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THE BOSTON SUN

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SERVING BACK BAY - SOUTH END - FENWAY - KENMORE

Pine Street, Roundhouse Hotel to open homeless shelter at Mass/Cass

Agreement shocks neighbors, some in City Hall

By Seth Daniel

By Monday morning, tables, lamps and other hotel amenities were being taken out the front door of the Best Western Roundhouse Hotel on Mass/Cass in the South End to make way for a controversial new homeless shelter, but many in the neighborhood – and some in City Hall – had just found out about the plan last Fri-

day. When the news leaked out on Friday, neighborhood groups in the South End quickly began meeting to digest the shocking information and figure out what to do. Several neighborhood groups put together quick meetings to analyze the shock factor of adding a homeless shelter in place of a hotel in an area that wasn't supposed to get any more human services – period.

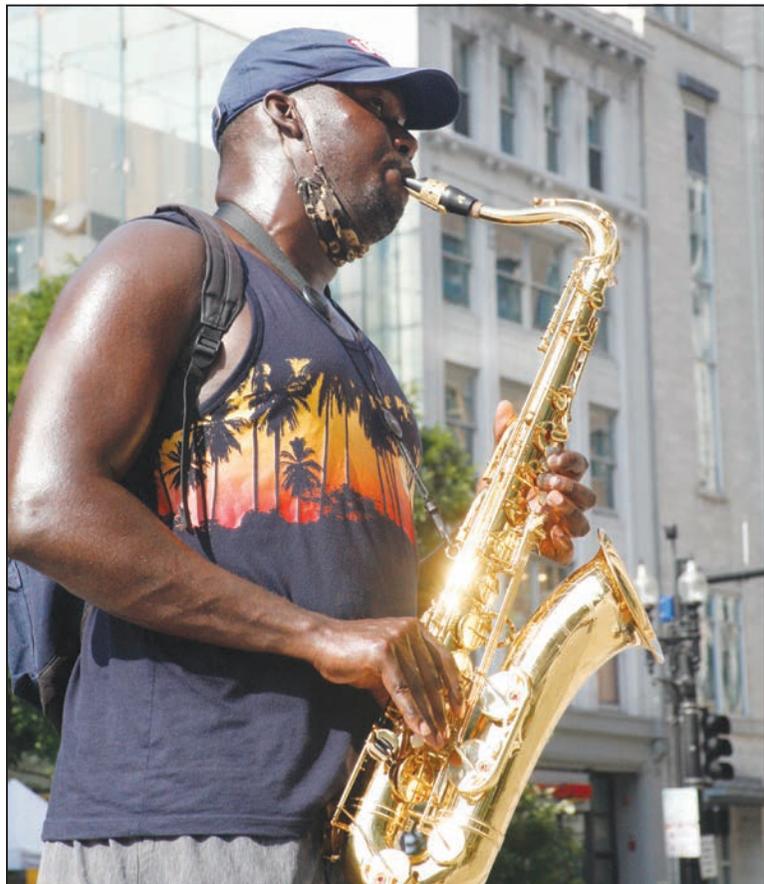
The period has been replaced with a comma, though, as Pine Street Director Lyndia Downie this week said they are moving forward and will transfer approximately 180 individuals into 92

rooms at the hotel – which they have leased for one year. The clients are being transferred from a Suffolk University dorm they have been in since the pandemic hit the homeless population hard in April and the City moved fast to find alternative housing in empty dorms across the City. To socially distance its population, Pine Street had used the Suffolk dorm, but Downie said they have to be out by the end of July – and their choices came down to the Roundhouse or nothing.

“This is a decision between two

(PINE STREET INN, Pg. 4)

SAX SERENADES ON BOYLSTON



Jonte Samuel worked hard for his music last week on Boylston Street, where he played his saxophone despite the hot and humid temperatures. Coming from St. John, USVI, he said the heat doesn't bother him. He came to Boston 10 years ago, and frequently can be found playing on Boylston Street. Of note, he can play from memory about 20 national anthems from various countries – something that's a big hit with tourists during normal summer visiting season.

Vacation cancelled?

Take a trip to the Public Garden instead

By Lauren Bennett

The Boston Public Garden is known for being a place to relax, unwind, and enjoy nature, and this summer, be sure to stop and smell the hibiscus.

