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WELCOME TO THE 2022 BCYF SPELLING BEE

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THE BOSTON CENTERS FOR YOUTH AND FAMILIES SPELLING BEE

Last week, schools from across the city of Boston sent grades 3-8 representatives to the city-wide spelling bee. The Guild Elementary School in Orient Heights, sent 5th grader, Maria Camilla Rojas Quiceno (number 7). Maria Camilla won the Guild Spelling Bee to qualify, beating all of her classmates and 10 schoolmates from across the grades. Maria Camilla competed for a chance to be the Boston representative in the famous Washington DC Scripps's National Spelling Bee. She advanced to the third round of the Bee before being eliminated, making her family, her school, and her East Boston community proud.



Suffolk Downs updates plans to be an outdoor entertainment venue

By John Lynds

At a recent community meeting HYM's Andrew Townsend gave the community a bit more information on HYM's plans for turning a portion of Suffolk Downs into an outdoor entertainment venue through 2025.

With construction set to begin on the Beachmont Revere side of the Suffolk Downs mixed use development project, HYM filed a Notice of Intent (NOI) recently with the Boston Conservation Commission (BCC) of their plans to create an interim outdoor entertainment venue, associated infrastructure, and other related site improvements.

The entire outdoor venue will be located in a portion of the existing racetrack infield area and will consist of a grassed

area with temporary stage, restrooms, and vendor booths to remain in place until late 2025.

"We've partnered with 'The Bowery Presents', which is a first class promoter, on the venue," said Townsend. "We see this venue as continuing the long tradition of arts or music and entertainment on the site."

Over the historic span of the thoroughbred racetrack, Suffolk Downs hosted big name bands and events including The Beatles in 1966 and Cirque du Soleil.

"The Bowery Presents is a leading East Coast promoter," said Townsend. "They manage 18 indoor and outdoor venues in the Northeast primarily in New York City, Boston and Philadelphia. Locally

See SUFFOLK DOWNS Page 3

Fire tears through triple decker on Meridian Street

By John Lynds

Boston Fire Department investigators are still looking into the cause of an early morning fire that destroyed two floors of a triple decker on Meridian Street Tuesday.

Firefighters battled the blaze at 363 Meridian St.

for over two hours in frigid temperatures Tuesday morning.

Boston Fire got the call for a fire at 12:30 am and when firefighters arrived flames were already shooting out of the roof of the building.

See FIRE Page 2



Firefighters battle an early morning blaze Tuesday on Meridian Street. The fire displaced 19 residents and was the second large fire in East Boston this year.

Sen. Edwards kicks off reelection campaign for 3rd Suffolk seat

By John Lynds

"I swear I'm not a serial candidate," Senator Lydia Edwards joked Monday night at her campaign kickoff for the 3rd Suffolk State Senate seat.

Edwards, who won the special election for the vacant state senate seat back in January, needs to run for reelection during the

state's primary and general elections this November.

Edwards's joke poked fun at the fact that she ran and won her reelection to the Boston City Council in November during Boston's municipal elections, then ran for senate in the winter during a special election and is now running again to keep her

senate seat.

"Right now my district is the 1st Suffolk & Middlesex, which includes East Boston, Beacon Hill, the North End, Chinatown, parts of the South End, Winthrop, Revere and Cambridgeport," said Edwards. "However, this seat has been redistricted into the 3rd Suffolk and I am already up for reelection."

tion."

Edwards explained that the redistricted seat includes all the parts of the 1st Suffolk & Middlesex except for Cambridgeport. However, Edwards will pick up all of the Back Bay.

"So Back was included and Cambridgeport was excluded during redistricting," she explained.

Edwards, who was sworn into the senate in January, has kept her city council seat but will officially resign on April 30th.

"I'll be your full time state senator at that time," Edwards told guests. "It's coming right around budget time. So what that means for us and my district is we're looking at all sorts of ways to have an equitable recovery (from the pandemic) by looking at how we see the economy differently in each of the cities and towns."

Edwards said this includes looking to make the Suffolk Downs project

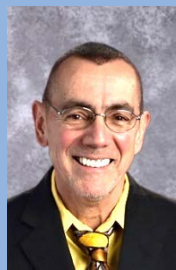
See EDWARDS Page 7



Sen. Lydia Edwards kicked off her reelection campaign Monday at Spinelli's in East Boston. From left, Andrea Campbell, Rep. Adrian Madaro, Mayor Michelle Wu, Sen. Edwards, Rep. Jessica Giannino, City Councilor Kenzie Bok, and Rep. Jeff Turco.

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TOXIC MASCULINITY AT THE OSCARS

When we first heard the joke by Chris Rock that was directed at Jada Pinkett-Smith at the Oscars, we didn’t get it. It was not until Will Smith stepped up to smack Rock that we grabbed our laptop to do a Google search for “G.I. Jane” and “Jada Pinkett-Smith” to figure out what the incident was all about.

We’ve admired Chris Rock and Will Smith throughout their careers, both on and off the stage.

But the behavior exhibited by both of them at Sunday’s Oscars show was inexcusable.

Chris Rock’s joke (which wasn’t even funny) was obnoxious, in bad taste, and hurtful. Mocking a person with a disease (Ms. Pinkett-Smith suffers from alopecia) or a disability never is appropriate in any setting.

This sort of bullying behavior is a characteristic of many men. Recall for example, when our former president mimicked with his body language a New York Times reporter who has a physical disability.

Similarly, Will Smith’s subsequent assault and battery upon Rock exemplified another variation of a uniquely-male noxious attitude in which men justify the use of their fists (or guns) either to salve their bruised egos or to get what they want by brute force (e.g., Vladimir Putin).

We have read in various media that some have attempted to justify Smith’s criminal behavior on the grounds that he was defending his wife’s honor. However, women are more than capable of taking care of themselves. They don’t need a man to do so. That attitude prevails only in societies where women are treated like second-class citizens.

In our view, both Chris Rock and Will Smith should be banned from the Oscars until further notice. Their toxic masculinity has no place anywhere in our society, but especially on a stage as big as the Oscars.

RECALLING THE APRIL FOOL’S DAY BLIZZARD OF 1997

This Friday, April 1, will mark the 25th anniversary of the great April Fool’s Day blizzard of 1997.

As often is the case when a major storm strikes, the forecasters had not predicted the extreme severity of the storm.

We recall going to bed that night of March 31 and preparing to go to work the next day, only to wake up to discover that Mother Nature had dumped more than two feet (25.4 inches was the official total at Logan Airport) of heavy, wet snow on our area, making it the fourth-largest snowstorm in Boston history, exceeded only by the 27.5 inches in the President’s Day blizzard of 2003; the 27.1 inches in the famous Blizzard of ’78; and the 26.3 inches in the blizzard of February, 1969.

The storm was the biggest on record in the month of April and made April 1997 Boston’s snowiest April ever, nearly doubling the previous record of 13.3 inches. It also set a record for Boston’s greatest 24-hour snowfall in April.

We vividly recall waking up to the wonder of that morning. “Are we still dreaming?” was our first thought when we opened our front door, only to be greeted by a huge drift of snow that had been driven by winds that reached 70-90 miles per hour in many areas.

Ironically, that winter had been fairly uneventful (there had been only 26 inches of snow in total that winter season).

Although the storm essentially paralyzed the Boston area for that entire day, it was not a particularly dangerous storm. We recall a lot of downed tree limbs that were laden with the heavy, wet snow, which in turn brought down power lines in some places. The only deaths were the result of heart attacks by persons trying to shovel the heavy snow. In addition, there was no coastal flooding.

Our overall memory of the blizzard is the picture in our mind’s eye of a Winter Wonderland amidst temperatures that reached the 50s by mid-day.

It was a joyful event, an unexpected day off from work (and back then, the internet was still barely a thing, so no one worked remotely). We took our young children sledding and walked around the neighborhood with our Golden Retriever, Jake, who loved the snow.

Yes, it was a ferocious, record-breaking storm. But for us, we always will have only warm memories of the April Fool’s Day Blizzard of 1997, a particular point in time when we, and our now-adult children, were 25 years younger.



Forum

GUEST OP-ED

Take It From a BPS Mom: Receivership is Not the Solution.

By Tania Del Rio

The status quo is not working in our Boston Public Schools, but receivership is not the pathway to delivering a quality education for all of Boston’s children. I applaud Mayor Wu, Councilor Mejía, and BPS families for raising their voices against this top-down takeover. As a candidate for Boston City Council District 1 and a BPS mom, I oppose receivership alongside all the other brave voices calling for a different, more democratic plan of action.

BPS is a large and complex system. The students, staff, teachers, and families that I speak with share my concern that the turnover of leadership in BPS has had significant consequences in the classroom. It makes it challenging to create stable school cultures and come together to form a collective vision. Too many creative solutions are stifled in the chaos that naturally comes with leadership transitions. A state takeover would only add to that instability.

