text and email alerts for traffic conditions. · Follow MassDOT on Twitter @MassDOT to receive regular updates on road and traffic conditions. · Download MassDOT's GoTime mobile app and view real-time traffic conditions before setting out on the road.

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NEWS FROM AROUND THE REGION

AMBROSINO NAMED ADMINISTRATOR FOR COURT

CHELSEA - City Manager Thomas Ambrosino has been selected as the next Court Administrator of the Trial Court in Massachusetts by the justices of the Supreme Judicial Court.

Ambrosino also served as mayor in Revere for over a decade, first defeating four-term Mayor Robert Haas in 1999.

In 2012, Ambrosino was hired as the executive director of the Supreme Judicial Court, and in 2015, he was selected by the Chelsea City Council to replace Jay Ash as City Manager.

“We are so pleased to appoint Tom Ambrosino as Court Administrator,” said Supreme Judicial Court Chief Justice Kimberly Budd. “Tom is an experienced leader who has managed public sector entities with vision, professionalism, and compassion. We are excited that he will bring his many talents to the court system.”

Ambrosino expressed his love for the city of Chelsea, and said that his time as City Manager was nearing an end, adding he expected to retire at the end of 2023.

“This has nothing to do with the city of Chelsea,” he said. “I love the community and the time I have spent here.”

However, Ambrosino said the court administrator position was one he was familiar with from his time with the Supreme Judicial Court and one he had an active interest in.

In addition to his experience in legal and court settings, Ambrosino said he hopes he can bring the leadership skills he has honed over the last seven years in Chelsea to his new position.

Ambrosino will begin his new position on Jan. 30 of next year, where he will succeed John Bello, who will leave the position at the end of the year.

“During the time that I worked at the SJC, one of my roles was to assist the Chief Justice in helping to onboard the inaugural Court Administrator, and I saw what a significant impact the position has,” said Ambrosino. “I now look forward to working with Chief Justice Locke and having the opportunity to advance the courts’ efforts to deliver justice with dignity and speed.”

Locke said that he is confident that together, he and Ambrosino will continue to grow the capabilities of the Trial Court and build upon recent successes in using technologies and improving operations.

Ambrosino said some of the accomplishments he is proudest of during his time in Chelsea include how the city reacted and mobilized in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic, a focus on development in the city, especially downtown, the city’s relationship with the school department. He noted that he is proud of the strong relationship he has with current Superintendent of Schools Dr. Almi Abeyta.

Court Administrator co-leads the Trial Court, the largest component of the Massachusetts Judicial Branch with seven court departments and over 6,000 employees, across 94 courthouses throughout the Commonwealth. The position of Court Administrator for the Massachusetts Trial Court was created by court management legislation enacted in 2011.

Working together with the Chief Justice of the Trial Court, the Court Administrator is responsible for shaping administrative functions that support the Trial Court’s delivery of justice to the people of Massachusetts. Duties include budget preparation and oversight, labor relations, information technology, capital projects, security, and personnel policy.

Ambrosino said it is up to the City Council to begin the process of finding a new City Manager, and he expected that process to get underway in early January.

The past year has also seen several major departures in the city. In the fall, Council President Roy Avellaneda stepped down from the council. The year also saw long-time Police Chief Brian Kyes appointed as the US Marshal from Massachusetts, and long-time clerk to the City Council Paul Casino announce his pending retirement at the end of the year.

LOCAL RESIDENTS IN MOVIE

EVERETT - Phunk Phenomenon dance choreographer and instructor Devin Woolridge and teenage dancer Maya Sutton will appear in the new Whitney Houston movie, “I Wanna Dance With Somebody,” which hits theaters nationwide this Dec. 23.

The Phunk Phenomenon Dance Complex has a studio in Everett and is owned by former New England Patriots cheerleader Reia Briggs-Connor, whose husband Rick Connor, is an Everett Police officer.

At the popular studio this week, the excitement was brewing for the premiere of the movie about Houston, one of the greatest vocalists of all time.