For more than 100 years, city gardeners have prided themselves on ornamental planting displays for people to enjoy on strolls through the park.

“Visiting the seasonal floral displays are more than a photo op—they are a civic tradition,” according to a 2019 article on the Friends of the Public Garden’s website.

“Exotic” plants like palm and banana trees were introduced to the Garden by William Doogue, who was in charge of the Public Garden from 1878 to 1906, the article states.

“Confident of his credentials, Doogue wanted nothing less than to make the Public Garden a show piece of the city,” it continued.

(PUBLIC GARDEN, Pg. 6)

USES EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAM REOPENS



COURTESY PHOTOS

The United South End Settlements (USES) Early Childhood Education program and the Club48 program re-opened this week for summer activities after having closed in March due to COVID-19 restrictions. Kids and staff at USES were excited to be back with friends and teachers for some ‘normalcy.’ All over the City, as Phase 3 rolled out, new activities like youth sports and summer camps were allowed.

Community advocates for fair tree removal in Phase Two of Muddy River Restoration Project

By Lauren Bennett

The Muddy River Restoration Project Maintenance and Management Oversight Committee (MMOC) held a virtual public meeting on June 30, where they provided information to the public about Phase Two of construction for the Muddy River Restoration Project.

Phase One of the project included the daylighting of the Muddy River in the area near Emmanuel College. Phase Two consists of work in the area between Lev-

erett Pond to Boylston Street in both Boston and Brookline, and includes dredging, excavation of the sandbar and island at Leverett Pond, removal of phragmites, and restoration of the shoreline.

A portion of Phase Two includes the removal of 123 trees over the more than three mile long stretch of land that makes up the project area, US Army Corps of Engineers Project Manager Jennifer Flanagan said at the public meeting. This news has left Caroline Reeves

(MUDDY RIVER, Pg. 3)

EDITORIAL

WHEN DID THE U.S. GO FROM FIRST TO WORST?

For those of us of the Baby Boom generation, it was unquestionable that the United States was “the best” country in the world.

Despite the war in Vietnam, Watergate, recessions, 9/11, and other setbacks, America continued to be a global leader in just about every aspect of world affairs.

Basically, there was the U.S. -- and then there was everybody else.

American exceptionalism was taken for granted (even if in truth we often were not all that exceptional).

However, the coronavirus has pulled back the curtain and exposed us for what we have become -- a nation that ranks among the worst by many metrics. Compared to our supposed peers in Western Europe and Asia, our response to the pandemic has been pathetic. COVID-19 death rates per capita in Western Europe are only a 10th of the death rate in the U.S. And while theirs are falling, ours is rising.

Consider these additional facts:

How can it be that we have 4% of the world's population, but we have 25% of the deaths from COVID-19?

How can it be that four months into the pandemic, we still do not have enough PPE (personal protective equipment) for our hospital and other front line workers?

How can it be that some of our states have more new cases of COVID-19 than entire countries?

How can it be that not only is the amount of our testing still woefully inadequate, but that our labs are so backed up that it is taking 5-7 days to get results -- which all but makes the testing useless because results need to be made available within 24-48 hours?

COVID-19 has revealed us to be the equivalent of a so-called Third World country.

To put it simply, we have devolved from being a global leader to that of a global laggard with the result that thousands of Americans are getting sick and dying and our economy remains in tatters -- and with no end in sight.

NAME CHANGE WAS A LONG TIME COMING

The decision this week by the Washington Redskins to change its team name was long, long, LONG overdue.

The term “redskin” is -- and always has been -- a racist reference to Native Americans.

For anyone who doubts that notion, just think about all of the western movies that have permeated our culture for almost 100 years. When the hero would say something like, “Let’s kill all of those thievin’ redskins,” (or something similar), the use of the term “redskin” was meant to dehumanize Native Americans.

It certainly was not a complimentary term.

We should point out that the obnoxious and arrogant owner of the Washington football team for years has ridiculed any suggestion that he change the team's name.