We must also center our next generation in this discussion and realize that our BPS student population has starkly different needs than students in the rest of the Commonwealth. 71% of students are low-income, 48% of our BPS students do not speak English as a first language, and 21.9% of students have disabilities, and all of these rates are significantly higher



Tania Del Rio with her family.

than state averages. The District is also suffering from historic disinvestment – especially when it comes to its crumbling facilities – and an outdated, inefficient, and inequitable transportation system. The City should welcome support from the Commonwealth in these specific aspects – both financial and technical – but instead, in the form of a comprehensive partnership.

The Commonwealth’s Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) has not provided any evidence that it can produce improved results after a takeover, as we have seen in Southbridge, Holyoke, and Lawrence. These school districts remain the lowest-ranking in the state, with Southbridge identified as the worst-performing and Holyoke the second worst-performing, leaving no evidence that outcomes would be better for Boston. The newly-elected mayor in Lawrence is prepared to act on a community-wide call from parents and residents to “keep control of [their own] education.”

A state takeover would also mean that the City would need to entirely rework their contract with the Boston Teachers Union, whom the district has already been disregarding during their current negotiations. BPS representatives have canceled 57% of bargaining sessions in 2022, only offering “insulting low salary increases” on top of “no proposals to improve learning conditions.”

This entire receivership situation seems like a further attempt to politicize the very real impacts that BPS’ shortcomings are having on teachers, students, and parents, pitting these groups against each other just to remove any agency they may have to make meaningful change in their school communities. Collaboration and support from the state would be much more impactful and allow Boston’s new Mayor and incoming Superintendent a fair shot at turning around the District.

Until the voices of the people who live firsthand with the chronic issues our school system faces are

leading the conversation, we will continue to spin our wheels and see our students suffer. State receivership would be a step backward, granting the power to engineer outcomes for our students to people outside of Boston with the least experience in our systems. Considering the massive wave of newly elected, inclusive leadership in our City Council and mayoral office, as well as voters’ widespread support for a fully-elected School Committee, I challenge the idea that our pathway to success is through a top-down approach like receivership. Instead of placing accountability in the hands of the few and unelected, we should lead with collaboration. As a City Councilor, I will not shy away from school issues and convene conversations with those best equipped to solve our problems – our students, teachers, and parents – about how to move our most troubled schools forward. I will support an elected school committee and promote a community-driven process of hiring a new superintendent.

Tania Del Rio is a BPS mom, Latina immigrant, East Boston resident, and proven leader in her community and our local government running for Boston City Council District 1 in the upcoming special election on May 3rd to represent East Boston, Charlestown, and the North End.

GUEST OP-ED

Ukraine refugees are coming

gee legally resides in the country of resettlement and is eligible for federally funded cash assistance for up to 8 months. Refugees are resettled in the United States by the federal government and are afforded specific refugee assistance to help them rebuild their lives in America. This federal funding is limited in both duration and amount. It is important to note that most refugees arrive with very little in terms of possessions, beside a few bags of luggage, and if they are lucky, all of their family members.

All refugees arriving in the United States are entitled to 8 months of Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) from the date of their U.S. arrival. The RCA amounts vary based on the size of the family: Single person (\$230/month), Family of 2 (\$363/Month), Family of 3 (\$485/month), Family of 4 (\$611/month), etc. If a family qualifies for Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), offered by the State Department of Health and Human Services, they will not receive RCA funds, but will immediately begin receiving TANF funds, which provide the same amounts of funds as outlined above for families (Refugee or American), yet unlike RCA, there is 5 year time limit to their receipt of funds which can be reviewed and extended depending on need. All TANF recipients must be participating in verified educational courses, volunteer placements, and/or employment searches in order to access these funds. Source, Catholic Charities

The Ukrainian people appear to be hard working people. Once they make it to America I would not be surprised if some of our

worker shortage will start to disappear. These people have nothing. If you still want a job you probably should take one and go to work.

At this point we have no choice but to help these people as the economy and infrastructure of the countries surrounding Ukraine cannot absorb them all.

Can you imagine if Russia and China combined to attack America? What if we had to run to Canada to survive? We would appreciate anything anybody would do to help us.

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.

LETTERS to the Editor

CARGO VENTURES To the Editor,

Logan Airport is growing again, very quickly. Logan, like the rest of the national airport system, seems to be making up for the huge decline in operations experienced in the past two pandemic years. Recently however flight operations at Logan have rebounded dramatically, consistently doubling month to month while passenger totals have tripled

during the same period. Air cargo volumes have also increased. Clearly, Logan Airport is rapidly recovering from the pandemic recession

The national aviation trends are similar. According to an analysis by the Adobe Digital Economy Index, which compiles data from six of the country’s top airlines, ticket sales for domestic flights in February 2022 exceeded those for the same month in pre-pandemic 2019

for the first time since the pandemic began two years ago. While the cost of jet fuel has increased because of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine it is not expected to be a significant factor in reducing flight growth predictions. For example, Cirium, an aviation data provider, states that 2.1 million domestic flights are scheduled for the peak summer vacation period between June and August this year, just marginally down from the same period

in pre-pandemic 2019.

This actual and predicted Logan growth reality ought to be a cause of concern, given the historical conflicts between East Boston and Logan Airport’s environmental impacts on the community. However, there is an intriguing source of community environmental remediation regarding the certainty of Logan Airport growth, and that is the Car-

OBITUARIES

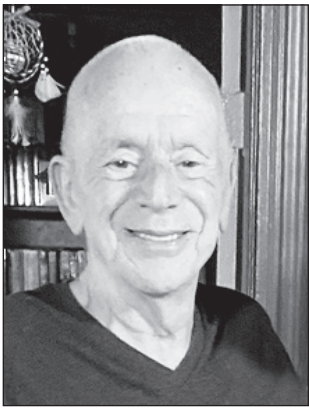
James Arsenault

Longtime Verizon telephone operator

James “Jim” M. Arsenault of East Boston passed away peacefully on Monday, March 21 at 79 years of age. James was a longtime telephone operator for Verizon.

The dear brother of Arthur Arsenault of East Boston, Yvonne Ghilardi of Florida, Debra Menard of Michigan and the late Philip, Albert and Paul Arsenault and Patricia Tinkham, he was the honorary grandpa of Aaliyah, Aliana and Austin and is also survived by many loving nieces and nephews.

Family and friends honored James’ life by gather-



ing at the Ruggiero Family Memorial Home, 971 Saratoga Street, (Orient Heights) East Boston, on Sunday, March 27. Committal services will be private.

To leave an online condolence, please visit www.ruggieromh.com

Letters // CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

go Ventures property along the Chelsea Creek which has the potential to be an effective buffer between Logan Airport ground activities and East Boston, if developed properly. This 30-acre site could absorb inevitable future increased airport commercial activities without intruding into the community due to the significant protective barrier of Route 1A.

The potential of the Cargo Ventures property to benefit East Boston would be greatly enhanced if the disused railroad parcels between Route 1A and the Chelsea Creek were developed to allow traffic associated with the commercial development to directly access the airport without affecting local streets. The traffic improvements could be accomplished with a direct connection to the Martin Coughlin Bypass Road which I developed a few years ago. This connection would also provide measurable relief from Southbound Route 1A traffic from Revere and beyond.

Furthermore, development of the railroad parcels would enhance the potential of Cargo Ventures to develop a substantial multi-faceted community environmental program involving not only the creation of direct water access to the Chelsea Creek with pedestrian and bicycle pathways but also other priorities evolving from the associated HarborKeepers community involvement process.

John Vitagliano
Former Boston Transportation Commissioner
Former Massport Board Member

WE NEED SOME SERIOUS RESILIENCY PLANNING

To the Editor,
In your March 16 piece on wind energy legislation that highlighted Blue Atlantic, a steel and aluminum fabricator in the Shipyard, there was a critical error that East Boston residents and businesses must understand. We are all proud of Rep. Madaro and his work on wind energy. We are all also proud of Blue Atlantic and our historic maritime industry. The article stated however that “As more and more waterfront parcels are zoned out of Designated Port Areas (DPA) to make way for luxury housing in Boston, Blue Atlantic General Manager Michael Julian has been trying to re-

main a viable employer in East Boston.” The luxury condos and gentrification we are all concerned about were not built on land that was zoned out of the Designated Port Area (DPA). In fact, they were built on land that was never in the DPA.

