

East Boston

TIMES - FREE PRESS

Wednesday, February 1, 2023

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RIBBON CUTTING FOR NEW POLICE STATION IN EASTIE



Opening of New District A-7 Police Station in East Boston. Among those who turned out for the event are Mayor Michelle Wu (cutting the ribbon), Rep. Adrian Madaro (third from left holding the ribbon), Veronica Robles, City Councilor Gabriela Coletta, Boston Police Commissioner Michael Cox (behind Mayor Wu's left), Police Captain Dean Bickerton (behind Mayor Wu's right), Amelia Marcella (helping to cut the ribbon) and Skip Marcella.

Wu sets ambitious agenda in State of the City address

By Stephen Quigley

Boston Mayor Michelle Wu delivered her State of the City Address at the MGM Music Hall next door to Fenway Park last week in which the mayor noted the achievements that have been accomplished over the past year and outlined a vision for making Boston a greener and more affordable city by 2030.

"The state of the city is strong," said Wu adding, "We have the resources, the resolve, and responsibility to make it even stronger."

Wu praised city employees for making "every accomplishment and constituent service delivered, every detail of the agenda we're sharing here tonight — this is only possible because of you."

"Our cabinet is two-thirds people of color," Wu noted. She singled



MAYOR'S OFFICE PHOTO BY ISABEL LEON
Mayor Michelle Wu delivers remarks during the 2023 State of the City address at the MGM Music Hall.

out Boston natives Boston Police Commissioner Michael Cox; Trinh Nguyen, the Chief of Worker Empowerment; and Segun Idowu, Chief of Economic Opportunity and Development, for their commitment to Boston's residents.

"Three bus lines are entirely fare free," said Wu, "and now we are accelerating over two dozen, new, dedicated bus lanes, expanding our bike net-

work, and organizing even more neighborhood Open Streets events."

The mayor highlighted that public safety will be important, noting that 900 guns were taken off the streets and that violent and property crime are at the lowest levels in 15 years.

Bringing welcome news to many neighborhood residents who have bitterly complained about the indifference of the Boston Planning and Redevelopment Agency, Wu called for "charting a new course for growth, with people as our compass. Tomorrow, I'll sign an executive order establishing a Planning Advisory Council to fully integrate long-range planning, and begin modernizing our zoning code."

Wu noted that she aims to "sustainably" increase the population of Boston from its current number of 675,000 to 800,000.

Affordable housing also figured in her goals. Wu

See page 8 for
Mayor Wu's
complete speech.

said that more than 3,800 housing units were permitted, including 1,300 affordable units.

Wu said "every square foot of city-owned property" has been analyzed "and we have identified several parcels that could be used for affordable housing units."

If "local builders work with us to design high-quality, affordable homes that enhance the surrounding neighborhood, we will give you the land for free. And we will provide increased mortgage assistance so our residents can afford to buy these homes," said the mayor.

Wu set a goal of 2030 to have the city's public

See ADDRESS Page 5

Tree Eastie is making tremendous environmental strides

Michael Coughlin Jr.

Tree Eastie, a non-profit organization that focuses on planting and maintaining trees while educating residents about their benefits, has been doing its part in an effort to increase East Boston's scarce tree canopy.

East Boston's tree canopy sits at 7% — the lowest in the City of Boston — which is woeful considering the average is 27%.

"We need a lot more trees. We've got a lot of heat islands, and because of the effects of the highways and the airport and also the flooding that we get along the coastline, we need a lot of trees just from an environmental standpoint," said Tree Eastie Founder Bill Masterson.

Not only do trees help environmental aspects like reducing air pollution, but they can cool down streets, filter stormwater,

and even increase property value, according to Tree Eastie.

That being said, the non-profit is doing its best to increase the neighborhood's tree canopy and has had great success as they have planted 164 street trees over the last 15 months, a number Masterson is proud of.

"That's a big number ... these are small trees. I mean, they're only probably 10 or 12 feet tall, but, I mean, they're going to grow two to three feet a year, and fast forward 10 years from now, there's going to be a lot of shade," said Masterson.

One of the main reasons Tree Eastie was able to plant that many trees was due to its relatively new and strong relationship with the City of Boston. In negotiations that took place for about a year, the non-profit was able to se-

See TREE EASTIE Page 9

Moscone accepted into program

Special to the Times-Free Press

Albert J. "AJ" Moscone, Jr. has been accepted into the Boston Bar Association's Public Interest Leadership Program. Each year, the Boston Bar Association's Public Interest Leadership Program welcomes a select group of talented and highly-motivated lawyers to participate in a year-long program designed to provide intensive leadership and professional development training.

Moscone is the founder of Moscone Law, where he focuses on an array of matters, including criminal, civil, and business litigation as well as transactional and hospitality matters. He has successfully litigated before a judge or jury in multiple venues throughout the Commonwealth, as well as in Federal Court, and has guided home and business owners through transactional and zoning/licensure matters.

He was born and raised in East Boston, he currently serves on the Board of Directors for the East Boston Chamber of Commerce as well as the East Boston YMCA.

The notification letter is



Albert J. "AJ" Moscone.

as follows:

On behalf of the Boston Bar Association, I am pleased to welcome you to the 2023 class of the Public Interest Leadership Program (PILP). You have been selected from a number of impressive applicants to join this tremendously talented group of attorneys. Congratulations on this achievement!

I am confident that your PILP experience will deepen your engagement and involvement as a leader both in the BBA and within the community at large. Further, I hope the bonds you develop with fellow PILP participants will enrich your experience and growth during the program and beyond.

I wish you and your class all the best and look forward to working with you this year.

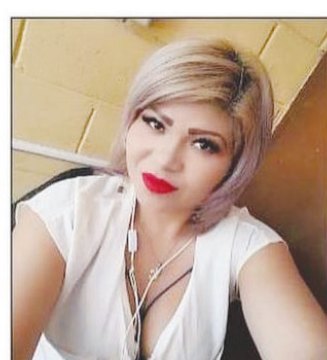
Police seek help with local missing person

The Boston Police Department is seeking the public's assistance in efforts to locate Reina Morales Rojas, 41, of East Boston. She is described as a Hispanic Female, 5'5", 145lbs, black hair and brown eyes. We are praying Reina is found and returned with her family.

Anyone with information regarding her whereabouts is advised to contact 911 or A-7 Department at (617) 343-4324.



Reina Carolina MORALES ROJAS



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Wu submits Home Rule Petition to end Urban Renewal

Mayor Michelle Wu on Monday submitted to the City Council a proposed Home Rule Petition to end Urban Renewal in Boston. If approved by the City Council, the Home Rule Petition would be sent to the State House for approval by the Massachusetts legislature. The proposed legislation would create new tools to meet future needs such as climate change resilience infrastructure, and retain the Boston Planning & Development Agency’s (BPDA) ability to enforce restrictions that protect community assets, such as affordable housing and open space. The proposal will also update the statutory mission of the BPDA by establishing a new charter for advancing resilience, affordability, and equity. Mayor Wu today also submitted an order to the City Council requesting a two-year extension of remaining Urban Renewal plans to allow time for legislative approval of the Home Rule Petition.

Urban Renewal

The proposed Act would end the ability to make land takings based on blighted, decadent, or substandard conditions in the City. It also entitles the agency to enforce any conditions and restrictions in existing plans that protect important community benefits such as affordable housing, open space, and

community uses.

New Charter

The legislation directs the BPDA to prepare and implement plans that address three key planning principles: 1) resiliency, including climate change mitigation and adaptation; 2) affordability, including the creation and retention of affordable housing and support for local businesses; and 3) equity, in the form of community development plans that ensure the equitable distribution of benefits derived from development in the City, and redress historical inequitable policies that may have led to inequities in the City’s growth. The legislation would require that all plans be approved by the mayor.

Modernizing the BPDA

Since 2016, the Boston Planning & Development Agency (BPDA) has been the operating name of two legal entities: the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) and the Economic Development and Industrial Corporation (EDIC) of Boston. This legislation will simplify Boston’s quasi-governmental entity by abolishing the BRA and EDIC and transferring the powers and duties of those entities into a new, singular entity named the BPDA. As Mayor Wu announced in her 2023 State of the City address, the quasi-governmental entity, which will be named

the the Boston Planning & Development Agency (BPDA) legally upon passage of this legislation, is envisioned to be staffed by City employees who work for a City Planning & Design Department and report to the Chief of Planning. The migration of current BPDA staff to this new City department will take place over the next 1 to 2 years.

Temporary Urban Renewal Extension

The Order submitted today, which requires approval of the City Council, the BPDA Board, and the Commonwealth’s Department of Housing and Community Development, extends protections on 12 existing Urban Renewal plan areas beyond the current sunset date of March 31, 2023. The extension will guard land use protections currently in place and give time for the Home Rule Petition to pass. Once passed, the temporary extensions will remain in place through March 31, 2025, or until passage of the proposed Home Rule Petition.