“It’s awesome to have two people from our studio in this movie,” said Briggs-Connor. “Devin is an amazing choreographer and performer, and Maya is a tremendously talented dancer for L’il Phunk. We are so excited that Devin and Maya have this incredible opportunity to be featured in a major motion picture. I can’t wait to see them on screen.”

Woolridge, 37, will appear in the movie as a back-up dancer to singer and songwriter Bobby Brown, who is being portrayed by Ashton Sanders. Sutton, a 13-year-old, eighth-grade student, will appear as a back-up dancer to Whitney Houston, who is being portrayed in the movie by Naomi Ackie.

Woolridge is an international award-winning dancer and choreographer who holds a degree in Fashion Design and

Merchandising from Fisher College.

Woolridge previously appeared in the movie, “Ghostbusters 2,” and performed with Phunk on the TV reality show, “America’s Best Dance Crew.” He also performed in Hip Hop International and was featured in a videogame, “Dance Central,” for Xbox 360.

Woolridge is especially excited about his role in the Whitney Houston movie because his mother, Robin Woolridge, was a huge fan of the best-selling musical artist.

“My mother was the biggest fan of Whitney Houston,” said Woolridge. “She was a singer and used to perform Whitney Houston songs, and I became familiar with her music. It’s really heartwarming to see Naomi Ackie act as Whitney and hear her sing these songs that my mother used to play all the time.”

Woolridge said his scene in the movie was filmed last year at the Wang Theatre in Boston.

“The set was made to look like the Soul Train Music Awards,” related Woolridge. “It took two days of rehearsals for the choreography, which consisted of old-school dance moves.”

Woolridge was humbled by being selected for a role in the movie. Hundreds of dancers auditioned for the role.

“I was glad I was picked for the movie because there are so many talented dancers in Boston,” said Woolridge, who will be heading to theater Friday to view the movie.

Maya Sutton, daughter of Gregory Sutton and Cathy Sutton, has been a hip-hop dancer at Phunk Phenomenon for four years. She has performed for Lil Phunk at Boston Celtics home games in front of 19,000 fans at TD Garden. Her brother, Isaiah, 15, is a current dancer at Phunk. An older sister, Jada, is a former dancer at Phunk.

In the movie, Maya is one of three dancers backing up Naomi Ackie to the song, “I’m Every Woman.” The concert scene was filmed in November (2021) at the House of Blues in Boston.

“It’s really exciting to be in the movie,” said Maya. “The whole process was a great experience. Everyone was so nice when we were filming our scene.”

Maya said she is thankful to Briggs-Connor and her staff for developing her dancing skills and being an inspiration in her life.

“I just want people to know what a great person Reia is, and she really loves what she does,” said Sutton. “She is such a great influence to all of her students.”

Cathy Sutton also expressed her gratitude to Phunk for setting the foundation to her daughter being selected among hundreds of dancers for a role in the movie.

“It’s very, very exciting,” said Cathy. “We didn’t expect it. It was an amazing opportunity and we’re so proud of her. We’re so thankful to Phunk for giving

WINTHROP LODGE OF ELKS HOST CHRISTMAS PARTY FOR THE KIDS



Children of the Winthrop Elks members gear up for present time at the Winthrop Lodge of Elks Christmas Party and Santa has a list of all the names.

her this opportunity. The actress, Naomi Ackie, who plays Whitney, was super nice. It was just a really cool experience for Maya and the other girls to go through hair and makeup, then actually be filmed for the movie, and see how the whole movie scene takes place.”

CITY OFFICIALS HOLD OPIOD HOTLINE

REVERE - The city and school department held an online forum on fentanyl and opioid use Monday night, spurred in part by the discovery of a small baggie of powdered drugs at Revere High School earlier this month.

Initial test results showed the powder to contain MDMA and ketamine, and the Revere Police Department is awaiting state lab test results to determine if there was fentanyl in the mix of drugs.

During the forum, several local and state experts discussed the statistics for fentanyl and opioid use by young people, and discussed ways to talk about drugs with young people and help prevent overdose deaths.