This is important since the DPA designation by the state prohibits anything from being built or improved except marine industrial facilities. It is appropriate to have this protection in the Shipyard and in the Border St North areas. But the commercial hub of our neighborhood – Central Square and Border St South – unfortunately also falls under this outdated state designation. As a result, the CDC land that should be used for affordable housing, the Liberty Plaza that needs to be maintained and improved, and the contaminated land next to the Umana School can never be cleaned up or improved unless and until the DPA designation is removed by the state from those areas.

We need some serious resiliency planning in East Boston to protect our neighborhood from ever increasing floods. We deserve a waterfront that is enjoyable, accessible, and pedestrian-friendly. We have waited far too long for City Hall to pay serious attention to our waterfront and our needs. But Mayor Wu’s waterfront planning effort cannot be realized unless, and until we first get the state to drop their 44-year-old DPA restrictions from Central Square and Border St South. Keeping the DPA at the Shipyard and Border St North area will continue to support marine industrial uses in East Boston’s waterfront. But removing the DPA from Central Square and Border St South will allow the city and all of us the opportunity to plan a better waterfront and create a safer and more dynamic East Boston for our residents, families, and businesses.

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Heath Properties
Brenda Rodriguez
Grid Management, LLC

Diane Abcunas

Chief Court Officer at
East Boston District Court

Diane M. Abcunas, 68, of Lynn died peacefully at her home on Saturday, March 26.

Born in Lynn, the daughter of Mary (Mercurio) Abcunas and the late James Abcunas, she lived in Lynn for the greater part of her life and was a graduate of St. Patrick’s School and St. Chretienne Academy in Salem. She also attended Salem State University.

Diane was the Chief Court Officer at East Boston District Court, a career she enjoyed for the past 37 years. She was well-respected by her colleagues and will be remembered for her work ethic.

Growing up, Diane helped at her family business, Bill’s Lunch, in Lynn for many years. She enjoyed yoga and running and was a proud volunteer at the Boston Marathon for over 20 years. Above all, Diane was the heart and soul of her family and her family meant the world to her. She went to her mother’s home every weekend morning and the two would venture to whatever North Shore breakfast spot her mother had decided on for that day before bringing doughnuts to her nieces and nephews and shopping at Market Basket and Marshalls.

“Auntie” never missed a family gathering or child’s sports game and she was the favorite babysitter of all her nieces and nephews.



es and nephews. Diane always put everyone else before herself, and she was happiest when giving to others.

In addition to her mother, she is survived by her brothers, Kevin Abcunas and his wife, Chasity and Billy Abcunas and his wife, Kellie; her nephew and nieces: Brian Abcunas and his wife, Colleen, Lindsay West and her husband, Derek, Stella and Addy Abcunas; her great nieces and nephews: Sam, Harry, Teddy, Mira and Brooke; as well as her three beloved cats.

Visiting hours will be held on Thursday from 4 to 7 p.m. in the Solimine Funeral Home, 426 Broadway (Rt 129), Lynn, with a funeral service beginning at 6 p.m. Relatives and friends are respectfully invited.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Boston Children’s Hospital Trust, 401 Park Drive Suite 602, Boston, MA 02215-5301.

Directions and guestbook at www.solimine.com.

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2022 March 31st 1981 & 2009

family would prevail over all else! The belief that man had, that kindness and love and all other things can work and come together. In his short dubious life he led with those ideals. As a young man he met and married his beautiful wife, Josephine Helen Cosco. Together in life the went off to have six children. Together with the same beliefs in love, happiness, kindness too circumnavigate the world. They would live, love, work, play, dream with all life obstacles and not succumb to a lesser mind. Tony and Josiphine would direct to prevalence the desire, that this man and woman can have and would change the world around them for the good. To say they’re endeavors would work for life and living for when they leave us loved ones will only have good thoughts and wishes throughout our lives.

So precious are the two that we lost; So much was given, taught, learned that we may pass on to the next generations that come. In life, we all desire for the best.

Anthony and Josiphine Giarla are the epitome integrity, perfection, love, kindness, compassion, that they always gave all of us.

We are so thankful for Tony and Josie to integrate and anticipate the outcome in life.

Godless Mom and Dad

Forever Together -Missing you two Always

Your loving and devoted son

Dennis

Wilma Short

February 10, 1938 ~ March 26, 2022

Wilma M. (Lantz) Short, 84, of Winthrop, formerly of Everett, passed away on March 26.

The beloved mother of David and his wife, Patty Short, Lynne (Short) and her husband, Ramon Alveres, Gary and his wife, Susan Short and Kevin and his wife, Sheila Short, she was the loving grandmother of 12, great grandmother of nine and great great grandmother of three. Wilma is also survived by her sister, Audrey Berardino of Everett and Roy Lantz of Sun City, CA, nieces, nephews and good friends.

Funeral from the Salvatore Rocco & Sons Funeral Home, 331 Main Street, Everett on Friday, April

1 at 9:30 a.m. followed by a Funeral Mass to be celebrated in Immaculate Conception Church, 133 Beach St., Revere at 10:30 a.m. Relatives and friends are kindly invited to attend. Visiting hours will be held at the funeral home on Thursday from 5 to 8 p.m. Complimentary valet parking Thursday at the Main Street entrance. Interment in Puritan Lawn Memorial Park Cemetery, Peabody. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to American Cancer Society, 3 Speen St., Suite 250, Framingham, MA 01701

For more information, please visit www.roccofuneralhomes.com.

Michael “Spanky” Straccia

Of Revere

Michael “Spanky” Straccia of Revere passed away on Friday, March 25.

The loving son of the late Jerry and Patricia (Hancock) Straccia, he was the dear brother of Paula Czernetsky of Everett, Ann Gayhart of Saugus, Joseph Straccia and his wife, Sandra of Nahant, Jerry Straccia and his wife, Angela and Janine Straccia, all of Revere and the beloved canine father of Benz. He is also survived by many cherished nieces and nephews.

Family and friends will honor Michael’s life by gathering at the Ruggiero Family Memorial Home, 971 Saratoga Street, (Orient Heights) East Boston, on Thursday, March 31 from 5 to 7 p.m. A prayer service will follow in our



Serenity Chapel at 7 p.m. Committal services will be private. In lieu of flowers, in honoring Michael’s love for animals and his canine companion, donations may be made to MSPCA, 350 South Huntington Avenue, Boston MA 02130. To leave an online condolence please visit www.ruggieromh.com.

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Edwards // CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

an economic center for small businesses in Eastie and Revere; creating a vibrant economic center in Revere; building more affordable housing in Boston and balancing economic development with creating strong communities; and making Winthrop's economic business center vibrant and sustainable.

"I will also be looking at how we can make transportation better and more equatable with a Blue-Red Line connector or a better and more affordable ferry service," said Edwards. "Hopefully, we'll be able to really talk about what we can do creatively with American Recovery Act funds and create infrastructure for the public good."

Edwards added that she will continue to be an advocate for environmental justice communities in the senate.

"We need to be making sure that when we think about how we build and plan for our state and cities and towns, we have a centralized definition that includes language justice, that includes racial justice, that includes health impacts," she said. "Our future is going to be green, so we need to begin that partnership with the green future of labor. I'm excited that Eastie Farms is opening a new greenhouse in East Boston. The first thing I did was invite my friends in labor because I want them to see this new green infrastructure. We invited the plumbers, who are wondering what their future is going to be. We invited the pipefitters union because we want to show them that a thermal greenhouse in East Boston is good permanent infrastructure built through union jobs. Our future is going to change and we need the skill sets to bring about that change."

During the Zoom portion of Edwards's kickoff she was joined by Assistant Speaker of the US

House, Congresswoman Katherine Clark of Revere.

"I just wanted a chance to come by and talk about Senator Edwards," said Clark. "First of all, I just moved into her district so I am thrilled not only that she's in the State Senate, but then she's my state senator. Lydia is so effective and such the right person for this time. She looks at issues you find partnership, and uses equity as her headline. And that's exactly what we need to tackle these huge issues in front of us whether it's transportation, addressing climate change, making sure healthcare is accessible and housing is for all. Lydia is so passionate and informed and really uses that base for finding great partners, keeping her community involved and using her integrity and her incredible voice to move us forward. She's really going to help us in the communities she serves, and in the Commonwealth as a whole, and will meet this time of historic challenge with historic progress."

Clark added that her and Edwards are beginning to have some of their first events together as state senator and congresswoman.

"Lydia's voice, whether it is out celebrating an investment in a new station to connect Revere to the Commuter Rail or the host of other projects that are coming that are about making sure that we are meeting this moment," said Clark. "This is our moment to keep working, making sure that people are able to thrive and that every single person can see themselves in the economy and see a place for their family to grow and succeed."

"That is what Livia does so naturally so I am just thrilled to be part of her delegation and thrilled to have her voice in the state senate for the communities that she serves."



Sen. Lydia Edwards and City Councilor Kenzie Bok.