Executive Order on New Direction for Planning and Development

In her 2023 State of the City last week, Mayor Wu announced a new direction for planning and development that ensures resilience, affordability and equity goals guide the City’s growth. Today,

Mayor Wu also issued an Executive Order to ensure that direction. The Executive Order directs the BPDA to invest in reforming Boston’s zoning code and to prioritize community engagement in that planning work. It also directs the Chief of Planning to create a coastal resilience delivery team responsible for preparing Boston for sea level rise and directs the BPDA to use its portfolio of property to advance the City of Boston’s priorities. The Executive Order also instructs the BPDA to use its existing powers to act in accordance with the Home Rule Petition filed.

Ward 1 City Councilor Gabriela Coletta said, “ I applaud the move by Mayor Wu to embed climate resiliency, affordability, and equity within the planning process in the City of Boston. East Boston, Charlestown, and the North End are uniquely vulnerable to sea level rise due to climate change. The creation of the Coastal Resilience Delivery team is much welcomed after months of advocacy from my office for more resources and coordination. I look forward to working with the team to realize and deliver climate resiliency for District One and the entire City of Boston.”

LOCAL STUDENTS EARN ACADEMIC HONORS

HOLY CROSS ANNOUNCES FALL 2022 DEAN’S LIST

College of the Holy Cross congratulates the following students who were named to the Fall 2022 Dean’s List for outstanding academic achievement during the fall semester of the 2022-23 academic year.

Eileen Ledesma of East Boston , member of the class of 2026

Melina Valencia of East Boston, member of the class of 2026

To qualify, students must pass four or more letter-graded courses with no failing grades during the semester and earn a GPA of 3.5 or higher.

The College of the Holy Cross, in Worcester, Mass., is among the nation’s leading liberal arts institutions. A highly selective, four-year, exclusively undergraduate college of 3,100 students, Holy Cross is renowned for offering a rigorous, personalized education in the Jesuit, Catholic tradition. Since its founding in 1843, Holy Cross has made a positive impact in society by graduating students who distinguish themselves as thoughtful leaders in business, professional and civic life.

MCLONE NAMED TO UVM DEAN’S LIST

David McLone has been named to the dean’s list for the fall 2022 semester at the University of Vermont. McLone from East Boston is majoring in Mathematics.

To be named to the dean’s list, students must have a grade-point average of 3.0 or better and rank in the top 20 percent of their class in their respective college or school.

Since 1791, the University of Vermont has worked to move humankind forward. Committed to both research and teaching, UVM professors -- world-class researchers, scholars, and artists -- bring their discoveries into the classroom and their students into the field. Located in Burlington, Vermont, one of the nation’s most vibrant small cities and top college towns, UVM top 100 national research university educating over 14,000 undergraduate students, graduate students, certificate and non-degree students, and M.D. students in the Larner College of Medicine.

Public health warning issued related to recent sewage discharge

The following is a public health warning related to a recent sewage discharge, also known as a combined sewer overflow (CSO). State regulations require local public health departments to provide notice to the public when these discharges may create a risk to public health, including when a discharge lasts for more than two hours.

The following outflow locations experienced discharge events:

- Massachusetts Water Resources Authority Outfall MWR203, located in the Upper Inner Harbor, upstream of North Washington St. Bridge, experienced a treated discharge or overflow starting on January 26 at 3:05am, creating a potential public health risk. This overflow ended at 6:29am. This data is preliminary and may be revised. Check the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority website here for current updates about this discharge. This event may potentially affect waters in Boston Inner Harbor.

- Boston Water and Sewer Commission Outfall 070, located on the Fort Point Channel at Al-

bany Street, experienced a discharge or overflow on January 26 starting at 4:05am and lasting until 6:25am, creating a potential public health risk. This data is preliminary and may be revised. Check the Boston Water and Sewer Commission website here for current updates about this discharge. This event may potentially affect waters in Fort Point Channel and Boston Inner Harbor.

- Boston Water and Sewer Commission Outfall 013, located at the confluence of the Mystic River and Chelsea Creek at the Condor Street Bridge in East Boston, experienced a discharge or overflow on January 26 starting at 2:40am and lasting until 6:50am, creating a potential public health risk. This data is preliminary and may be revised. Check the Boston Water and Sewer Commission website here for current updates about this discharge. This event may potentially affect waters in

Boston Inner Harbor and the Chelsea Creek/Mystic River confluence.

This advisory expired 48 hours after the overflow has ended at each location.


The public is advised to avoid contact with affected water bodies for at least 48 hours after a sewage discharge or overflow, during rainstorms, and for 48 hours after rainstorms end, due to increased health risks from bacteria or other pollutants associated with urban stormwater runoff and discharges of untreated or partially treated wastewater.


A combined sewer overflow occurs when a large storm overwhelms the combined sewerage system causing rainwater to mix with wastewater and discharge to a nearby water body. This prevents sewage backups into homes and businesses.

More information about CSOs and public health is available at www.boston.gov/cso.

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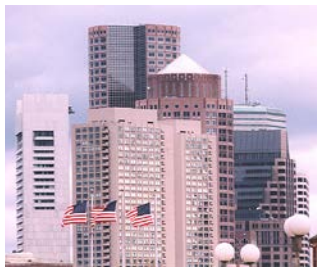
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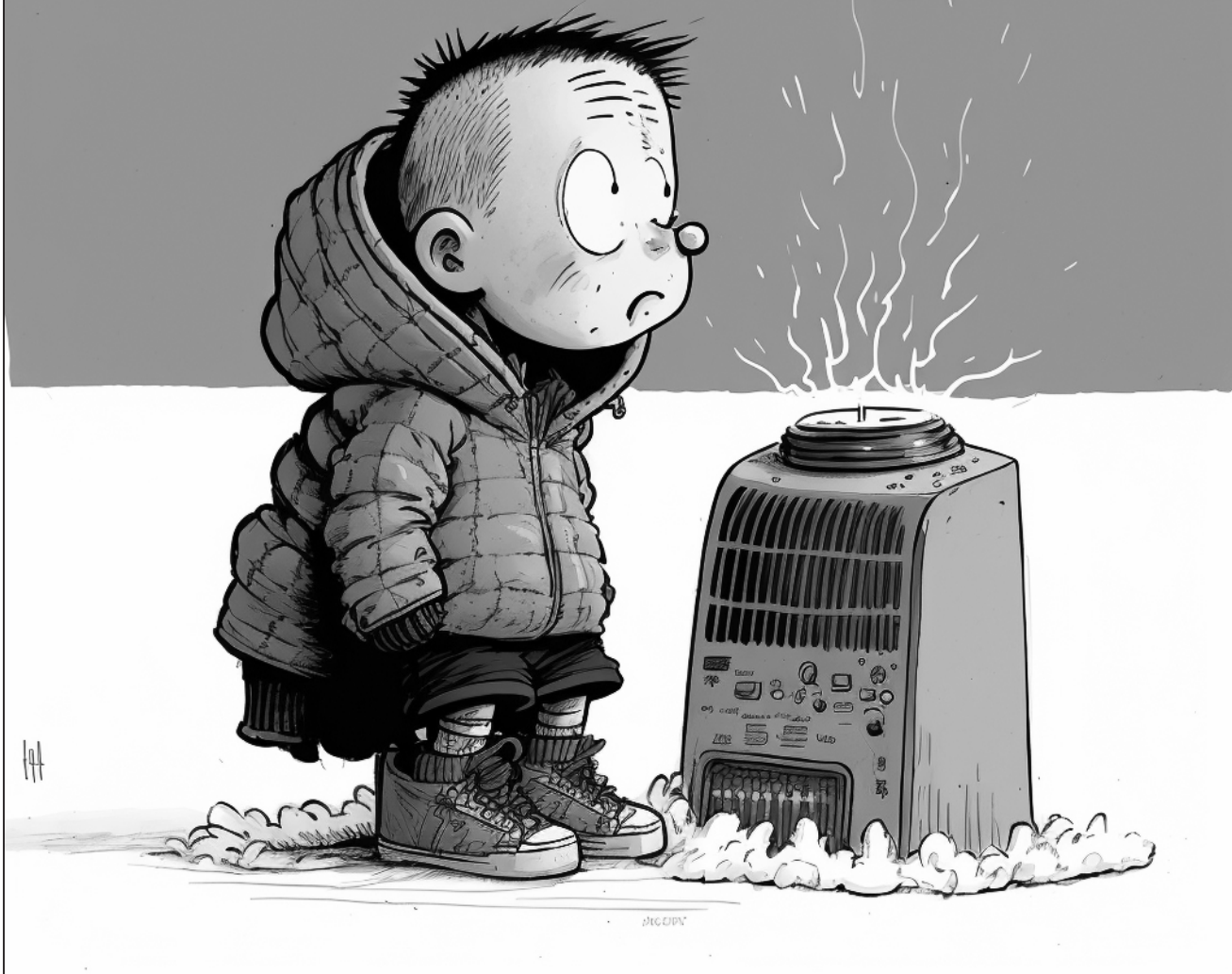
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Forum

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GUEST OP-ED

Classified document stink piles

Dr. Glenn Mollette

An Old Testament story records an overwhelming infestation of frogs throughout Egypt. There was no place in Egypt where frogs were not present in large numbers. The plague was sent in response to Pharaoh's attitude toward the Israelite people who lived in slavery under his rule. When God ended the plague there were piles of dead frogs all over Egypt. In the streets, bedrooms, bathrooms, closets, storage facilities, and places we can only imagine. It became a very stinky situation as they raked up the dead frogs and piled them up all over Egypt.