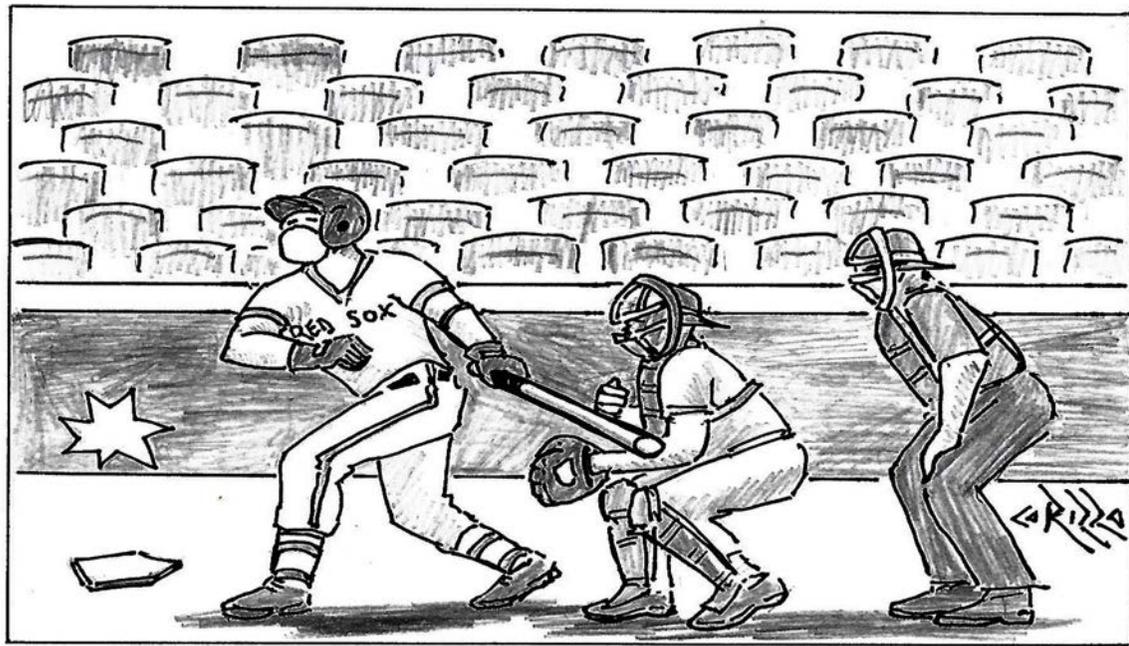
It finally was the force of economics, not a sudden surge of altruism, that prompted the team's about-face. When various team sponsors -- who themselves became motivated to do so only in light of recent events -- threatened to remove their millions of dollars of revenue, that finally is what got the team ownership's attention.

So we're happy to see that yet another vestige of America's racist past is falling. There still is a lot more to do, but changing the name of Washington's football team is yet another step in the right direction as we acknowledge and renounce our racist and genocidal past.

To quote the Sam Cooke song:

It's been a long, a long time coming

But I know a change's gonna come, oh, yes, it will



LOOKING FORWARD TO GETTING BACK

ZBA approves takeout for Greystone Cafe Bakery and Provisions

Staff report

Greystone Cafe Bakery and Provisions, which is co-owned by Jacqueline Gannon, is set to open at 75-77 Dartmouth St. on the corner of Appleton and Dartmouth Streets. The space was previously occupied by Appleton Bakery Cafe.

There will be minor interior renovations to the space, but

Gannon said at the Zoning Board of Appeal (ZBA) virtual hearing on July 14 that she is seeing to remove the proviso granting takeout accessory use to the previous owner, and have it granted to the new cafe.

She said that as a previous employee of Appleton Cafe, she has experience with takeout “in that particular space.”

Faisa Sharif from the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services

said that there were no concerns about the proposal, and ZBA staff noted that they had received 10 letters of support. Councilor Flynn was also in support of the project.

The ZBA granted the take-out proviso to the applicant, noting that it will again be for this applicant only, and any other applicant who wishes to offer take out at this location must come before the ZBA for separate approval.

Bok navigates uncharted terrain during first term

By Dan Murphy

When Kenzie Bok was sworn in for her first term as District 8 City Councilor on Jan. 5, she never could have imagined what the following six months would have in store for her.

Bok, who was named chair of the city's Ways and Means Committee, soon found herself charged with managing the city's budget for the first time -- a daunting task even under the best of circumstances -- while navigating the consequences of an unforeseen pandemic and amid growing tension between the public and law enforcement.