“I did speak with the (police) chief again today, and he said the tests are still not back from the state lab,” said Superintendent of Schools Dr. Dianne Kelly. “He said it could take several months, as the state lab is backed up with testing demands. As students and parents know, we did work with local law enforcement to have the drug dogs and the firearm dogs do a sweep of the school, just to see where we are, and that happened last Thursday.”

While no drugs were discovered, Kelly said there were a few areas of concern where the dogs caught the scent of marijuana in a locker or backpack. She said those concerns would be addressed with the individual students and their families.

Revere High Principal Chris Bowen said the incident does provide an opportunity for the schools and community to collaborate to help make the high school a better place.

“This was a disturbing and unsettling discovery for all of us involved, and I hope that we can use that to launch some great collaboration between the high school administration, family, students,

families, and the broader Revere community,” said Bowen.

Opioid-related deaths in Massachusetts have risen from an average of about 500 to 600 annually a decade ago, to over 2,000 per year in recent years, according to Dr. Alexander Walley, an internist and addiction specialist at Boston Medical Center.

“What drove that surge was fentanyl being introduced into the heroin supply, primarily,” said Walley.

While the majority of opioid-related deaths are among people over the age of 25, Walley noted that those under the age of 25 account for 1 percent of all deaths in the state, but 5 percent of opioid overdoses.

“Young people are overrepresented, which is an important reason for us to think about overdose prevention in young people,” Walley said.

While overall drug use has remained fairly consistent for people aged 14-18 over the past decade, Walley said the number of fentanyl overdose deaths has surged.

“It really points to concerns of the toxic drug supply,” he said.

While fentanyl is most prevalent in heroin, there has also been a surge in deadly counterfeit pills cut with fentanyl and other substances that have helped fuel overdose deaths.

Dr. Sarah Bagley said when she talks to youth about drug use, she typically asks them why they turn to drugs. While peer pressure remains a top concern, she said that more recently, there has been an uptick in young people who state they use drugs to help deal with depression or anxiety.

“I also hear a lot about isolation or boredom, especially during Covid, that was so common,” said Bagley.

A high percentage of youth who turn to drugs or overdose also have a history of mental health issues, said Bagley.

“It’s really clear from the data that there are a lot of opportunities available for us to provide more overdose education, distribute more naloxone, and be able to train people on how to respond when there is an overdose,” said Bagley.

Statistics show that over 60 percent of overdoses for young people happen in their own homes and with someone nearby. Nearly 70 per-

cent of those overdoses have no response from someone who is nearby, Bagley said.

Response strategies for youth are focused on strategies of detection, prevention, and empowerment, according to Traci Green, an epidemiologist and professor at Brandeis University.

In addition to making sure people have and know how to use naloxone, Green said it’s also important for there to be access to fentanyl test strips, which can help drug users determine if there is fentanyl present in drugs.

Prevention strategies include regular medical check ups, youth having a confidential person they can talk to, and empowerment strategies can include having a safety plan in place that includes hydration and having someone available to check in on someone using drugs.

FREEZIN’ FOR A PLUNGE

LYNN - The Sonia and Capano families have chosen Camp Fire North Shore as this year’s Freezin’ for a Reason beneficiary.

Camp Fire, which is led by executive director Laurie Hamill, will receive all net proceeds from the annual plunge on January 1, 2023, at 12 p.m. at the Nahant Coast Guard Station.

“We are so grateful that we were chosen this year as their beneficiary,” said Hamill. “The work we do is so important in the community, and we cannot do it without the support and donations from our community partners. We are so grateful to the Capano and Sonia families.”

Attorney Mario Capano noted that it was George Sonia who started the “jumping-into-the-water” tradition on New Year’s Day 14 years ago.

“This is our seventh year doing it to raise funds for local charities,” said Capano. “We’re glad to be doing it this year for Camp Fire. Laurie is a hard worker who does tremendous work for the children in the city and the North Shore. It’s an outstanding charity that we’re helping out.”