Sen. Lydia Edwards with Revere Mayor Brian Arrigo.



Sen. Lydia Edwards spent the evening talking with supporters and political colleagues.



From left, Sheriff Steve Tompkins, City Councilor Ed Flynn, Andrea Campbell, Rep. Adrian Madaro, Mayor Michelle Wu, Sen. Edwards, Rep. Jessica Giannino, City Councilor Kenzie Bok, and Rep. Jeff Turco.



Mayor Michelle Wu addresses the crowd.



Sen. Lydia Edwards officially kicks off her reelection campaign.

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From left, Revere City Councilors Marc Silvestri and Steven Morabito, Sen. Lydia Edwards, Revere Mayor Brian Arrigo, and Revere City Councilor Patrick Keefe.



Mayor Michelle Wu, Sen. Lydia Edwards and Juan Carlos Ferrufino.

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Classico Pasta Sauce.....	2/¢4.00
Pillsbury Quick Breads	2/¢4.00
Starkist Solid White Canned Tuna.....	2/¢3.00
Motts Apple Juice 64 oz	2/¢5.00
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McCain's French Fries	2/¢5.00
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Yellow Onions 2lb bag.....	4/¢5.00

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NEWS FROM AROUND THE REGION

CHELSEA IS IN SOLID FINANCIAL SHAPE

CHELSEA - The city is still catching up on the auditing process for its finances, thanks to the pandemic, but the latest results still show Chelsea to be in solid financial shape.

Representatives from the independent auditing firm of Rosselli and Clark Associates appeared before the City Council's finance subcommittee on Wednesday, March 16 to discuss the Fiscal Year 2020 audit and financial report.

City auditor Edward Dunn noted that the city is currently in the tail end of FY22, and that the audit is from FY 20. Tony Rosselli of Roselli and Clark said that because of information that has been delayed at the state level, many audits have been delayed, but that he expected the audits for Chelsea to get back on schedule fairly quickly.

Rosselli said there are many positive economic indicators for the city in the FY20 audit, including over \$40 million in reserve funds and a high bond rating. Rosselli also discussed what an independent audit is, and what it can accomplish.

"The first thing the public is thinking when you are doing an audit is that you are going to look at everything and you are going to look at everything and you are going to find everything, that if someone took something for \$5, we're going to know where it is," said Rosselli. "That's not really what an audit is. An audit is more of a process put out ... by the Government Accounting Office in Washington."

During the process, the auditors may identify if there is anything unusual which could point to a misappropriation, but Rosselli said the auditors don't go into the process with the express purpose of finding misappropriations.

"This audit is really intended to go out to all of your bond holders," he

said. In addition, copies also go out to the federal government to make sure the city is in compliance with federal grants and to the division of local affairs at the state level.

Rosselli said the audit showed a clean opinion, showing no major qualifications or areas of concern.

The economic trends for FY20 showed about \$43 million of reserve funds in the city coffers.

"The reserve funds peaked back in 2017 at about \$45 million, and it looks like it is making its way back there, which is a great place to be for the city," said Rosselli.

The amount of money in reserve compared to the city's expenses was at 27 percent, which is almost three times the state average. Rosselli said that number puts Chelsea in a good position for its bond rating.

In addition, for the year audited, the city's expenses were \$5.5 million under budget, and its revenues exceeded expectations by \$6.2 million, creating a surplus of \$11.7 million.

"Your bond rating is a double A, which is a very good investment grade and one step below the triple A," said Rosselli, allowing the city to get good interest rates when it bonds for capital projects.

The only thing keeping the city from the highest bond rating is its demographics, especially compared to wealthier communities such as Newton and Wellesley.

The audit also showed the city is in good shape funding its pension liability, which was 76.5 percent funded in the FY20 audit, compared to the state average of 65 percent.

The audit did show that there are almost 100 smaller accounts in the city which have not been used for at least a year or two that should be closed out. The total amount in those accounts is about \$600,000.

City Manager Thomas Ambrosino said the auditor's office is in the process of going through those accounts so that the

money can be earmarked for current programs or projects in the city.

TAHILIANI CALLS FOR DIPIERRO TO STEP DOWN

EVERETT - In an unusual action, Superintendent of Everett Public Schools Priya Tahiliani used her allotted time on the School Committee agenda on to call upon Ward 3 City Councilor Anthony DiPierro "to step down" from office following the recent disclosure of racist memes that DiPierro had used on his Instagram account.

"I condemn the actions of Anthony DiPierro," she said, adding, "I am offended by the racist content." Tahiliani reminded the committee that the school budget is approved by the City Council and wondered whether the Everett Schools could be tainted in the scandal.

"We can do better and be better," she added.

School Committee-at-Large member Samantha Lambert said that the community is hurting and that they are here to represent the 7,000 students of the public schools.

Student Representative Dyna Louis said, "We are a diverse community and deserve better."

Committeeman Jason Marcus talked about his long relationship with DiPierro and his family and said, "I never saw any part of him like that," adding, "We should help him rather than beat him down."

In other matters, the committee voted to send to the Rules Committee a motion to have Louis, the student representative, be able to add her motions to the School Committee's agenda, rather than just being an observer who is only able to comment at the meeting.

"This is a phenomenal idea and I fully support the motion," committeeman Michael McLaughlin said.

This motion was first discussed late last year, but the matter was not taken up by the then-school

CELTICS, MASS. LOTTO HONOR WINTHROP'S BRENDAN EDWARD AS 'HERO AMONG US'



Massachusetts State Lottery and the Boston Celtics Honored Winthrop resident Brendan Edward as a Hero Among Us for his creative and playful fundraising efforts for children in need during the holiday season at the Boston Celtics' game against the Golden State Warriors on December 17th, 2021. For the past five years, Brendan Edward, an Air Force medic and firefighter with the Natick Fire Department, has raised funds for Boston Children's Hospital. In 2021, Edward took his fundraising efforts to the streets, dressing an elf and starting playful pillow fights with Boston locals and tourists alike in an effort to incentivize them to donate to the hospital.

Since its establishment in 1997 by the Boston Celtics, The Heroes Among Us program has recognized outstanding individuals who have made exceptional and lasting contributions to their communities. The award is presented at every Celtics home game and pays tribute to the heroic achievements of these outstanding citizens.

committee and it faded away without a resolution.

The committee as a whole echoed the support for expanding the role of Student Representative.

"We must do this properly," School Committee Millie Cardello noted, though adding, "We must act quickly."

MS-13 MEMBER SENTENCED

LYNN - An MS-13 member was sentenced yesterday in federal court in Boston for RICO conspiracy and for his participation in the July 2018 murder of a teenage boy who was stabbed at least 32 times in a public park in Lynn.

Eliseo Vaquerano Canas, a/k/a "Peligroso," 22, a Salvadorian national, was sentenced by U.S. Senior District Court Judge Mark L. Wolf to 43 years in prison and five years of supervised release. Vaquerano will be subject to deportation proceedings upon completion of his sentence. In February 2021, Vaquerano pleaded guilty to conspiracy to conduct enterprise affairs through a pattern of racketeering activity, also

known as RICO conspiracy, on behalf of the MS-13 gang. As part of his racketeering activity, Vaquerano participated in the 2018 murder of a teenager, who was murdered with extreme atrocity and cruelty, and with deliberate premeditation, in violation of Massachusetts law.

MS-13, or La Mara Salvatrucha, is a transnational street gang operating in Massachusetts and numerous other states, as well as countries such as El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala. MS-13 gang members often commit acts of extreme violence against suspected rivals, those suspected of cooperating with law enforcement, and others who the gang views as a threat. In recent years, dozens of MS-13 members have been convicted of RICO conspiracy and other serious felonies in the District of Massachusetts.

MS-13 is organized into "cliques" or branches operating in local territories. Vaquerano belonged to the "Sykos Locos Salvatrucha" clique of MS-13, which operated in the cities of Lynn, Chelsea, and other parts of Massachusetts. MS-13 has vari-

ous ranks, with elevation to "homeboy" status generally requiring the commission of a significant act of violence. Evidence showed that Vaquerano had achieved homeboy status in MS-13 even prior to the July 2018 murder. Evidence also showed that Vaquerano helped recruit young members on behalf of the gang, including at Chelsea High School.

In November 2018, Vaquerano and five other MS-13 Sykos clique members were indicted following an investigation into the murder of a teenage boy, whose body found in a park in Lynn on Aug. 2, 2018. The six defendants in this case included five participants in the murder, as well as one longstanding member of the Sykos clique. In a related case, the government charged a juvenile co-conspirator who was the sixth person involved in the murder.