“It was a very challenging process because first, we had to deal with declining revenues because of the pandemic,” Councilor Bok said, “and as the pandemic wore on, the situation around the budget grew darker.”

Councilor Bok rose to the challenge, however, by overseeing the city's first-ever remote budgeting process, which included “behind-the-scenes staff clinics and working sessions” for her fellow councilors that allowed them to make inquiries of the city's various departments on what they planned to spend requested monies on.

Also, the city was able to take more public testimony than ever before via virtual meetings.

And just last week after the city finalized its budget for next fiscal year, Councilor Bok filed for a public hearing to discuss the merits of participatory budgeting and zero-base budgeting.

Unlike participatory budgeting where the public is allowed to pro-

vide input during the process, and which looks at the current budget as it pertains to last year's budget, zero-base budgeting follows an example set by the federal government in which a smaller group of stakeholders would take a clean-slate approach in examining the current city budget.

“We're implementing it going forward to build on the good job this year in making the traditional budget process more inclusive and transparent,” Councilor Bok said, “but we could still do more to open up the budget process.”

This new approach proposed by Councilor Bok, along with her other fellow first-term councilors -- Julia Mejia, Liz Breadon, and Richard Arroyo -- would allow community organizations that came before the committee during the budget cycle to testify again about their proposals for new programs.

(KENZIE BOK, Pg. 3)

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Walsh announces city programs, and initiatives, provides COVID-19 update

By Lauren Bennett

Mayor Walsh made several announcements at his press conference on July 14, one day after Step One of Phase Three of the state's reopening plan took effect in the City.

"Right now, the US is the worst place it's ever been in dealing with the pandemic where our numbers are," Walsh said. "Here in Boston and in Massachusetts, we need to do everything we can to avoid going down that path."

He said that the first few weeks of Phase Three "are very critical," and emphasized the importance of continuing to wear a face covering, social distancing, and washing your hands.

City Hall remains open to the public on Tuesdays and Fridays, and Walsh said on July 10 that the City is "formulating a plan to increase access to services," but "despite the state guidelines...we will not be hosting public or private meetings in City Hall or any other City building at this point." He said that online meetings will continue to ensure that residents have their voices heard.

On Tuesday, Walsh announced that beginning on July 23, City Hall will also be open for in-person services on Thursdays, for a total of three days a week that they will be open to the public. All safety measures will still be in place, and appointments will still need to be made to come to City Hall. To

make an appointment

Last week, Walsh also talked about the importance of the availability of parks and open space this summer as the City continues to fight COVID-19.

"I believe and we believe in the City that parks are essential to the health and wellbeing of the residents in every single one of our neighborhoods," he said. "We remain the number one city in the country for access to parks."

In Phase Two, City playgrounds and splashpads reopened "with appropriate safety and signage," Walsh said, and beginning on July 13, permitting resumed for "low and moderate contact sports and other events."

While high contact sports such as basketball, football, and lacrosse are not allowed until Step Two of Phase Three, participants in those sports are permitted to conduct skill practice.

Outdoor events in the City are limited to 50 people, which is half of what the state allows. "People will be required to follow guidelines of face coverings and social distancing," Walsh added.

BOSTON POLICE REFORM TASK FORCE

Walsh previously announced the Boston Police Reform Task Force, headed by former US Associate Attorney General Wayne Budd and made up of black and brown community leaders, civil rights leaders, and activists.

"Starting next week, the task

force will be holding online listening sessions on key issues," Walsh said on Tuesday, when residents can share their "experiences, beliefs, and suggestions."

More details on the times, dates, and content for the sessions will be available this week.

Walsh also said that he "reaffirms" his "pledge to act on the recommendations of this board as informed by the community."

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

On July 14, Walsh announced updates to the youth summer job program offered by the City.

With fewer employers Abel to offer in-person jobs for youth, the City has increased funding for the youth summer job program from \$8 million to \$12 million, as well as increased outreach and support for youth, to "offer an opportunity to every young person in the City who wants it."

This includes the creation of a program called Learn and Earn Career Development Internships, which pays high school and college students to take college level courses and leave with actual college credit, experience, and financial earnings.

The program, which began on July 13, has more than 500 young people enrolled in 26 different classes.