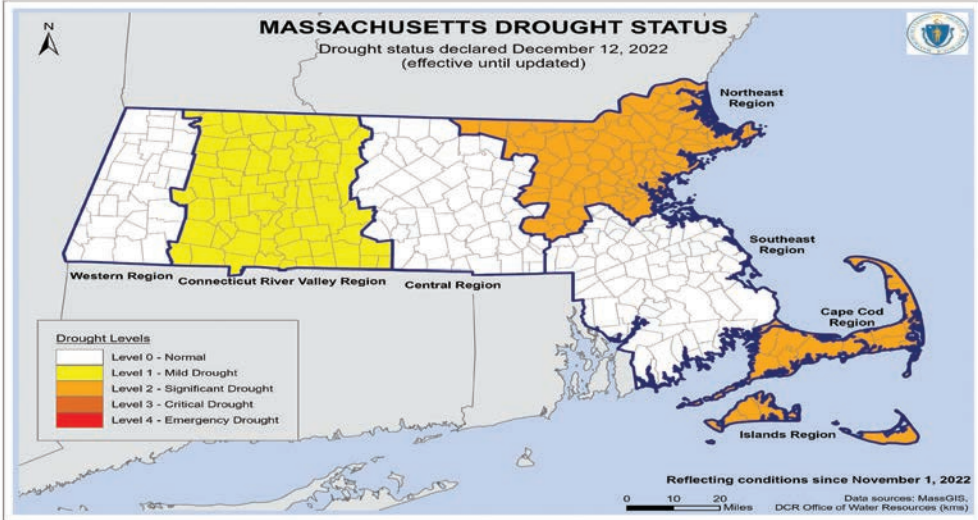
Following the plunge, there will be a fundraiser at 2 p.m. at Rolly’s Tavern. All raffle donations, along with a portion of

Drought persists in several regions

While some parts of Massachusetts experienced minor improvements through the month of November, several regions within the state continue to be impacted by long-term drought conditions, and today Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) Secretary Beth Card announced the following drought declarations: the Northeast and Cape Cod Regions have been downgraded and will join the Islands Region at Level 2-Significant Drought, the Connecticut River Valley Region will remain at Level 1-Mild Drought, and the Western, Central, and Southeast Regions will remain at Level 0-Normal Conditions. Recent rain and snow events in the past few days offer potential improvements, particularly in the Northeast Region of the state; however, precipitation will need to continue in order to make a difference. As outlined in the Massachusetts Drought Management Plan, a Level 1-Mild Drought warrants detailed monitoring of drought conditions, close coordination among state and federal agencies, and technical outreach and assistance to the affected municipalities. Additionally, a Level 2-Significant Drought calls for the con-

vening of an interagency mission group, which is already meeting, to more closely coordinate on drought assessments, impacts, and responses within state government. “Even though the weather is getting colder and wetter, we can’t lose sight of the fact that several regions within Massachusetts continue to be impacted by drought conditions,” said Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Beth Card. “It is important that everyone, especially those living and working in the Northeast, Cape Cod, and Islands Regions, continue to practice water conservation in order to ensure that our water resources fully rebound.” This declarations are the result of recommendations made by the state’s Drought Management Task Force, which is composed of state and federal officials, and other entities. The taskforce will continue to meet until water levels return to normal in all affected regions of the state. The task force noted that the Commonwealth experienced below-normal precipitation during the month of November, with departures ranging from 0 to 3 inches below normal, with the northeastern area ranging

2 to 3 inches below normal. Additionally, normal conditions in several regions of the state for this time of year have historically been even colder and wetter than what is currently being experienced. Below are recommendations for communities and individuals living and working within a Level 2 – Significant Drought region and a Level 1 – Mild Drought region, including those utilizing a private well. Residents and businesses are also asked to check with their local water system in case more stringent watering restrictions are in place. For Regions in Level 2 – Significant Drought Residents and Businesses: 1. Minimize overall water use; and, 2. Follow local water use restrictions. Immediate Steps for Communities: 3. Limit washing of hard surfaces (sidewalks, patios, driveways, siding); personal vehicle or boat washing; and, 4. Establish water-use reduction targets for all water users and identify top water users and conduct targeted outreach to help curb their use. Short- and Medium-Term Steps for Communities:



5. Establish a year-round water conservation program that includes public education and communication;
 6. Provide timely information to local residents and businesses;
 7. Implement or establish drought surcharge or seasonal water rates;
 8. Check emergency inter-connections for water supply; and,
 9. Develop or refine your local drought management plan using guidance outlined in the state Drought Management Plan.
- For Region in Level 1 - Mild Drought Residents and Businesses:
10. Toilets, faucets, and showers are more than 60% of indoor use. Make sure yours are WaterSense efficient;
- Short- and Medium-Term Steps for Communities:

11. Establish a year-round water conservation program that includes public education and communication;
 12. Provide timely information to local residents and businesses;
 13. Check emergency inter-connections for water supply; and,
 14. Develop a local drought management plan.
- Furthermore, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) will continue to provide technical assistance to communities on managing systems, including assistance on use of emergency connections and water supplies.
- “Despite the fact that significant rain has fallen so far in December, droughts reflect deficits that build up over time and it will take time for water levels in some parts of the Commonwealth to return

to normal,” said MassDEP Commissioner Martin Suuberg. “We continue to urge residents to follow the water-use recommendations of their local water supplier to help protect their water resources for the future.” It is important to note that the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) water supply system is not experiencing drought conditions, as defined within its individual plan. Private wells, local streams, wetlands, vernal pools, and other water-dependent habitats located within MWRA-serviced areas are being impacted by drought conditions, while water quality in ponds can deteriorate due to lowering of levels and stagnation. The Drought Management Task Force will meet again on Monday, January 9, 2023, at 12:30PM.

Region // CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

food and drink sales that Rolly’s generously donates, will go directly to Camp Fire North Shore. Camp Fire North Shore is a non-profit youth organization serving children and families across the North Shore. They are a co-ed organization whose mission is to provide safe and inclusive out of school time programming that empowers youth to thrive and become caring and confident leaders. They serve over 700 children throughout the year by offering a variety of programming including, State Licensed After School Programs, 21st Century Community Learning Centers, a homeschool program, Teens in Action, and a 10 week summer day camp for kids ages 5-13. Since its inception “Freezin for a Reason” has raised over \$120,000 for several “reasons”, including donating a handicap golf cart to Gannon golf course, helping Lynn Special Needs Camp get a splash pad, Homes for our Troops, the Michele Durgin Scholarship Fund, the Kelly Martin Autism Fund, Camp Rotary of Lynn, and Rally for Ricky Fund for West Syndrome.

OFFICIALS MAINTAIN UNIFORM TAX RATE

WINTHROP - As has been the case in past years, the Town Council

voted to accept a uniform tax rate for residential and commercial property Tuesday night. With the uniform rate, Interim Assessor Patrick Harring said the tax rate for Fiscal Year 2023 should come in at \$10.70 per \$1,000 of valuation. The average tax bill would go up about 2.25 percent, or a little over \$172 per year for a homeowner with a single-family house assessed at just over \$624,000. “The average single-family home in Fiscal Year ‘22 was \$554,013, and that increased by about 12.8 percent,” said Harring. “The average single-family bill last year was \$6,515.19. With the estimated tax rate that we are proposing tonight, that single-family tax bill would rise to \$6,687.30.” The average assessed value for a commercial or industrial property in the town for FY23 stands just short of \$820,000, an increase of 16 percent over FY22, according to Harring. The tax bill on that assessed value would be \$8,667, he said, an increase of around 6 percent. This year, there were 267 residential properties, 21 commercial properties, and 191 personal properties that contributed to new growth. “New growth is utilized in calculating the levy from year to year, the amount to run the town,” said Harring. “As you know, the increase of the levy is 2 1/2 per-