The Classified Document saga seems to be growing in similar fashion to the dead frogs of Egypt. They appear to be everywhere and they stink. The odor has to be particularly bad for Presidents Donald Trump and Joe Biden as well as Vice President Mike Pence.

First came the big raid of Trump's home in Florida. Late at night, FBI agents went through his home and personal items and carried out boxes of documents. Next, we hear that Biden has had classified documents in his home for years. They seem to be scattered everywhere throughout his house. Then, Mike Pence

in Indiana has more classified documents. What are these men doing with these documents? They are scattered out like the dead frogs of Egypt.

Again, what are these individuals doing with classified documents? I used to keep a big box of comic books when I was a kid. I would read a comic and then put it in the box. Sometimes I would read them again. I definitely knew that I had them. Why would past administrations hold on to classified documents? How did they get to the locations where they were found?

The National Archives has asked all the former Presidents to check for classified documents. Jimmy Carter? Where would he have them? In his family Bible? Mixed in with old Sunday school lessons that he has taught at the local Baptist Church? I don't think so but you never know who might have picked them up, packed them in a box, and placed them on a shelf in his garage. What about George W. Bush? Could documents be under the seat of his old truck? Bill Clinton has emphatically stated he does not have any classified documents but he has made emphatic statements before. These former Presidents have said they do not have such documents.

Did Trump carry these documents out of the White House when he and his family climbed aboard the Presidential helicopter? I've never seen Trump or Biden carry anything. Which aid picked up some boxes and tossed them into the moving van? Where is White House security when it comes to classified documents?

Only time will tell and we may never know for sure about the plethora of classified documents. We hope they aren't reading some of them in China or Russia. Who can say for sure where they are not being read? We do not know for sure whether or not someone else has them. Could another fam-

ily member have a box or two somewhere? How much money would China, Russia or others pay for classified documents?

Democrats and Republicans will point fingers and scream about all this in the next election. Both sides will try to make the other side look worse but it appears there is plenty of stink everywhere.

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.

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GET READY FOR THE COLD!

We may have just finished what reportedly ranks as the fifth-warmest January on record, but by the end of this week, we'll be experiencing our coldest weather in seven years when an Arctic blast dips into the United States and delivers temperatures that will start to plummet during the day on Friday and extend through Sunday morning.

The weatherman is telling us that the temp will be at six below zero in the Boston area when we wake up Saturday morning and will reach no higher than 15 throughout the entire day.

In addition, the Arctic blast will be riding a north-west wind of 20-30 miles per hour, bringing the dreaded wind chill factor into the range of -20 or lower.

For those of us who live along the coastline, we will be treated to the eerie spectre of "sea smoke," the water vapor that forms when really cold air moves over the relatively warmer water (which presently is at a temperature of about 40 degrees in Boston Harbor).

Fortunately, this cold snap will be gone in a snap -- less than 48 hours -- with the temperatures getting back to more-seasonable levels by Sunday when the wind direction shifts from the northwest to the southwest.

Needless to say, outdoor activity of just about any kind will be impossible during the day on Saturday. While that may be a minor inconvenience for most of us, for those who are homeless, the extreme cold will be deadly, particularly for the recently-homeless who have not experienced weather this cold.

We trust that local officials and charitable organizations will do their best to get the homeless off the streets and into warming shelters during this life-threatening period.

As for the rest of us (who can turn our TV onto some golf tournament in California or Hawaii for a vicarious experience), we should make sure that all windows and storm windows are shut tight throughout our homes to ensure that cold air does not infiltrate, with the potential to cause freezing pipes. It also is smart to make sure that our thermostats are kept high enough to ensure that outside walls that have water or heating lines (and that may not be fully-insulated) are kept warm enough to prevent freeze-ups. We realize that this will increase our heating bills -- but that will be far cheaper than repairing the damage from a frozen pipe that bursts.

Ol' Man Winter has been kind to us up to now -- but this weekend he'll be letting us know that we should not take him for granted.

HEALTH CARE FOR ALL IS A PUBLIC GOOD

We were pleased to see that Chelsea's newly-elected State Representative, Judith Garcia, announced last week that she has co-sponsored An Act to Advance Health Equity, a bill that aims to close the gap in health-care by prioritizing equity in state government, regulating data reporting on health equity, and improving access to and the quality of healthcare for historically-disadvantaged communities.

The COVID-19 pandemic brought into stark contrast the disparity in outcomes between those in our society who have good health care options vs. those who do not. The COVID-19 death rates in poorer communities far exceeded those in wealthier communities (which is typical for just about every disease and illness known to man).

Based on a data analysis of more than 3,000 counties across the US, Americans in poorer counties died at almost twice the rate of those in wealthier counties at the start of the pandemic. That dichotomy became even more pronounced in the later waves of the pandemic, when death rates in economically-disadvantaged counties were three and four times the rates of more-affluent counties.

But those of us who are fortunate enough to have access to healthcare should not be deluded into thinking that this is "someone else's" problem. The COVID-19 pandemic proved conclusively that what happens anywhere can have serious implications everywhere.

Communicable diseases are "communicable" because they spread and, as we learned from COVID-19, viruses do not discriminate between rich and poor. Persons in wealthier communities overall may have had better outcomes because of better access to healthcare, but when viruses spread rapidly through communities without good healthcare options, it is inevitable that all of us are affected (and infected).

The simple point we're trying to make is that in our interconnected world in which we rely on each other for everything, it is to the advantage of everyone to make sure that every member of our society has access to quality healthcare.

This is both a moral imperative and a common-sense goal that benefits every member of society.

We applaud Rep. Garcia for sponsoring this bill and we urge the legislature to pass it forthwith.

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Action for Boston Community Development (ABCD) urges all residents of Boston and the Mystic Valley who earned \$60,000 or less in 2022 to schedule a FREE in-person tax prep appointment at one of our neighborhood sites by calling 617-348-6329 or visiting bostonabcd.org/tax.

ABCD is a co-founder of the Boston Tax Help Coalition, a public-private collaboration with the City of Boston, which seeks to ensure the full participation of all Boston residents in the City's economic vitality and future. In addition, ABCD is a member of the Massachusetts Association for Community Action (MASSCAP) Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) network and offers free tax preparation services in the Mystic Valley Area. Both the Boston and Mystic Valley coalitions fall under the federal VITA program.

ABCD's IRS-certified tax preparers will prepare and electronically submit returns through in-person appointments and document drop off. Last year, ABCD helped 2,565 residents complete their state and federal tax returns, resulting in \$6,431,747 in federal and state refunds combined, \$1,454,056 in Earned Income Tax Credits (EITC) and \$72,597 in Child Tax Credits (CTC). That economic infusion channeled dollars back to hardworking families and revitalized businesses in under-resourced neighborhoods. For over 30 years, ABCD has provided more than 150,000 people across the city with free tax preparation services.

Those who may qualify for free tax preparation services include:

- People who earned \$60,000 or less in 2022
- People with disabilities
- Limited English-speaking taxpayers

ABCD tax volunteers are multilingual, and fluent in eight languages including English, Spanish, French, Mandarin, Cantonese, Vietnamese, Cape Verdean Creole and Haitian Creole.

"ABCD is proud to

be a longstanding partner of the VITA program and the Boston Tax Help Coalition," said ABCD President and CEO Sharon Scott-Chandler. "Free tax preparation services help empower people who are struggling by providing the necessary IRS-certified tax experts to complete their returns, ensuring that Greater Boston residents obtain every tax credit to which they are entitled. In doing so, money is channeled directly back into the hands of residents and under-resourced communities. People have an opportunity they don't often have to access a lump sum of their hard earned cash and pay off debts or save toward things like buying a house or furthering education. With extraordinarily high food and energy prices today, they are also able to help meet immediate needs like rent and transportation."

ABCD's IRS-certified tax preparers will make sure that residents receive every tax relief measure to which they are entitled, including:

- EITC – Earned Income Tax Credit – one of America's most effective anti-poverty initiatives – EITC is a tax deduction that rewards work. This year a Married Filing Jointly family with three or more children earning up to \$59,187 and filing jointly will receive total federal and state EITC deductions of \$9,016 off their 2022 income tax. EITC can be claimed retroactively for the past three years, so eligible taxpayers can qualify for a sizable sum. The IRS estimates that one out of five eligible taxpayers will not claim EITC and will lose out on this important credit.
- CTC – CHILD TAX CREDIT – returns a maximum of \$2,000 in 2022. This is a non-refundable credit which reduces the tax liability. The CTC has been reduced to 30% of the total amount paid for tax year 2022.
- SENIOR CIRCUIT BREAKER – a state tax deduction providing seniors age 65 and older who pay unsubsidized rent or

property taxes. The maximum credit amount for tax year 2022 is \$1,200. If the credit owed exceeds the amount of the total tax payable for the year, the additional amount of the credit will be refunded without interest.