The evidence in this case, which included a recording of one of Vaquerano's co-defendants describing the murder in graphic detail, revealed that Vaquerano Canas and

See REGION Page 9

Real Estate Transfers

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Realty Boston Invs LLC	Grods LLC	2 Lamson Ct	\$676,000
Rabinovich, Leonard G	Trichilo Development LLC	37 Horace St #203	\$520,000
Kincaid, Brenna	Candido, Vilma	38 Morris St	\$925,000
Goal Line Realty LLC	Sillari Jr, Daniel J	40 Orient Ave	\$1,200,000
Held, Paul J	101-105 Condor Street LL	101-105 Condor St #303	\$640,000
Kulick, Brian	101-105 Condor Street LL	101-105 Condor St #205	\$639,000
Barboza, Antonio J	101-105 Condor Street LL	101-105 Condor St #301	\$619,000
Szala, Krystle L	101-105 Condor Street LL	101-105 Condor St #202	\$610,000
Rodriguez, Sabiel	Daly, Lauren	113 Sumner St #45	\$334,500
Alexander-Barone, Lauren	224 Princeton Street LLC	224 Princeton St #1	\$680,000
306 Saratoga Prime LLC	Yannetty, Rosemarie	306 Saratoga St	\$700,000

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HOP TO IT....

Region // CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

five other MS-13 gang members murdered the victim based on their mistaken belief that he may have been assisting law enforcement.

On July 30, 2018, the six gang members lured the victim to a public park. At least four of the attackers, including Vaquerano, were armed with knives. The group pretended to be friendly with the unsuspecting victim and took him to a wooded area of the park where they surrounded the victim and repeatedly stabbed him to death. At least four of the six assailants took part in stabbing the victim. Vaquerano had an especially active role in the brutal attack. Evidence showed that as the victim was being attacked, he called out to Vaquerano for help, believing that Vaquerano was his friend. Instead, Vaquerano repeatedly stabbed and hacked at the victim with a large knife. Vaquerano attacked the victim with such force that parts of his large knife shattered, and pieces of the blade were embedded into the victim's skull.

After killing the victim, the gang members left his body in the wooded area of the public park where it was discovered days later, on Aug. 2, 2018. An autopsy revealed that the victim suffered at least 32 distinct sharp force trauma wounds consistent with being stabbed repeatedly, along with multiple blunt force injuries.

All six defendants indicted in this case, along with the juvenile charged in the related case, have pleaded guilty. Vaquerano is the fifth defendant to be sentenced in the case. On Feb. 14, 2022, Erick Lopez Flores, a/k/a "Mayimbu," was sentenced to 40 years in prison. On Feb. 15, 2022, Jonathan Terce-ro Yanes, a/k/a "Desalma-do," was sentenced to 33 years in prison. On Feb. 16, 2022, Henri Salvador Gutierrez, a/k/a "Perver-so," was sentenced to life in prison. On Feb. 18, 2022, Djavier Duggins, a/k/a "Haze," was sen-tenced to 15 years in pris-on. A sentencing hearing for the remaining co-de-fendant, Marlos Reyes a/k/a "Silencio," has not yet been scheduled by the Court.

First Assistant United States Attorney Joshua S. Levy; Joseph R. Bonavo-lonta, Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bu-reau of Investigation, Bos-ton Division; Matthew B. Millhollin, Special Agent in Charge of Homeland Security Investigations in Boston; Colonel Christo-pher Mason, Superinten-dent of the Massachusetts State Police; Essex Coun-ty District Attorney Jona-than W. Blodgett; Suffolk County District Attorney Kevin Hayden; Acting Boston Police Commis-sioner Gregory Long; and Lynn Police Chief Chris-topher Reddy made the announcement. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Kunal Pas-richa, Kaitlin O'Donnell, and Philip Mallard of the Criminal Division prose-cuted the case.

This effort is part of an Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task For-ces (OCDETF) operation. OCDETF identifies, dis-rupts, and dismantles the highest-level criminal or-ganizations that threaten the United States using a prosecutor-led, intelli-gence-driven, multi-agen-cy approach. Additional information about the

OCDETF Program can be found at <https://www.justice.gov/OCDETF>.

BIZZY WOMEN SOCIAL LAUNCHES

REVERE - Aman-da Schepici-Portillo and Lauren Maloney certainly mean business for women.

The two Revere-based businesswomen have launched BIZZY Women Social "to inspire, empower, and connect like-minded female entre-preneurs and professionals who reside in and around Boston."

The debut members-on-ly social event - BIZZY Hive Meeting - is set for Thursday, March 24 at 7 p.m. at Mission on the Beach, Ocean Avenue.

"Bizzy Women Social is a one-of-a-kind exclusive, social networking club for female entrepreneurs and professionals who want to expand their network and promote themselves but do so in a really fun way," said Portillo. "Our core value in authentic-ity, meaning that we want women to come together in authentic way and just be their full selves."

Maloney, a member of the Revere High School Class of 2004 and a three-time state cheerleading champion and a nation-al champion, has been friends with Portillo since elementary school.

Maloney formerly owned Vamped, a clothing boutique, on Route 1, Sau-gus, for seven years before closing in 2017.

"That's where I started my entrepreneurial jour-ney and I had a great ex-perience and met a lot of people," said Maloney. "As Amanda was run-ning her businesses, she reached out to me with this concept and vision (for BIZZY). She present-ed the idea to me to come on board as the creative di-rector and build the brand. And it has transpired from there."

Portillo, who is also the Executive Director of the Revere Chamber of Commerce, said BI-ZZY will primarilyhold members-only events but at times will offer events open to the public.

"The Hive meetings are members-only, fun, net-working get-togethers," said Portillo. "One of our members will be holding a mixology class. Not only are we providing a cool experience to our guests, but she gets to showcase her brand in her business. We'll be having a dinner party and wine-tasting event in mid-April and our monthly Hive meeting will be a brunch at Dryft."

Twenty-three busi-nesswomen have joined BIZZY to-date, with the hope to grow membership into the hundreds.

What makes BIZZY different than some other female networking orga-nizations?

Said Portillo, "I have been in the entrepreneur-ial scene for the past four years and I've joined different networking or-ganizations for wom-en, and I felt there were two big things missing for me. There was the authenticity piece - ev-erything felt structured, and you couldn't be your whole self, and the events weren't super fun. I just feel when people can be themselves and have con-versations that go beyond business, you get to know on a humanistic level and that's going to open up doors. That's where real

meaningful relationships form."

Maloney said BIZZY plans to hold events at small restaurants and busi-nesses. The pre-launch event was held at Pazza on Porter, East Boston.

"We're here to support each other and bring up the small guy," said Malo-ney. "We're trying to build a an experience complet-ely different from anything that exists right now."

To learn more about BI-ZZY Women Social, visit bizzywomensocial.com

RESULTS OF WATER AUDIT DISCUSSED

WINTHROP - At its meeting on March 15, the Winthrop Town Council viewed the results of an audit of the town's wa-ter system conducted last year.

The Town Manager's Office hired a consultant last spring to find out why Winthrop's water rates were on the high end for the Commonwealth, and to possibly reduce user rates. Environmental Part-ners sent its report to DPW Director Steven Calla on Dec. 17, 2021.

Ryan Trahan, the Se-nior Principal at Environ-mental Partners, presented the 57-page Town of Win-throp Water Audit Report to the Council.

According to the report, it will cost roughly \$60M to replace old pipes and upgrade other aspects of the town's water system. This number is likely to climb with inflation over the several years it would take to complete the up-grades.

A graphic revealed that Winthrop loses an esti-mated \$1.1M annually in non-revenue water. An-other image showed Win-throp in the bottom 50 per-cent of U.S. water systems in general and in the bot-tom 10 percent in terms of "real losses." As a result, customers are paying an average of \$232 extra per year.

To minimize losses, En-vironmental Partners rec-ommended that Winthrop expand its pool of leak detection contractors and technologies, and research water main replacement options in coastal areas.

Environmental Partners commented that it could not confirm some basic information about Win-throp's water system due to lack of records. The au-ditor could not verify the length of mains, the num-ber of service connections, or the duration of services. The DPW provided the consultants with a system map from 1991, but it was unclear if there had been updates since then.

As a result, Environ-mental Partners suggested that Winthrop modernize and digitize all of its wa-ter system records. This would improve record se-curity, ease of access and sharing, analysis and loss detection, and response times to failures. The town can realize this transition in stages.

Councilors reacted with concerned ques-tions, though they didn't propose any next steps at the meeting. Councilor Rob DeMarco remarked that the town's water rates were already high and asked if relief to residents would be possible. During the public comment pe-riod, one resident com-mented on a statistic from MWRA regarding high levels of chloroform in the town water.

Eduardo Moreno Mendez named new Chief of Staff for Sen. Lydia Edwards

By John Lynds

Growing up in El Sal-vador Eduardo Moreno Mendez never imagined he'd one day be work-ing in the office of some high-profile elected offi-cial like U.S. Senator Eliz-abeth Warren.