cent plus the amount of growth. So the growth is an important amount that we calculate, and it’s kind of average for this year, it’s contributed \$236,683.” Harring said that there is not enough commercial development in the town to justify shifting a heavier burden of the tax rate on to commercial property owners wouldn’t make much sense, since less than 7 percent of the town’s property is commercial, and over 93 percent is residential property. Legally, municipalities can vote to shift the tax burden onto commercial property by up to 150 percent. According to the assessor’s office, that maximum shift would result in only a 3 percent decrease in the tax bill for residential property owners, while commercial tax bills would increase by about 50 percent. “The law does allow you to shift more on commercial, as high as 50 percent,” said Harring. “The history of the differential tax rate over the years, Winthrop has historically maintained a single tax rate. Shifting the rate on to the commercial, industrial personal property would create a greater tax burden on those properties while the residential properties would only benefit from a small savings, mainly because Winthrop is comprised of residential property at 93.8 percent.”



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Orient Heights residents dissatisfied with zoning recommendations

By Michael Coughlin Jr.

As the start of a new year rapidly approaches, the Boston Planning and Development Agency’s (BPDA) process to make zoning changes for East Boston continues to move forward – however, it is doing so with some backlash – most of which comes from residents of Orient Heights.

Back on Monday, Nov. 28, over 200 Orient Heights residents convened at the Madonna Shrine Function Room to discuss and voice their displeasure regarding the BPDA’s plan to turn zoning in the neighborhood on its head.

Orient Heights resident John Casamassima highlighted the proposed plans to those in attendance and got a good sense of the overall sentiment among attendees concerning the zoning changes.

The BPDA’s proposed zoning updates, initially revealed back in October, would focus on the dimensions of the building itself rather than its use, such as a one or three-family home like zoning is now.

On the surface, a zoning process that looks at the actual dimensions of the building seems to make sense. However, to residents in Orient Heights, it could cause many problems.

One of the main problems residents have with the plan is that they feel it would encourage developers to come in and essen-

tially squeeze out one and two-family homes.

“A lot of us are afraid that the single and two-family homes here in Orient Heights would easily be torn down and turned into six or seven-family homes. Basically, this plan is really incentivizing developers to do that as it currently stands,” said Casamassima.

Another issue residents have with the proposed zoning changes is the impact on density it would have on the neighborhood. This is especially important considering the impending impact from the influx of units being introduced at Suffolk Downs.

“It just doesn’t seem right that we are giving 10,000 units at Suffolk Downs, and they are asking for more when places like Back Bay and Beacon Hill are not building any affordable units or any units,” said Casamassima.

“Why should East Boston continue to have to give – let West Roxbury and let Hyde Park go build 10,000 units, and then we can talk about how much more East Boston has to do.”

While those residents in attendance could voice their frustrations with the BPDA’s plan to elected officials, such as City Councilors Michael Flaherty and Gabriela Coletta, who were present at the meeting, they could not do so with BPDA officials themselves.

The BPDA was not represented at the Nov. 28



Boston City Councilor Gabriela Coletta answers questions from the over 200 Orient Heights residents that convened at the Madonna Shrine Function Room to discuss and voice their displeasure regarding the BPDA’s plan to turn zoning in the neighborhood on its head.

meeting due to an incident of “threatening behavior” toward a BPDA staff member and their family at a community engagement event on Nov. 15.

The incident forced the agency to pause all meetings while they drew up a code of conduct for future meetings, which explains the BPDA’s absence.

Due to the pause, Britany Comak, the BPDA’s Assistant Director of Communications, explained that the agency hopes to reschedule postponed visits to neighborhood associations and more in January.

Casamassima described that many residents in attendance did not know about the proposed changes that could be coming their way. He alluded to the barrier Zoom meetings create for those who might not know how to

use the program and some residents not being on the BPDA mailing list.

“I would be surprised if more than five percent of the people in that room had even heard of this plan before,” said Casamassima.