A Massachusetts-based nonprofit human services organization, ABCD provides disadvantaged residents in the Boston and Mystic Valley areas with the tools, support, and resources they need to transition from poverty to stability and from stability to success. Each year, we serve more than 100,000 individuals, elders and families through a broad range of innovative initiatives as well as long-established, proven programs and services. For 60 years, ABCD has been deeply rooted in each neighborhood we serve, empowering individuals and families and supporting them in their quest to live with dignity and achieve their highest potential. For more, please visit bostonabcd.org.

Address // CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

housing developments become fossil fuel-free.

"Our neighborhoods must be climate resilient and community-focused. This year we will launch a civic space master plan," said the mayor.

Wu also offered some examples "of the things we're doing right now to strengthen our schools, support our teachers, and do right by our students."

She pointed out the brand new Boston Arts Academy in the Fenway, and the resurrection of the decade-old plan for the Josiah Quincy Upper School in Chinatown to become

the city's next state-of-the-art high school.

"This project was kicked off in 2012: three mayors and six superintendents ago. Students in the first grade when this project started will have graduated from high school by the time it is finished," said Wu.

She pointed out the early college and innovation pathways at five high schools and the partnership with UMass Boston that will provide real-life work experiences and offer college-level courses in finance, healthcare, and biotech.

Wu closed her speech saying, "Boston is a city that will never stop reaching — up toward the progress we know to be possible, and out to the community whose work makes it lasting."

District 1 City Councilor Gabriela "Gig" Coletta enthusiastically applauded Wu's vision.

"Boston has accomplished so much in the last year and I cannot wait to see all we accomplish in this year," said Coletta. "I look forward to working with Mayor Wu on housing, climate resiliency, and mobility."



Gov. Maura Healey, Mayor Michelle Wu and State Treasurer Deborah Goldberg after the 2023 State of the City Address at the MGM Music Hall in Fenway.

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Wu leads the 43rd annual homelessness census

Special to the Times-Free Press

With record setting cold weather approaching this weekend, Mayor Michelle Wu on Tuesday night led a group of volunteers, including U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development officials, City officials, State officials, homelessness services providers, and public health and first responders, in conducting the City of Boston’s 43rd annual homelessness census. The street count is part of the City’s comprehensive yearly census of unsheltered adults, youth, and families in emergency shelters, transitional housing, domestic violence programs, as well as individuals living outside. The census helps inform the City of Boston’s policy development and allocation of resources for households experiencing homelessness.

“Boston’s annual homelessness census is an opportunity to assess the need for housing across our neighborhoods and move us closer to ensuring that every resident has a safe, healthy, affordable place to call home,” said Mayor Michelle Wu. “Last night’s Census is critical to ensuring that the City moves with urgency and care as we work to improve the lives of our residents and build a Boston for everyone. I am grateful for our state and federal partners and our volunteers across the city for working with us to safely undertake this year’s count and who made this year’s census possible. With this important data, we’ll continue taking action to tackle our housing crisis across city departments and ensure that homelessness is rare, brief, and non-repeating in Boston.”

This year, more than 200 volunteers canvassed

45 areas after midnight, covering every city neighborhood, Logan Airport, and the transit and parks systems. Volunteers canvassed assigned areas, identified those sleeping on the street, conducted a short survey, and provided individuals with important safety information and items to help keep warm. The surveys will be closely analyzed to ensure accuracy, and then cross-checked and combined with the results of a shelter count. The annual homelessness census required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is a key component in Boston receiving more than \$38 million in federal grant funding for housing and services for households experiencing homelessness in Boston.

“Every year, cities and towns across America are required by HUD to do their Point-in-Time count, an assessment of homelessness on one night in January,” said Richard Cho, HUD Senior Advisor to the Secretary for Housing and Services. “But this is about more than numbers – it is an opportunity to come together to understand that behind each data point is a human being who is struggling to survive and ultimately find their way back home. I applaud Mayor Wu and the City of Boston for their commitment to this issue and their continuous work to find solutions to the most pressing housing needs for their citizens.”

In 2021, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s (HUD) launched House America, a new federal initiative that invited mayors, city and county leaders, tribal nation leaders, and governors into a national partnership. House America made investments provided through

the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to address the crisis of homelessness through a “housing-first” approach. As part of the House America initiative, the City of Boston committed to rehouse 1,100 households experiencing homelessness and build over 650 units of housing for people facing housing insecurity by the end of 2022. The City exceeded the goals set by HUD by housing 1,161 individuals and creating 739 units of housing.

“The homeless census brings together government, non-profit organizations and community volunteers to understand the needs of our unsheltered neighbors and to renew commitments to solve this critical issue,” said Sheila Dillon, Chief of Housing. “The City remains committed to ending homelessness through the creation of permanent supportive housing, providing services that assist our most vulnerable residents and tracking our progress. Boston has the lowest number of unsheltered individuals in the country, but even one person on the street is one too many.”

The City of Boston and its partners continue to work to end chronic and veteran homelessness using the Housing First approach, an evidence-based approach to ending homelessness that uses principles such as the philosophies that everyone is “housing ready” and everyone deserves permanent and stable housing without preconditions like sobriety or treatment. City agencies and community partners have dramatically redesigned the way services are delivered to homeless individuals, increasing resources devoted to housing and deploying new technologies to match homeless individuals



Richard Cho, HUD Senior Advisor to the Secretary for Housing and Services talks to the group conducting the census as Mayor Michelle Wu looks on.



Mayor Michelle Wu (right) talks with a homeless person during the annual homeless census.

with housing and services.

“The annual census is an important tool that shows our progress toward ending homelessness in Boston,” said Lyndia Downie, President and Executive Director, Pine Street Inn. “We are proud that Boston’s street numbers are very low, especially in comparison to many cities across the country. However, as long as there is anyone on the street or in shelter, our work is not done. We must continue to focus on strategies to move vulnerable individuals off the street, out of shelter, and into the safety and stability of permanent housing.”

In September 2022, the City of Boston submitted a grant proposal of \$41 million to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to support Boston’s homelessness programs in 2024, through HUD’s McKinney Homeless Continuum of Care program.

“Homelessness is a public health crisis that significantly increases the risk of poor health outcomes,” said Dr. Bisola Ojikutu, Commissioner of

Public Health and Executive Director of the Boston Public Health Commission. “The Boston Public Health Commission will continue to work with Mayor Wu and the City of Boston to improve access to housing and provide critical wraparound services to support the health and wellbeing of our residents who are experiencing homelessness or housing instability.”

In June 2022, Mayor Wu announced that the number of individuals experiencing homelessness in Boston on the night of the census decreased by 2.4 percent, from 1,659 individuals in 2021 to 1,545 individuals in 2022. This reduction builds on a decrease of 24.7 percent from 2020 to 2021, which was due in part to a coordinated effort by city agencies and homeless service providers to create alternative housing, shelter, and healthcare options that concentrated shelters during the first wave of the pandemic. It also reflects sustained and successful efforts in housing individuals experiencing homelessness and at-risk individuals, and diverting

individuals from emergency shelter to safe alternatives when possible. Additionally, in 2022, with the support of many City agencies and partner organizations, more than 470 individuals formerly living unsheltered in the Mass/Cass area have been connected with low-threshold, supportive housing.

The results from this year’s homeless census will be available in the coming months.

The Mayor’s Office of Housing is responsible for housing people experiencing homelessness, creating and preserving affordable housing, and ensuring that renters and homeowners can obtain, maintain, and remain in safe, stable housing. The department develops and implements the City of Boston’s housing creation and homelessness prevention plans and collaborates with local and national partners to find new solutions and build more housing affordable to all, particularly those with lower incomes. For more information, please visit the MOH website.

The Boston Public Health Commission, the country’s oldest health department, is an independent public agency providing a wide range of health services and programs. It is governed by a seven-member board of health appointed by the Mayor of Boston. The mission of the Boston Public Health Commission is to protect, preserve, and promote the health and well-being of all Boston residents, particularly the most vulnerable. For more information, please visit www.bphc.org



Lyndia Downie, President and Executive Director, Pine Street Inn helps with the homeless census.



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Wynner’s Circle

Sports betting begins at Encore

By Cary Shuman

Encore Boston Harbor President Jenny Holaday said it all about the opening of the WynnBET Sportsbook Tuesday at the five-star resort/casino in Everett. “It’s sports betting in the nation’s best sports town,” remarked Holaday. “Everyone is thrilled and excited it’s here.”

Holaday was joined by Everett Mayor Carlo DeMaria, Speaker of the House Ron Mariano, State Reps. Joseph McGonagle and Dan Ryan and an array of professional athletes at the grand opening of the new sportsbook which is another step in Encore bringing a spectacular Las Vegas-style experience to Everett.