Mendez, who has lived in Eastie since coming to America at 16, has be-come a shining example of where determination can get you if you work hard and apply yourself to the task at hand.

It was announced this week that Mendez was appointed by Sen. Lydia Edwards to serve as her Chief of Staff.

"Eduardo is from El Salvador and is a long time East Boston resident," said Edwards. "Eduardo represents the values and the hard work that many immigrants bring to our country and to our city."

After arriving in the US, Mendez enrolled in East Boston High School and graduated in 2012.

After graduating EBHS Mendez attended Bunker Hill Community College for four years before trans-ferring to UMass Boston where he received his de-gree in 2019.

While in college Men-dez interned in Sen. War-ren's office and then for former State Sen. Joseph Boncore.

After he graduated



Sen. Lydia Edwards new Chief of Staff Eduardo Moreno Mendez.

college he served in the Secretary of Housing and Economic Development Jay Ash's office doing re-search on several issues that affect economic de-velopment in the Com-monwealth before landing a job as a legislative aide for Sen. Sonia Chang-Di-az.

Mendez said he got to know Edwards while in-terning for Sen. Boncore.

"I obviously knew who she was being my City Councilor," said Mendez. "But my mentor at the time, Juan Jaramillo, for-mally introduced us while he was Boncore's legisla-tive director."

So when Edwards was elected to replace Bonore, Mendez was on the very short list of candidates to serve as her Chief of Staff.

"This is a great oppor-tunity, because I will get to serve my community as well as the opportunity to be more impactful on

News in Brief

CITY HOLDS FIRST BOSTON REC FEST AT FRANKLIN PARK APRIL 19

Mayor Michelle Wu and the Boston Parks and Recreation Department present the first annual Boston Rec Fest (Re-creation Festival) during the April school vacation week at the Playstead in Franklin Park on Tuesday, April 19, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

This free event for kids 18 and under will feature a variety of sporting ac-tivities for young Boston residents. Fun inflatables will provide skills chal-lenges in the All-In-One Sports Arena, Full Court Press basketball game, QB Blitz football throw, Field Goal Challenge, Slap Shot Hockey, Soccer Shoot Out, All Star Chal-lenge obstacle course. Baseball fans can engage with the Speed Pitch radar gun, Batting Cage, and Extreme Batting attraction that lets kids swing for the fences.

Hands-on clinics hosted by sports professionals in archery, baseball, and soft-ball will be offered along with a Boston Bruins Foundation street hockey clinic and giveaway, USA Pickleball Association clinic, and USTA tennis clinic. The event will also include an appearance by Red Sox mascot Wally the Green Monster.

The festival location is at the Playstead on Pier-pont Road near the rear entrance of Franklin Park Zoo. By MBTA, take the Orange Line to For-est Hills and the #16 bus to the zoo. By car, the park can be reached from Blue Hill Avenue, Seaver Street, or Circuit Drive. Ample free parking. Fully handicapped accessible.

For more information and to stay up to date with news, events, and improvements in Boston parks, call (617) 635-4505, visit Boston.gov/

Parks, join our email list at bit.ly/Get-Parks-Emails, and follow our social channels @bostonparksd-ept on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram.

HARBOR VIEW NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION MEETING AGENDA

The next meeting of the Harbor View Neighbor-hood Association will be on April 4, 2022 at 6pm. Please NOTE that the meeting will be In Person only; you must attend the meeting to vote.

The meeting will be held in the Salesian Boys and Girls Club cafeteria, across from the Brooke Charter School on Byron Street. You can access the meeting from the front door on Byron Street or from the rear door on Wordsworth Street, which is the handicap entry to avoid the stairs. Since we will be indoors masks will be worn and the cafeteria is large enough for social distancing. All presenters on the agenda are expected to present In Person. Our interpreter, Ricardo, will be present for our Spanish speaking members.

Reminder the meeting is In Person only, it will not be on Zoom. So plan accordingly.

La próxima reunion de Harbor View Neighbor-hood Association está en el 4 de Abril 2022 a las 6pm. La reunión está sola-mente en persona. No hay un opción remoto. Llega a la cafetería del Salesian Boys y Girls Club por la calle Byron al otro lado de Brooke Charter School. Puede usar la entrada prin-cipal por la calle Byron o la entrada en la calle de Cowper. La entrada de la calle Cowper no tiene es-caleras por personas con discapacidades. Por favor, usa una mascarilla y hay espacio por la distancia social. Todos de los presta-

the legislative agenda that Sen. Edwards is creating," said Mendez. "It's very ex-citing."

Mendez said he's also excited to get to work on housing justice, social jus-tice, environmental jus-tice issues in the district as well as working to help the immigrant community thrive.

"With Sen. Edwards being the Chair of Small Business and Community Development the office will have a bigger impact on small business owners and immigrant business owners impacted by the pandemic," said Mendez. "Many owners are still desperate and need our help because they are the mom and pop business-es that have been in our communities for so many years."

In the end, Mendez said he wants to use his role as Chief of Staff as an exam-ple of hard work and de-termination.

"I want to prove to all young people, whether they are from the US or are immigrants, that hard work, passion and dedi-cation will get you far in life," he said. "I want to just show people that if I can do it they can do it as well."

Mendez recently be-came a U.S. Citizen and speaks four languages, English, Spanish, Italian, and French.

ciones están en persona y tenemos interpretación en Español de nuestro intér-prete, Ricardo.

Esa reunión está sola-mente en persona. Por fa-vor traje mascarilla.

Agenda:
Welcome/Introduction (5min)

Announcements (5min)
180th Anniversary of Ohabei Shalom Ceme-tery, HVNA Elections, St. Vincent de Paul Clothing Drive May 21 and 22, McLean Playground, City Councilor Debate: Ga-briela Coletta and Tania Del Rio April 28, 2022 and ZBA hearing on 200 Byron Street April 5th @9:30am.

Station 7 Police Report: (15min) Sgt. Cintolo, Of-ficer Mosley and Officer Domenico

Piers Park 3, (10min) Gabriela Ramirez, Trust-ees, Design Update.

Tree Eastie, (15min) Bill Masterson will pres-ent tree facts in East Boston, tree history and achievements. Future plans.

134 Wordsworth Street, (20min) 2nd Presentation and VOTE, Dana Gris-wold, homeowner, will present for the proposed project. Family has grown by 3 children and needs additional space. Propo-sal is to add a bedroom, bathroom and a playroom. Replace old stairwell, old water heater and furnace shed.

114 Coleridge Street/1 Short Street (30min) At-torney Jeff Drago for own-er, Joseph Ricupero. Pro-posal is to demolish the single family house and erect 3 residential build-ings, each with 3 units. Total 9 units with 9 park-ing spaces.

The next meeting of the HVNA will be on May 2, 2022.

Visit us at <http://www.facebook.com/groups/harborviewna> or check out our website at harbor-vieweastboston.com

Baker launches ‘HireNow’ employer grant program for hiring and training

The Baker-Polito Administration launched a new hiring and training employer grant program, “HireNow,” which will help employers quickly hire and train new workers and get more people back to work. The new program provides eligible employers with a \$4,000 per employee grant, which can be used to cover training costs or as a signing bonus for new employees. By providing employers with these flexible funds to facilitate quick hiring, the Administration is focusing on addressing continued hiring challenges faced by employers and increasing labor force participation. Employers can learn more about the program and apply at www.mass.gov/hirenow.

The program is open to all Massachusetts employers, including both for-profit and non-profit entities (excluding federal, state, and municipal governments). Governor Charlie Baker, Lt. Governor Karyn Polito and Labor and Workforce Development Secretary Rosalin Acosta announced the launch of the program today at LabCentral, a Cambridge non-profit that provides support and working space for startups in the biotech and life sciences sectors. LabCentral plans to hire lab operations and other technical and administrative staff this year and will use funds from HireNow to support training costs.

“Our Administration is focused on supporting Massachusetts’ economic growth and getting more people back to work, and the HireNow program is one more tool at our disposal to meet employers’ workforce needs and grow our labor force,” said Governor Charlie Baker. “The flexible funds from this program will be distributed to employers quickly to help them with training costs, tuition support and other needs. We are grateful to our partners in the Legislature for allocating the ARPA funds necessary to make this program happen.”

“We know employers are ready to grow and expand by hiring new workers, and we’re excited to deploy flexible dollars as part of the HireNow program to jump-start those efforts,” said Lt. Governor Karyn Polito. “Massachusetts’s economic recovery from the pandemic is off and running, but we know there are still persistent workforce challenges that we must address. To boost our local economies, it is critical that we help both for-profit and non-profit employers meet their workforce needs and get more people back to work. We appreciate the partnership of the employer community as we developed this program and look forward to putting these funds to work alongside our existing, proven job-training programs.”