As for what is next – upon completing their remaining community engagement commitments, the BPDA will present revisions and updates to the public regarding their plans at a date expected in February.

Even with impending revisions, it is clear that Orient Heights residents will not let these plans come to pass without their voices being heard.

“I think they’re just beginning up here. Maybe this plan can go forward with Jeffries Point and Eagle Hill if they support it, but I think we are too



Councilor Erin Murphy receives hand-delivered letters from volunteers.

far apart up here between what I am hearing they are willing to consider for changes and what the neighborhood actually wants,” said Casamassima.

Wu on hand to swear in the 2022 - 2023 Mayor’s Youth Council

Mayor Michelle Wu recently joined the Department of Youth Engagement and Employment to swear in the 2022 - 2023 Mayor’s Youth Council (MYC). These 86 high school students work to give teens a voice in City government by advising the Mayor and her Cabinet on issues pertinent to their peers. This is the most diverse Youth Council in the program’s history and the most proportional in representing the number of youth in each Boston neighborhood.

“This year, the Mayor’s Youth Council received the most applications in its history, demonstrating the energy and activism of our City’s young people,” said Mayor Michelle Wu. “The 86 selected members

represent every neighborhood and community across our city, and I’m excited to work with them on priorities and issues most important to our next generation of leaders.”

The Mayor’s Youth Council is a model of youth inclusion in government and civic engagement. As the first Mayor’s Youth Council in the nation, it has spurred cities across the nation, and even internationally, to examine how they include youth in local government.

Members, or Ambassadors, of the MYC serve for one term and act as representatives for all young people who reside in Boston. Students were selected following an extensive application and interview process. This



Mayor Michelle Wu with the 2022 - 2023 Mayor’s Youth Council.

year, the Youth Council accepted 100 percent of returning members who re-applied, and saw a record-breaking number of more than 300 applicants. The number of youth representing neighborhoods is based on census data that indicates where young people live. MYC is a year-round commitment, and members devote 10 to 15 hours a month to meetings, events, projects, and outreach.

“It brings me sincere joy to know that we are building the leaders of tomorrow,” said José Massó, Chief of Human Services. “These students are passionate about the issues facing our city and are dedicated to working with city departments to find creative solutions.”

MYC ambassadors form issue-based sub-

committees designed by input from youth and are reflective of the overall structure of Mayor Wu’s Cabinet. The current committees include Arts & Culture, Community Engagement & Safety, Economic Opportunity & Inclusion, Education, Environment Energy & Open Space, Public Health, Urban Planning and Youth Lead the Change. Twenty-eight of the members are elected by their peers to serve as Directors and Liaisons to lead the Youth Council’s committees and neighborhood working groups.

“I am honored and thankful for this opportunity to spearhead change in my community,” said Esther Ajibola, 18, who is a senior at Boston Latin Academy and a Roslindale resident. Ajibola is begin-

ning their third year on the Mayor’s Youth Council and is a co-leader of the Environment, Energy and Open Space Committee.

“It was really exciting to be at the swearing-in ceremony and see the Mayor,” said Lucas Golding, a 15-year-old Jamaica Plain resident and sophomore who is new to the Council this year. “I’m on the Environment and Open Space Committee, and I think it’s really cool that we have an opportunity as youth to do something about problems that matter.”

In their Committees and Neighborhood Working Groups, ambassadors work to bridge the gap between the needs of young people in communities and resources available in the city with an array of projects. Historical-

ly, members of the MYC have worked on a variety of issues related to public safety, participatory budgeting, and civic engagement. Through the City’s \$1 million per year Youth Lead the Change program, young people run a city-wide participatory budgeting process, and direct the implementation of winning projects. Recent projects include a “Future Media Center” in the BCYF Tobin Community Center, and the expansion of urban farms through the “Eat Local” project with GrowBoston. Currently, YLC Committee members are planning the implementation of last year’s three winning projects: “Addressing Youth Homelessness”, “Basketball Court Redesign” and “Heated Bus Stops with Charging.”

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