“This has been long overdue,” said DeMaria, who led the way for the Encore resort/casino to be built in the city. “People have been able to go to other states to wager on sports. We made the same argument when we were bringing the casino to Everett – why not keep the money here in the community? This sportsbook is a very nice facility.”

DeMaria said he had the opportunity to chat with Johnny Damon, one of the sports celebrities in attendance at Tuesday’s event. “I thanked him for breaking the Curse of the Bambino,” remarked DeMaria.

An historic day for Massachusetts

Boston sports fans,



Former Boston Red Sox star Johnny Damon and Olympic gold medalist and former Harvard hockey captain Angela Ruggiero are pictured at the grand opening of the WynnBET Sportsbook Tuesday at Encore Boston Harbor.

who have enjoyed several championships by the New England Patriots, Boston Red Sox, Boston Celtics, and Boston Bruins in this century, can now legally wager on professional and college sports at Encore – and they’re excited about the opportunity.

Mike Capone of Malden was one of the first patrons to wager after Holaday personally led the countdown to the 10 a.m. launch of the betting kiosks inside the casino.

“I bet a couple of Super Bowl props and parlays tonight for hockey, college basketball,” said Capone. “It’s fantastic to be a part of history. Encore did a great job with this. It’s really a good time.”

Artie Ells, a Chelsea resident, wanted to be a part of an historic day for Massa-

chusetts. “This is just another great day for the area,” said Ells. “This resort is a beautiful place. It still amazes me that it’s here. Everything here is first-class.” Sports broadcaster Sean McDonough served as the master of ceremonies for the event. “It’s great to see so many people here as we commemorate the first sports bets in Massachusetts,” said McDonough.

Holaday told the large gathering, “I want to thank you, ladies and gentlemen, fans, for coming out to celebrate this historic moment with us. This has been a wonderful team effort, and we’re really excited to bring legal sports betting to the Commonwealth.”

Wynn Vice President of Trading Alan Berg expects the WynnBET Sportsbook to be a very successful operation. There are WynnBET Sportsbooks in ten states.

“I think it’s going to be phenomenal,” predicted Berg. “Boston is one of the biggest sports cities in the world as far as I’m concerned. So, the pent-up demand – I think we’ve been hearing about for so long – and the excitement have reached a big pitch at this point. We’re trying to give Boston the best product possible, and I think we’re ready to do that.”

State, local officials excited about launch of sports betting

Rep. Joe McGonagle of



Encore Boston Harbor President Jenny Holaday is pictured adjacent to the WynnBET Sportsbook area inside Encore Boston Harbor, commemorating the first day of legalized sports betting in Massachusetts.

Everett attended the grand opening ceremonies for the WynnBET Sportsbook.

“I’m excited to see the launch of legalized sports betting in Massachusetts,” said McGonagle, who supported the legislation. “Sports betting in Massachusetts will be creating more jobs, and we’re hoping they will be jobs for Everett residents.”

Rep. Dan Ryan of Charlestown supported the effort to bring legalized sports betting to Massachusetts.

“Sports betting is here. The Legislature, the Massachusetts Gaming Commission, and the state’s constitutional officers have weighed this possibility with great diligence to ensure that the jobs, revenue, and entertainment created by this venture will have a positive impact on our local cities and towns,” said Ryan.

State Rep. Jessica Giannino of Revere was also a supporter of the legislation



Rep. Aaron Michlewitz, Speaker of the House Ron Mariano, and Rep. Jerald Parisella are pictured at the grand opening of the WynnBET Sportsbook at Encore Boston Harbor.



Pictured at the grand opening of the WynnBET Sportsbook at Encore Boston Harbor Jan. 31 are, from left, Encore Vice President of Food and Beverage Michael LaPorte, Rep. Dan Ryan, Everett resident Carol Scalesse, and Rep. Joe McGonagle.

to allow legalized sports betting in Massachusetts.

“Massachusetts residents are passionate about their sports. This legislation will allow fans to bet on their favorite teams but do so in a regulated manner that promotes responsible gaming, while bringing in millions of dollars of revenue that has previously been going to our neighboring states or to illegal operations,” said Rep. Giannino. “I was proud to serve on the Economic Development Committee under the leadership of Chairman Jerry Parisella and work on this important legislation. I am thankful for the work of Speaker Mariano and his tireless effort in getting this bill across the finish line.”

Rep. Jeff Turco of Winthrop voted in favor of the legalized sports betting bill in Massachusetts. “To be blunt, I’m sort of gaming skeptic, but the simple reality of gaming in Massachusetts is it’s here. We have the most successful lottery in the country. Our gaming industry is doing very well. It’s simply doesn’t make any sense to have all the gaming we do and exclude one of the more profitable elements, not just for the casinos, but also for the Commonwealth. The deci-

sion on gaming was made decades ago, and this is just a natural expansion of it, and I supported it, and proudly so.”

Rep. Adrian Madaro of East Boston said he voted in favor of the legalized sports betting bill.

“Legalized sports betting means fans can enjoy games in a whole new way,” wagering responsibly while creating jobs and raising revenue for important state services,” said Madaro. “I was please to vote in favor of this bill. I look forward to seeing the economic growth that comes from this new industry in Massachusetts.”

Lynn City Councilor Brian LaPierre said, “This is awesome. Today is an historic day for Massachusetts. Sports wagering has been a long time coming for our state. It’s going to bring in millions of dollars in new state revenues that can go to our schools, our roads, and housing concerns throughout the Commonwealth. This is a great, one-stop shopping experience for anyone who likes to dabble a little bit on sports betting. You can bet all the games and come and have a great time at the beautiful Encore resort.”



Speaker of the House Ron Mariano (center) joins Reps. Aaron Michlewitz, Dan Ryan, Jerald Parisella, and Joe McGonagle and Boston sports celebrities for a photo at Tuesday’s grand opening celebration of the WynnBET Sportsbook at Encore Boston Harbor.

‘The Comedy of Errors’ to be staged by Theatre Company of Saugus

The Theatre Company of Saugus presents The Comedy of Errors, one of William Shakespeare’s most popular plays. Performances are the first two weekends of March 2023.

The Comedy of Errors is a farce about two sets of identical twins who were separated in a shipwreck shortly after birth. Now adults, Antipholus of Syracuse and his servant, Dromio of Syracuse, arrive in the town of Ephesus, which happens to be where their long-lost twins, Antipholus of Ephesus and Dromio of Ephesus, live. When the Syracusan twins encounter the friends and families of their siblings, a series of mishaps based on mistaken identity result in wrongful beatings, a near-seduction, the arrest of the Ephesian twins, and false accusations of infidelity, theft, madness,



and demonic possession. Eventually it all gets sorted out!

The Theatre Company of Saugus (TCS) is

pleased to have Waltham resident Francine Davis as the director of the show, and a troupe of talented actors from all over the

North Shore of Massachusetts.

TCS welcomes some performers new to the group: Reading resi-

dent Bryan Deroo as Antipholus of Syracuse, Ryan Marchant from Arlington as Antipholus of Ephesus, Amanda Flicop of Malden as Adriana, David Lee Vincent of Newburyport as the Duke, Roland “Boot” Boutwell of Winchester as Egeon, Shelove Superior of Malden as the Courtesan, and Olga Karasik-Updike of Newbury as the Foreign Merchant.

TCS welcomes some returning veterans of its stage to the show: Billy Jenkins of Stoneham as Dromio of Ephesus, Vi Patch of Wakefield as Dromio of Syracuse, John Leonard of Andover as the Map Seller, Kaycee Renee Wilson of Brighton as Luciana, Kathy Rapino of Saugus as the Abbess, Larry Segel of Winthrop as Angelo, and Sherri Wilcauskas of Middleton as Nell. Lauren Lyon of

Natick is the stage manager.

Performances of The Comedy of Errors are on March 3-4-5 and 10-11-12, 2023, on Fridays and Saturdays at 8:00 PM, and at Sunday matinees at 2:00 PM.

Tickets purchased at the door are \$22-\$24. Tickets purchased in advance are \$19-\$21, online at TCSaugus.org/tickets.

The venue is the American Legion Post 210 / 44 Taylor Street / Saugus, Massachusetts 01906. The performance space is not wheelchair accessible, but it does feature a bar serving alcoholic and soft drinks. Snacks and raffle tickets are available for purchase before the show and during intermission.

For more information, see the Theatre Company of Saugus website at TC-Saugus.org.

Mayor Wu’s State of the City Address

Mayor Wu delivered her first State of the City Address on Wednesday, January 25, 2023, at MGM Music Hall. The following is her speech:

Good evening, Boston! Tonight we’re at the beautiful new MGM Music Hall, and I want to thank the Red Sox and Fenway Music Company for hosting us, and for your commitment to our city.