HireNow aims to address hiring challenges faced by employers that have been brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. According to a recent analysis of Bureau of Labor Statistics data, there are over 85,000 workers not participating in the labor market compared to pre-pandemic levels. Meanwhile, employers’ need for workers has continued to increase, with unfilled job postings up 20% compared to pre-pandemic levels and approximately 200,000 open jobs available across the Commonwealth.

The Administration is focused on addressing these challenges through a variety of efforts, including by expanding access and awareness to its existing apprenticeships, incumbent worker training programs, the Career Technical Initiative and more. Local MassHire Workforce Boards are also expanding resources to match employers and workers with training programs, and regions are hiring new staff members to serve as regional “Market Makers” to connect companies to graduates of new education and training programs starting up in their areas funded by the American Rescue Plan Act. These staff members will be regional points of contact to help match employers’ needs with both job-seekers and the skill-building programs needed to successfully fill open jobs. In addition, MassHire Centers are adding staff to work directly with job seekers who want to enroll in new training programs to gain more skills.

The HireNow program will build on these efforts by providing resources directly to employers that make it possible to immediately hire new employees and provide them with necessary training to fill open roles. The program will be supported by \$50 million in American Rescue Plan Act funds.

“We are excited to add HireNow to our growing number of grant programs that aim to close job and equity gaps across the Commonwealth,” said Labor and Workforce Development Secretary Rosalin Acosta. “We hope these funds will encourage employers to expand their hiring strategy to include those with potential for learning and growing on the job, over a direct-skills match, as this will widen the candidate pool and help both jobseekers and businesses.”

“Getting people back to work is a key element of our strategy for economic recovery and the ‘HireNow’ program allows us to double down on these efforts,” said Housing and Economic Development Secretary Mike Kennealy. “I look forward to this program’s success not just in enhancing access to employment opportunities, but accelerating it.”

“HireNow will be an excellent complement to the Career Technical Initiative we launched two years ago which expands access to high-quality vocational programs for high school students and adults by creating three shifts, one during the regular school day for vocational students, one in the afternoons for students enrolled in their local high school, and one in the evening for adult learners looking to change careers or upgrade their skills,” said Education Secretary James Peyser. “Employers will be able to recruit students from CTI programs, and use the HireNow grants to offer deeper training for their employees.”

Program Details:

- Employer Eligibility: Any Massachusetts employer who is in good standing with Department of Unemployment Assistance and Department of

Revenue obligations and is not de-barred by the state is eligible (excluding federal, state, and municipal governments). Applications must be submitted by the employer, not an education or training partner.

- Application Process: Employers must pre-register online at Mass.Gov/HireNow by providing employer information. Following the employee’s hire and 60-day retention period, employers will submit a final application for funding. The Commonwealth will also approve the planned use of the funds (training costs, signing bonus, etc.) when approving the application.
- Eligible Hires: Hires must be made after March 23, 2022, be retained for a minimum of 60 days, and be placed in jobs that are at least 30 hours per week. New hires need to be Massachusetts residents employed in Massachusetts. There are also limits on compensation:
 - Minimum eligible compensation: \$14.25 / hr (minimum wage)
 - Maximum eligible compensation: \$42.50 / hr (~\$85K annualized)
 - Funding: up to \$4,000 for each eligible employee hired, with a limit of \$400,000 per employer. Funds will be provided on a first-come, first-served basis.

MBTA approves fare changes, including permanent 5-Day Flex Pass

The MBTA Board approved several fare changes that aim to improve equity by closing gaps in existing fare structures for Reduced Fare Riders, minimize pandemic-related revenue implications and budget uncertainties while increasing ridership where possible, and simplify fare tariff rules as the MBTA’s Fare Transformation moves forward. These fare changes go into effect on July 1, 2022, with the exception of the 5-Day Flex Pass being made permanent, which goes into effect immediately.

“We’re grateful to the Board for approving these fare changes, which prepare us for technology updates to come through Fare Transformation, increase equity through improvements to LinkPasses, especially for our Reduced Fare Riders, and make the 5-Day FlexPass permanent for Commuter Rail riders,” said MBTA General Manager Steve Poftak. “These fare updates allow us to continue to meet the needs of riders while minimizing revenue implications in this time of continued uncertainty.”

Permanent 5-Day FlexPass on mTicket for Commuter Rail:

First introduced as a pandemic fare pilot in June 2020, the 5-Day FlexPass available on mTicket for the Commuter Rail is a bundled fare valid for any five days of travel within a 30-day period. Good for unlimited travel within a 24-hour period, these five passes are available for 10% off the cost of 10 one-way trips. An attractive option for riders whose travel patterns have changed due to hybrid work schedules and the availability of remote-work options, the 5-Day FlexPass on mTicket is now permanent effective immediately.

Reducing Price of the 1-Day LinkPass:

Effective July 1, 2022, and in an effort to increase ridership by encouraging more riders to buy passes and increase equity for low-income and minority riders who often purchase this fare product, the cost of the 1-Day LinkPass will be lowered from \$12.75 to \$11. An \$11 LinkPass pays for itself with five subway rides taken in 24 hours.

Expanding Second Transfers on Buses, Express Bus Routes, and/or Subway:

Currently, the MBTA only allows one transfer between Bus and/or Subway with one recent addition – CharlieCard riders may transfer from Bus to Subway to Bus. To simplify complexities in the T’s transfer policy, the transfer process will be standardized to allow all combinations of second transfers involving Buses, Express Bus Routes, and/or Subway, including Bus-Bus-Subway, Subway-Bus-Bus, and Express Bus-Express Bus. This second transfer on Subway and Buses and transfers between Express Routes goes into effect on July 1, 2022.

Changes for Reduced Fare Riders:

Some riders are eligible for reduced fares, including people with disabilities and Medicare cardholders, people 65 and older, some middle and high school students, and people 18 – 25 with low income. Three fare changes that aim to improve equity by closing gaps in existing fare structures for Reduced Fare Riders will go into effect on July 1, 2022:

- Introducing the 7-Day LinkPass for Reduced Fare Riders: Aiming to increase equity by increasing the benefits of purchasing fares in bulk for Reduced Fare Riders, a 7-Day LinkPass for Reduced Fare riders will be available for \$10, which breaks even after nine subway rides. This product is designed to meet the needs of individuals who might not have enough cash on-hand to afford a monthly pass, but who qualify for Reduced Fare programs.
- Introducing Monthly Passes for Reduced Fare Riders on Commuter Rail, Ferry, and Express Bus: In order to increase equity by closing gaps in the T’s offering of products for Reduced Fare Riders, monthly passes on Commuter Rail, Ferry, and Express Bus for Reduced Fare Riders will be made available. This update offers a full set of monthly passes for Reduced Fare Riders at approximately 50% of the full fare pass prices.
- Expanding Availability of the LinkPass for Reduced Fare Riders on Commuter Rail Zone 1A and Inner Harbor Ferry: Currently, a LinkPass for Reduced Fare Riders is only available on CharlieCard fare media instead of a printed “flash pass” CharlieTicket that Commuter Rail conductors and ferry staff can see to visually validate a fare. In the future, as more updates take place as part of Fare Transformation, customers will be able to use tappable tickets as well as Charlie Cards to travel on the Commuter Rail and Ferries. As such, and to increase access and equitable pricing on Reduced Fare passes, the LinkPass for Reduced Fare Riders will be expanded to be valid for Commuter Rail travel in Zone 1A and on the Charlestown Ferry.

For more information, please visit mbta.com or connect with the T on Twitter @MBTA, Facebook /TheMBTA, or Instagram @theMBTA.

LEGAL NOTICE

LEGAL NOTICE

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
THE TRIAL COURT
PROBATE AND FAMILY COURT

Suffolk Division
24 New Chardon St.
Boston, MA 02114
(617) 788-8300
CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION
Docket No. SU22P0385EA
Estate of:
Barbara Snow
Date of Death: 12/03/2015

To all interested persons: A Petition for Late and Limited Formal Testacy and/or has been filed by Allison J. Snow of Boston, MA requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition. The Petitioner requests that: Allison J. Snow of Boston, MA be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve Without Surety on the bond in unsupervised administration.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: 10:00 a.m. on the return day of 04/28/2022. This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty days (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.

UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION UNDER

THE MASSACHUSETTS UNIFORM PROBATE CODE (MUPC)

A Personal Representative appointed under the MUPC in an unsupervised administration is not required to file an inventory or annual accounts with the Court. Persons interested in the estate are entitled to notice regarding the administration directly from the Personal Representative and may petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including the distribution of assets and expenses of administration.