I’m grateful to be joined by partners in public service: Council President Flynn and Boston City Councilors, Chair Robinson and the Boston School Committee, Mayor Janey, Ambassador Flynn and Mrs. Flynn, Governor Healey, Senate President Spilka, Attorney General Campbell, Treasurer Goldberg, State Representatives and Senators, US Attorney Rollins, county officials. Thank you so much for being with us. And to our interpreters, thank you for helping us reach all of our residents this evening, in seven languages.

A year ago this week, I was bundled up for my first snowstorm as mayor, riding shotgun with our Superintendent of Streets, Mike Brohel, as he drove the dark, icy roads before dawn, and worked with his team to salt, scrape, and win back the pavement from the snow. By the time we got to City Hall, Al Vilar was already hunkered down in the Traffic Management Center, lunch packed for a long storm, monitoring eight gigantic screens for anyone who might need help on the roads. As the rest of our city slept, Boston’s 311 and 911 call-takers answered phones throughout the night, to send services where needed, while emergency management crews, EMS, police, and fire stood ready.

Our city is carried by so many people whose faces most of us never see. Who aren’t on the news, or on stage accepting awards, but after a full day of serving our constituents, still find time to coach softball at Charlestown High Field or pack meals for new immigrant families in Mat-tapan Square.

That’s why, on your way in tonight, you saw the beautiful portraits of just a few of these civic heroes. To all our City Workers: Every accomplishment and constituent service delivered, every detail of the agenda we’re sharing here tonight—is only possible because of you. I’m so proud to work alongside you.

It’s been three years since we’ve been able to celebrate—and reflect on—the State of our City in person. And we’ve all felt the collective toll of these years and the continued impact on our hearts and minds, on local businesses and household budgets.

Boston has always been resilient.

But when resilience goes from a strength that we call on, to a constant state of being, it’s time to stop hardening ourselves against the world, and start changing the world we live in.

Real change comes from community, so I knew my first and most important job as mayor was to build the team Boston deserves. That team is here tonight. Our Cabinet is two-thirds people of color! We’re BPS parents, and graduates. We speak Spanish and Arabic, Vietnamese, Haitian Creole, and more. We speak honestly about Boston’s past, present, and future, because we’ve lived the challenges and shared the dreams of the families we now get to serve.

The young man who started as a life-guard in our community centers, now oversees them as our Chief of Human Services: José Massó.

The school lunch lady’s daughter, who found her calling as a teacher, then launched a nationally recognized high school in Dorchester, is now our Boston Public Schools Superintendent: Mary Skipper.

The boy from Roxbury who wanted to serve and protect, who—against all odds, and over nearly three decades—rose through every level of leadership at the Boston Police Department, is now our Boston Police Commissioner: Michael Cox.

The girl who watched her refugee parents wash dishes at restaurants so their kids could lead a better life—now leads our efforts to ensure that all workers, no matter where they were born or what language they speak, have health, safety, and dignity on the job, as our new Chief of Worker Empowerment: Trinh Nguyen.

The toddler who took his very first steps in City Hall daycare, grew up to hold city leaders accountable for vast racial disparities in city contracting as President and CEO of the Black Economic Council of MA, and is now our Chief of Economic Opportunity & Inclusion: Segun Idowu.

Just like our communities, this team refuses to accept that things must be how they’ve always been. We’re taking on the hard, complicated issues our residents face, no matter how deeply entrenched or politically fraught.

When we took office with winter looming, and hundreds living in unsafe, unsanitary encampments—we didn’t look away: We built a new model for housing and ser-



Mayor Michelle Wu delivers remarks during the 2023 State of the City address at the MGM Music Hall.

vices so tents could come down and people could heal. And through the Newmarket BID’s Back to Work program, folks who were once living at Mass & Cass are now part of the team working to keep the area clean and safe for everyone. Some of those leaders are here tonight. Mike, and Mike, Tim, Carlos, and Melissa: we are honored to be doing this important work together.

When Omicron spiked and pushed our hospitals to the brink, we didn’t turn away: taking decisive action for public health, because, no matter the backlash, Boston will never compromise on protecting our people. And I want to thank everyone at the Boston Public Health Commission, Executive Director Dr. Bisola Ojikutu, and all of our public health and healthcare workers.

When we learned the MBTA would finally make major repairs to the Orange line—but with just two weeks’ notice—we didn’t back away: every City department stepped in to keep Boston moving and proved that a more connected, coordinated system is possible. Tonight, I’m renewing my call for the people of Boston to have a seat on the MBTA Board.

Under extraordinary circumstances, our team has refused to settle. Over the last year:

We made three bus lines entirely fare-free. Now, we’re accelerating over two dozen miles of new dedicated bus lanes, expanding our bike network, and organizing even more neighborhood Open Streets events.

We worked alongside residents in Eggleston Square and business partners to secure a Community Peace Garden on Washington Street; and helped 40 artists in Uphams Corner go from facing eviction to owning their own building—the Humphreys Street Studio is here to stay. And, this year we’ll make Boston’s largest investment ever in artists and the arts.

We made the spaces and services of our City more accessible: opening a new, fully-accessible City Hall Plaza and senior center in Orient Heights, partnering with the City Council and our Disability Commission to require closed captioning on public TVs, connecting 19,000 seniors to services; and making our 311 app multilingual for the first time, in eleven languages. We reopened a newly renovated Roslindale Branch library...this year we will reopen the Faneuil Branch in Oak Square, and begin design in Fields Corner and the South End.

Our Office of Early Childhood made dozens of new Pre-K classrooms free for our littlest learners and launched a professional development program to help early educators teach in Boston, debt-free. We fought off a state takeover of Boston Public Schools, onboarded a new district leadership team, and just welcomed our first electric school buses at the Readville bus yard.

Our police officers took nearly 900 guns off our streets and worked with community to achieve the lowest level of Part One, violent and property crime in 15 years. I want to thank Commissioner Michael Cox for coming home to Boston, Superintendent-in-Chief Greg Long for your service over 18 months as Acting Commissioner, and all our officers for your hard work.

We are looking to end community violence with new strategies to address trauma and provide essential supports—from our Youth Safety Task Force, to an alternative crisis response program with EMS and behavioral health services. And, this April, we will launch a Fire Cadet Program thanks to the leadership of our new Fire Commissioner, Paul Burke.

We also graduated our first class of students from Boston’s PowerCorps program, training young people from our neighborhoods for great jobs in the green economy. Many of them are here tonight.



Rep. Aaron Michlewitz with Suffolk County Sheriff Steven Tompkins.

We’ve invested in longstanding Legacy Businesses and are helping new entrepreneurs fill vacant retail spaces to revitalize our neighborhood commercial districts. And we’re excited that Lego is building their North American headquarters in Boston this fall. We made progress on closing the supplier diversity gap, awarding contracts worth more than \$100 million—from school lunches to snow removal—to businesses owned by women and people of color. Thanks to legislation passed by the City Council and approved by the state legislature last month, we’ll be able to do even more. And we did all this on top of filling 5,000 potholes, collecting more than 500 tons of curbside composting, and plowing through 53 inches of snow last year.

In so many other cities, none of this would have been possible. But Boston has never let anyone else define our possibilities.

It’s thanks to the people of Boston that I can stand here tonight and say—the state of the City is strong.

And we have the resources, the resolve, and the responsibility to make it even stronger. As we look to the year ahead, our administration is focused on building a green and growing city for everyone.

Doing so will require that we reckon with—and rebuild—the systems that got us here. When the “Boston Redevelopment Authority” was created nearly 70 years ago, its purpose was singular: to clear the way for new development, even if that meant displacing tens of thousands of working class, immigrant, and Black and brown residents.

Since 2016 it’s been called the Boston Planning and Development Agency, or “BPDA,” but the focus on building buildings rather than community has held back the talent of its staff and deepened disparities in our city.

Over the last decade, Boston saw the largest building boom in generations: cranes in the sky and jobs on the ground. But that growth wasn’t harnessed for the benefit of all our communities. Not planning for community stability meant that even as our population grew, many were squeezed out. Not planning for affordability, and transit, meant that housing prices soared, and traffic snarled. Not planning for sustainability meant that as new development reshaped our skyline, public infrastructure continued to age: subway tracks and school buildings, pools and community centers.

Now, stronger storms and hotter summers raise the stakes. The pandemic has thinned our usual Downtown crowd, and inflation has forced many workers to balance two or three jobs just to keep milk in the fridge or make rent. In this moment of need, we have an opportunity and an obligation to change how we plan for Boston’s future.

Under the leadership of our Chief of

Planning, Arthur Jemison, we’re charting a new course for growth, with people as our compass. Tomorrow I’ll sign an executive order establishing a Planning Advisory Council to fully integrate long-range planning, and begin modernizing our zoning code. It will be led by Chief Jemison and consist of Cabinet chiefs in capital planning, transportation, climate, housing, and the arts.

Over this next year, we’ll shift planning efforts from the BPDA to a new City Planning and Design Department—to expand planning and urban design as a coordinated effort that guides our growth. Our vision is for Boston to sustainably reach our peak population of 800,000 residents with the housing and schools, parks and public transit to support that growth.

Next week we’ll file a home-rule petition to formally end the decades-old urban renewal mission of eradicating so-called “blight and urban decay,” and instead re-dedicate our resources toward Boston’s urgent needs today—resiliency, affordability, and equity. Together, these changes will, for the first time since the 1960s, restore planning as a central function of City government.

I’ve also charged our team with improving the uneven and unpredictable approval process that frustrates community members and developers. Next month, we’ll form a steering group of real estate and community leaders to recommend changes to our Article 80 development review process. We’ll simplify and accelerate timelines so that good projects get shovels in the ground faster. We’ll also transfer compliance and enforcement from the BPDA to the Office of Housing so our communities can be confident that we’re always getting the full benefit of development agreements.

Of course, we can’t grow sustainably unless our residents are secure in their homes. Our housing crisis displaces children and families, drives down enrollment in schools, hurts local businesses, increases homelessness, and strains our public health and safety systems.

So, our housing plan must be just as comprehensive. We’ll deploy every tool, every strategy, and every resource to create more housing that residents can actually afford. We will prioritize keeping residents in their homes, and closing the racial wealth gap by boosting home ownership.

Last year, our Office of Housing permitted 3,800 housing units—the most since 2018, including 1,300 affordable units—the most in a generation. And we’ll do even more by directing the bulk of our federal recovery dollars to housing. In the coming weeks, we’ll be sending the City Council a Home Rule Petition on rent stabilization to end rent gouging, and protect our families from eviction and displacement.

And we’re putting City land to work. We’ve analyzed every square foot of City-owned property and identified several parcels that could generate thousands of affordable housing units. We also have 150 vacant lots in our neighborhoods ready for housing. Local builders: work with us to design high-quality, affordable homes that enhance the surrounding neighborhood, and we’ll give you the land for free. And we’ll provide increased mortgage assistance so our residents can afford to buy these homes. We’ll accelerate zoning changes for predictability and equity in our growth. Our team will update zoning for squares and corridors across the City, and complete neighborhood planning processes to bring thousands of new homes and support the small businesses, retail, and jobs that make Boston a vibrant cultural hub.

Our neighborhoods must be climate resilient and community focused. This year we will launch a civic and green space master plan, and begin design for new community centers in Grove Hall and the North End.

And, we’ll help residents invest in retrofitting older homes, like triple deckers, to save money on utility bills and protect against flooding and heat. And we’ll walk the walk with municipal buildings, too.

Meeting our climate goals starts with ending our use of fossil fuels, so I’m signing an Executive Order requiring all new City construction and major renovations in our schools, municipal buildings, and public housing, to be entirely fossil-fuel free.

And because “green” and “affordable” go hand in hand, together with the Boston Housing Authority, by 2030, we will end the use of fossil fuel in the City’s public housing developments. This will mean unprecedented investments to modernize these buildings and meet Governor Healey’s ambitious goals for heat pump deployment—ensuring that the families with greatest need, benefit first—from healthier homes, and lower energy costs.

NEWS FROM AROUND THE REGION

COUNCIL LOOKS TO FILL POSITIONS

CHELSEA - The City Council is moving forward with several steps in the process to find a replacement for former City Manager Thomas Ambrosino.

Last week, the council held a subcommittee meeting to address several of the issues surrounding Ambrosino's departure, as well as for finding a replacement for clerk to the council Paul Casino. Casino officially retired from his position in December, but is working on a part-time/consultant basis to help the council until they find his replacement.

At the subcommittee meeting, the council discussed appointing Deputy City Manager Ned Keefe the acting City Manager.

However, the motion to appoint Keefe the acting City Manager was tabled at Monday night's meeting to the Feb. 6 council meeting because there was still some input the council was looking for from the deputy city manager and the city solicitor.

The council did approve hiring the Edward J. Collins, Jr. Center for Public Management to consult and assist with the City Manager search process.

"Prior to that, we, as a City Council will have a discussion about what we would like to see, what type of City Manager that the city will be looking for," said Precinct 8 Councilor Calvin Brown.

Brown said the search process will also incorporate input from the community, and that there will be more information at the next council meeting about a possible screening committee to help with the selection process.

As for the clerk to the council position, the council voted to reissue the job description for the position as a full-time position of up to 35 hours per week with a flexible schedule.

Brown noted that if the council could not find a suitable person to fill the

position full time, there could be some flexibility and ability to hire someone at fewer hours. However, Council President Leo Robinson stated that it is being advertised as a full-time position.

Casino announced his planned retirement for the end of 2022 in May of last year.

At that time, the council established a special search subcommittee for the clerk to the council position. At that time, the clerk was being listed as a 20-hour per week position.

LICENSING COMMISSION TOLD OF PLANS FOR QUALITY INN TO REOPEN

REVERE - The Revere License Commission held its regular meeting last Wednesday, January 18, in the Council Chamber. Chairman Robert Selevitch and member Daniel Occena were on hand for the meeting.

The meeting was routine in nature with the exception of a hearing into the future plans of the Quality Inn at 100 Morris St., which has been closed for almost the past three years since the beginning of the pandemic.

The specific agenda item stated as follows: "Sudguru Hotel, LLC d/b/a Quality Inn, 100 Morris Street, Beth Scherer, Manager, Renewal Hearing: Hearing into business reopening plans and status of building and safety violations."

Jamin Patel, a principal with Sudguru, and Ms. Scherer appeared before the commission.

"The reason you're here basically is for us to find out what your intent is with this license," said Selevitch, who noted that Mr. Patel had appeared before the commission a year ago and said that he would reopen the hotel.

"We have been trying to reopen," said Patel. However, he said that he has had difficulty find-

ing staff, but now he has found sufficient staff to reopen. He also noted that he has reached out to the various city departments to obtain the necessary permits for reopening.

"We've had two walkthroughs with the Fire Dept., Building Dept., and the Board of Health," said Patel.

However, Occena pointed out, "You're a-ways away from getting signed off, there are a host of issues and safety concerns that came out of these inspections, and you've done nothing since the walkthroughs to address them."

"We've addressed a number of them," said Patel.

Scherer stated that "95 percent of the work has been done."

"I know the list is extensive, but everything has been done," Scherer added, noting that burst pipes that had damaged the electrical systems while the hotel was closed during the pandemic had been the source of the problems. "We're ready to open."

In response to a question from Selevitch, the pair pointed out that Sudguru operates a large number of hotels in the area and in Florida.

Selevitch read a letter from Ward 6 City Councilor Richard Serino that Serino had sent to the commission.

"I am concerned with the prospect of renewing Quality Inn's licenses," said Serino. "For nearly three years it has not been operating as a hotel while other hotels have resumed their operations post-pandemic and has continued to act in a way that would seem to have no regard for the people of No.Revere."

Serino further noted that there is "trepidation about the Quality Inn's long-term goals." He also noted that during this past summer, an unauthorized Park and Fly business operated on the premises.

"There are rumors swirling about the hotel's management goals and

speculation that they have opted to move up their renewal for means other than as a hotel," Serino said.

Scherer responded that finding staff, particularly a qualified property manager, has been difficult.

She also briefly addressed the issue of the City of Boston's request to use the hotel as housing for that city's homeless back in 2021 by former Boston Mayor Kim Janey. The hotel had been at the center of controversy when Janey had suggested that the hotel be used to provide temporary housing as a solution for the homeless population in the encampment at the so-called Mass. and Cass intersection.

That prospect blew up in the Boston media and drew the ire of Revere officials, including Mayor Brian Arrigo.

"This is the 'elephant in the room', but that is not happening. Our intention is not to do anything behind anyone's back," Scherer said, thereby essentially putting the issue and the rumors to rest.

Although the commissioners were satisfied with the management's avowed intention to reopen as a hotel, Selevitch said that the commission is unable to grant a license at this time until all of the permits and department sign-offs are completed. He made a motion to table the application until the next meeting, which is February 15, and Occena voted in favor.

Prior to that hearing, the commission addressed two routine matters, both of which they unanimously approved with little discussion.

The first item was an application by Atlantic Auto Body, Inc. for transfer of ownership of a Class 2 Motor Vehicle Dealer license to Ana and Cleison Sarnaglia from Jeffrey Castaldo. The number of cars for sale is to remain at 60.

This matter had been

See REGION Page 11

OBITUARIES

Richard "Pinky" Senior
Lifelong East Boston resident

Richard "Pinky" Senior, a lifelong resident of East Boston, passed away on January 23 at the age of 87.

Richard was born on August 18, 1935 to the late Charles and Loretta (Daley) Senior. He was predeceased by his brother Charles Senior.

A veteran of the US Marine Corps, he served as a Corporal from 1954 to 1957. Richard worked as a machinist for the Boston & Lockport Block Company for 14 years. He retired from Bank of Boston in 1989 where he was employed as a security guard. After retiring, he enjoyed day trips to Foxwoods, collecting movies and spending time with his family.

The beloved husband of 58 years to Joan (McKee) Senior, he was the devoted father of Da-



vid Senior and his wife, Sharon Senior and Debra Birmbas and her husband, John Birmbas; cherished grandfather of Christopher Birmbas, Michael Birmbas, Alex Birmbas, Miley Senior and Michael Senior.