WITNESS, Hon. Brian J. Dunn, First Justice of this Court.

Date: March 23, 2021
Felix D. Arroyo, Register of Probate

3/30/22
EB

LEGAL NOTICE

CITATION GIVING NOTICE OF PETITION FOR APPOINTMENT OF GUARDIAN FOR INCAPACITATED PERSON PURSUANT TO G.L. c. 190B, Section 5-304

Docket No. SU22P0457GD
Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court Probate and Family Court
Suffolk Probate and Family Court
24 New Chardon Street
Boston, MA 02114
In the matter of: Maria Moscato Of: East Boston, MA
RESPONDENT Alleged Incapacitated Person
To the named Respondent and all other interested persons, a petition has been filed by Mass. Dept. of Mental Health of Westborough, MA in the above captioned matter alleging that Maria Moscato is in need of a Guardian and requesting that (or some other suitable person) be appointed as Guardian to serve Without Surety on the bond.

The petition asks the court to determine that the Respondent is incapacitated, that the appointment of a Guardian is necessary, and that the proposed Guardian is appropriate. The petition is on file with this court and may contain a request for certain specific authority.

You have the right to object to this proceeding. If you wish to do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance at this court on or before 10:00 AM on the return date of 04/21/2022. This day is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline date by which you have to file the written appearance if you object to the petition. If you fail to file the written appearance by the return date, action may be taken in this matter without further notice to you. In addition to filing the written appearance, you or your attorney must file a written affidavit stating the specific facts and grounds of your objection within 30 days after the return date.

IMPORTANT NOTICE
The outcome of this proceeding may limit or completely take away the above-named person’s right to make decisions about personal affairs or financial affairs or both. The above-named person has the right to ask for a lawyer. Anyone may make this request on behalf of the above-named person. If the above-named person cannot afford a lawyer, one may be appointed at State expense.

WITNESS, Hon. Brian J. Dunn, First Justice of this Court.

Date: March 10, 2022
Felix D. Arroyo, Register of Probate

3/30/22
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Grant proposals sought for Better Beaches Program

Save the Harbor/Save the Bay and the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) are now seeking Better Beaches Program grant proposals from organizations in Nahant, Lynn, Revere, Winthrop, East Boston, South Boston, Dorchester, Quincy, and Hull to support free beach events and activities on the region's public beaches this year.

The public is invited to participate in the process and help choose some of this year's events. Cast your vote here or follow this link <https://tinyurl.com/2022BeachBallot>

The Better Beaches program puts resources in the hands of local beach lovers, supporting and empowering them to execute events for their communities. The impact is clear — in 2021, these events connected more than 1 million people to the water at 13 different beaches and waterfront parks.

This summer, Save the Harbor has chosen to center community voices by reserving \$25,000 of Better Beaches funds to be distributed by participatory budgeting.

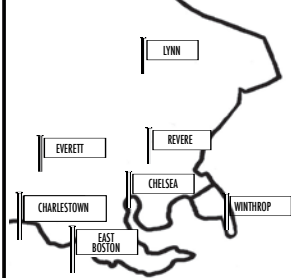
From December 2021 to February 2022, individuals from local schools and community centers submitted their ideas for free events and programs

to activate the region's beaches in the warmer months. You can cast your vote here or follow this link <https://tinyurl.com/2022BeachBallot>

Better Beaches funds will be intentionally awarded to organizations, programs, individuals, and creatives who empower, amplify and invest in community members of color, members of the Queer community, and people with disabilities. "Save the Harbor has recommitted ourselves to equity and anti-racism in our programs and on our beaches. We are excited to see the creative ways organizations and individuals will be activating our beaches this summer!" said Save the Harbor's Executive Director Chris Mancini.

To apply for a grant or ask any questions about the Better Beaches Program, please contact Maya Smith at smith@savetheharbor.org. Applications are due by April 22, 2022, after which Save the Harbor's Better Beaches Grants Committee will review the proposals. They will present the checks at their annual Better Beaches Award Reception, which all grant recipients are expected to attend, on June 11, 2022 at 10:00 AM at Boston's Fish Pier.

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Work on stalled Loftel project restarts

By John Lynds

The aging industrial building on the corner of Porter and Orleans Street was supposed to be one of Paul Roiff’s signature boutique hotels, complete with extended stay rooms for business travelers and a restaurant.

However, Roiff, known for high end hotels and restaurants throughout Boston, later sold the Boston Planning and Development Agency-approved project to the Patel family for \$14.75 million.

The Patels, known for operating and managing several area hotels, planned to continue Roiff’s original vision but for nearly

five years the project has stalled and the building has become a dilapidated, boarded-up eyesore in the community.

However, at Monday night’s Gove Street Citizens Association (GSCA) meeting, Ashok Patel and his attorney, Richard Lynds, said they were happy to announce preliminary work has begun on the building after years of delays.

“If you live in and around the area, you’ve seen a bit of activity recently happening and I’m sure people will be happy to hear that we have started work on the building in preparation for the full construction,” said Lynds. “Windows are being installed and the goal here is

to remove all of the temporary plywood and sheathing that has been used to essentially protect the interior of the building. I know this is a long process and certainly the process itself has not been the most efficient with COVID and other hiccups along the road with the city permitting process. But I can assure you my client has remained committed to getting this project done and getting it up and running, hopefully relatively soon.”

Lynds said work will involve a complete rehabilitation and restoration of the existing commercial structure.

“We are not expanding the footprint of the building and the building will stay exactly as is,” said Lynds. “All of the work that is being performed (after the windows are installed) will be done on the interior and the roof.”

Lynds said part of the process and certainly part of the delay in getting this to where it needed to be involved the telecommunications equipment on the building.

The Patels were forced to enter into lengthy negotiations with the telecommunication companies to move these antennas to another part of the roof. When

Project Overview



Ashok Patel talks about work being done on the stalled Loftel Project on Porter Street.

dealing with the relocation of telecommunication antennas there is very complicated and legal choreography that has to occur before one can move forward. Because moving these antennas causes a disruption in service there were a whole host of issues that came with that. These antennas are part of an old telecommunication easement and could not be evicted from the building because the companies own the space that occupies the building’s roof.

Lynds said once construction is completed the space will operate as a 123 room hotel with 65 surface parking spaces located immediately adjacent to the building with access from both Orleans and Frankfurt Streets.

“The ground level of this building will include a full service restaurant and

lounge that is not just available to the hotel guests but also available to the general public as well,” said Lynds.

Lynds said the project is expected to create 150 construction jobs over the course of construction as well as 20 new permanent full time jobs.

As far as mitigation the Patels plan to commit \$10,000 towards the repairs of the Porter Street Bridge, access to the hotel’s parking lots during snow emergencies, and pay for the costs associated with running Zoom meetings for the GSCA so they can continue holding meetings online.

The Patels also want to offer space at the hotel for the GSCA to host monthly meetings rather than at the community room at Logan’s Rental Car Facility.

“We will offer the use of the conference room or small function room for

GSCA meetings,” said Lynds. “I know you have access to the rental car facility but this might be an option that is a little more centrally located in the Gove Street neighborhood.”

The Patels are also planning on contributing \$5,000 a year for 10 years towards the cost of regular maintenance for the Mary Ellen Welch Greenway.

“Essentially what we’ll be doing is putting those funds towards either the Boston Natural Areas Network, the Friends of the Mary Ellen Welch Greenway or some organization that takes on responsibility of stewardship for the Greenway,” said Lynds. “We want to make sure that we are providing and being a good neighbor when it comes to access to that resource.”

All Girls Sports and Wellness Festival returns April 20

Mayor Michelle Wu, the Boston Parks and Recreation Department, and Boston Centers for Youth & Families (BCYF) invite Boston girls ages 9 to 14 to join us during the April school vacation week for the All Girls Sports and Wellness Festival.

The free event will take place on Wednesday, April 20, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the BCYF Leahy-Hol-

loran Community Center, 1 Worrell Street, Dorchester. The All Girls Sports and Wellness Festival will feature a variety of sports, games, health and wellness speakers, self-defense tactics, and aquatic activities.

Participants will find a variety of fun ways to exercise mind, body, and spirit and try out a variety of sports with expert instructors including basketball,

dance fitness, rock climbing, swimming, soccer, and more, with additional support from local non-profits and City of Boston agencies.

Event check-in begins at 9:30 a.m. Pre-registration is required at boston.gov/sports. Participants must be Boston residents and should bring activity-appropriate clothing (including swimsuits and towels

for those wishing to enjoy the pool). Free lunch will be provided.

For more information and to stay up to date with news, events, and improvements in Boston parks, call (617) 635-4505, visit boston.gov/Parks, join our email list at bit.ly/GetParksEmails, and follow our social channels @bostonparksdept on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram.

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