Donations can be made to the Wounded Warrior Project, P.O. Box 758516, Topeka, Kansas 66675-8516 or a charity of your choice.

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day God called you home
You left us peaceful memories,
your love is still our guide;
and though we cannot see you,
you are always at our side.
Our family chain is broken, and
nothing seems the same;
but as God calls us one by one,
the chain will link again.*

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Cheryl, Richard, & Lexi**

Fourth Anniversary Remembrance

†

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Region // CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

continued from the commission’s December meeting.

Mr. Sarnaglia presented his application to the commission. He said he recently bought both the business operation and the building. He further said the present auto body repair and auto sales shop will remain unchanged.

After Selevitch questioned whether 60 cars can fit on the lot, Sarnaglia pointed out a parking area on the lot. There were no opponents and the commissioners approved the application unanimously.

The second item was an application of Primos Partners, LLC d/b/a Fajita’s Sports Bar & Restaurant, 46 Revere St., Nicolas Portillo, manager, for a change of closing hours to 2 a.m. from 12 a.m.

Mr. Portillo presented the application. He noted that other establishments in the area remain open until 2:00 and said that a lot of his customers have requested that he remain open until 2:00.

Selevitch noted that a neighbor had contacted the commission and stated, “The business has been a very good neighbor.”

There were no opponents and the commissioners unanimously approved the change in hours.

The commission approved the following license renewals for 2023:

Common Victualler:

China Crystal, LLC d/b/a China Crystal, 750 Washington Avenue

Bell Circle Assoc. d/b/a Comfort Inn & Suites, 85 American Legion Highway

Casablanca House of Pastry, Inc. 151 VFW Parkway, Suite 60

Diya, LLC d/b/a Subway, 339 Squire Road

G.F. Enterprise, LLC d/b/a Taco Bell, 339 Squire Road

Hasbegu, Inc. d/b/a Glen’s Roast Beef, 325 Bennett Highway

Ly Roun & Sereypanha Chhoeurng d/b/a 4 Season Boba Tea, 196 Shirley Avenue

Mass. Trips, Inc. d/b/a Esquite, 194 Shirley Avenue

Mass. Trips, Inc. d/b/a Esquite Taqueria, 1148-1150 North Shore Road

Mehrun Islam d/b/a 7-Eleven #34393, 127 Broadway

N. Pizza, Inc. d/b/a Nonni’s Pizza, 750 Washington Avenue

Revere Pancakes, Inc. d/b/a IHOP 4732, 105 Squire Road

Sainte Corp. d/b/a Nick’s Deli, 750 Washington Avenue

Café Montecristo, Inc. d/b/a Montecristo Mexican Grill, 364 Broadway

Entertainment: Café Montecristo, Inc. d/b/a Montecristo Mexican Grill, 364 Broadway

Innholder Hotel: Bell Circle Assoc. d/b/a Comfort Inn & Suites, 85

American Legion Highway

Parking Lot: Bell Circle Assoc. d/b/a Comfort Inn & Suites, 85 American Legion Highway

Park N Co d/b/a Park N, 44 Railroad Street

Class 1 Motor Vehicle Dealer: The Bikers Outfitter, Inc., 1039 Broadway

Class 2 Motor Vehicle Dealer: N.L.R. Corp. d/b/a Nick’s Auto Sales, 141 Lee Burbank Highway

Motorcycles of Manchester, Inc., 184 Broadway

Secondhand Dealer: AC’s Cards & Games, Inc., 348 Revere Street

The next meeting of the commission is set for February 15.

The commission received one communication, which was as follows:

Notification from the Massachusetts Alcoholic Beverages Control Commission (ABCC) of the approval of an application for the transfer of a Malt/Wine Package Store license to Santa Fe Super Market Corp. from Shayona Management, Inc.

COUNCIL EXPECTED TO VOTE ON CHARTER CHANGES

WINTHROP - The Town Council will take its most significant step yet when it takes up whether

to bring proposed town charter changes..

The Ordinance Review Committee met for the better part of last year, coming up with 13 proposed changes to the town charter or town-wide ordinances.

The four proposed ordinance changes can be approved by a vote of the Town Council, but the changes to the charter need to go to the State House before a potential vote by the public during the municipal election in November.

Those proposed charter changes include several that have generated a good deal of discussion among the council and in town, including one that would change the composition of the council itself, and another that would set a recall provision for elected officials.

A number of those recommendations were made by the Ordinance Review Committee to increase participation in town government and entice more potential candidates to run for office.

The recommendations include decreasing the size of the council from nine to seven members

and making all the council seats at-large with one president. Currently, there are six precinct seats, two at-large, and the council president.

The committee also recommended reversing the term lengths for the councilors, with two-year rather than four-year terms for all councilors except the president. The president, who currently serves a two-year term, would serve for four years.

Council President James Letterie noted that when the council takes up these recommendations next week, councilors will have the opportunity to amend them before they go before voters. All charter changes will need a supermajority of six votes to continue along the path to make it before voters in November.

The proposed changes also include a mechanism where the council could vote on a pay raise, but there was no amount of that potential increase suggested by the Ordinance Review Committee.

“Many of these recommendations were done by the thought to try to get more energy, more enthusiasm, more competitive

racers,” said Letterie.

Letterie said the council will be able to make amendments, and expected that there could be amendments to the recommendations about the composition of the council as well as the recall provision.

“One of the recommendations was to go to all at-large,” he said. “Somebody could make a motion to put that on the table, there could be an amendment to say I think it is a good idea to reduce the number to seven . . . but instead of six at-large and a council president, it could be six precinct and a council president.”

While several councilors have expressed support for a recall provision in the charter, they have mostly agreed that there should be a higher threshold for the recall than was included in the Ordinance Review Committee recommendation.

Letterie said he suspects when that recommendation is brought up, there will likely be an amendment to increase the number of signatures needed to enact a recall election.

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FRESH AND LOCAL

Beans & Greens so many ways

By Penny & Ed Cherubino

For a long time, “beans & greens” was one of our favorite farmers’ market suppers. When we spotted excellent fresh greens on a farm stand, we’d grab a bunch, pull a few staples from our pantry, and toss together a hearty, healthy pan full of delicious. Lately, we’ve been reading about many different approaches with various cooking methods for these ingredients. We suspect that “beans & greens” may be trending in 2023.

Our Old Method

The preparation we’ve used for years takes a few minutes of tearing and chopping but then cooks up fast. The quantities are not that important, and you can add a flourish of this, and a dabble of that if inspiration hits you. This dish is gorgeous with ruby or tri-color chard, but you can use other greens, with or without the stems, as your taste and market

availability suggests.

First, wash the chard and tear or cut the leaves into bite-size pieces. Chop a small onion, slice some garlic and dice the chard stems. Sauté those items in olive oil in a large skillet or a wok over medium-high heat. Drain a can of beans (we like cannellini) and add to the mixture. Finally, add the chard leaves with any water clinging to them. Toss and cook until wilted. If the mixture looks too dry or sticks, add a bit of water or wine. Serve with a squirt of lemon juice and a good grating of Parmesan cheese.

Roasted or Braised

Our research into alternate approaches to this meal began with Rachel Roddy’s recipe for pumpkin, beans, greens, and cheese in The Guardian. She describes it as, “Like classic cassoulet, the beauty of this dish is the soft, almost fudge-like beans with a slight crust on top.”

We love that she added squash’s visual appeal, flavor, and nutrition to the meal.

Over at the New York Times, we found Lid-ey Heuck’s recipe for “Braised White Beans and Greens With Parmesan.” She calls it “...a satisfying vegetarian main course or a hearty side dish for roast chicken or sausages.”

In winter, we love the idea of a dish roasting in the oven, slowly braising on a burner, or simmering in a slow cooker. As the aroma fills our home, we can anticipate a warming meal on the way.

Added In or Served Alongside

Roddy added pumpkin to her version. Heuck suggested that her “beans & greens” could be a side dish. One of the beauties of this concept is that you can pick your cooking method and then add or subtract what you want to make a perfect meal for your favorite omnivore,



This batch of “beans & greens” was seasoned with a dice of smoky ham that was stowed in our freezer from another meal.

vegetarian, or vegan.

The batch Penny made and photographed below was seasoned with a dice of smoky ham she had stowed in our freezer from another meal. You can also decide what balance of ingredients you want for your creation.

This one was lemon-forward. Penny also used the end of a bottle of wine to make it a bit sauc-

ier. Sometimes she makes it with lots of garlic. This time the garlic was a background hum, not a shout.

If someone extra shows up for dinner, you can use the “beans & greens” to sauce a pan of pasta. You’ll also see it served on thick slices of country bread as a sort of bruschetta. Italian sausage makes a great addition, or you can serve the sausage as a side

option. And by changing the protein, cheese, greens, condiments, and type of beans, you can present your family with a Tex-Mex, Asian, Spanish or Polish version.

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

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