FOOD TRUCK INITIATIVE

This Friday will mark the start of a new summer food truck initiative in the City, Walsh said, where food trucks will make their way into neighborhoods across the city for the first time ever.

Walsh said that with food trucks offering a "natural outdoor dining experience," they are a great way for people to support local businesses in a safe way.

"We want people to support them," Walsh said. "Historically, food trucks have been associated with downtown locations and special events," but this year they will be parked in 23 sites across the City in places like city parks and playgrounds, with the potential for more sites.

For more details about the food truck initiative, visit boston.gov.

PLASTIC BAGS

In March, the City of Boston temporarily suspended the ban on plastic bags and the five cent fee for paper bags to allow for "more flexibility during a very difficult

time," Walsh said.

"Barring and changes in circumstances, the ban on plastic bags and the five cent fee will remain suspended until September 30 in the City of Boston," Walsh announced on July 14.

He added that the Boston Public Health Commission and other agencies have said that reusable bags are safe, and "people should feel free to bring them to the store."

BPL and BCYF UPDATES

The Boston Public Library (BPL) branches remain closed to the public, but BPL to Go, the online checkout system for pickup, has been popular, the mayor reported. He said that 1.4 million online items have been checked out, and there have been 31,000 new library card sign-ups.

As of July 13, BPL to Go will be available at a total of 16 branches, "with more branches coming soon," Walsh said.

Boston Centers for Youth and Families (BCYF) have been closed since March except for free meal distributions. Walsh said the City has "been working hard to make sure the programming is available."

Virtual teen programs have started, and online registration for both in-person and virtual programs for children ages seven and older began on July 10.

"As more programs are finalized, we're going to be adding them," the Mayor said. "All will be operated in accordance with public health guidelines."

OTHER UPDATES

Walsh said that "we're moving forward with caution because we're seeing what's happening in other states when they rush. "We need to continue moving forward, supporting the needs of the communities and investing in our communities," including "advancing equity and the quality of life in our City throughout this pandemic."

Walsh also addressed the ongoing concern of fireworks in the City, as they are still going off in many neighborhoods.

He said that the fireworks "continue to be a safety and a quality of life concern in our neighborhoods," and they are "causing trauma, stress, and sleeplessness" for many residents. They are also a fire and safety risk. Walsh talked about a one year old boy who

was in the hospital "with serious injuries to his hands and body," calling the situation "entirely preventable."

Walsh has created a task force whose job it is to come up with ways to address this issue in the neighborhoods.

"It's incumbent upon all of us to let those people it's time to stop," he said. "Fireworks are illegal in Massachusetts. They can't be carried over state lines."

Walsh said that concerned residents can anonymously call the CrimeStoppers hotline or text the word TIPS to 27463.

"My message to people on the fireworks is 'it's time to stop,'" Walsh said.

BAKER UPDATE

Governor Charlie Baker held a press conference on July 13, where he gave an update on COVID-19 statistics in the state, as well as announced a new process for the public to report business who are not complying with the state's health and safety guidelines.

Baker said on Monday that about 1.2 million COVID-19 tests have been administered so far, and the seven day average positive test rate "remains at about 1.7 percent," which he said is a drop of about 94 percent since mid-April.

Currently, there are 583 patients hospitalized statewide for COVID-19, he said.

The governor urged residents to continue wearing face coverings, hand washing, and staying home if they feel sick.

"COVID is not going to take the summer off," Baker said. "Our success on the reopening piece will be driven in many ways by the workforce safety standards. We're grateful that thousands of businesses and organizations are doing their part..."

A new website, mass.gov/compliance, has been launched for the public and employees of businesses to report non-compliance with the state's mandatory health and safety guidelines.

"Investigations can result in enforcement measures if violations are discovered," Baker said. "We are deeply grateful for the cooperation of our employer community and many others. We hope this tool can promote accountability as we reopen Massachusetts."

KENZIE BOK (from pg. 2)

Councilor Bok also commended Mayor Martin Walsh for taking the community's opinion to heart with his decision to reallocate \$12 million from the Boston Police Department's overtime budget to instead support other causes, such as affordable housing, public health and food access.

And while this change came after contracts with Boston Police unions expired on June 30, Councilor Bok believes it will set an important precedent moving forward.

"The commitment I made is to do everything I can to keep us on that path in the year ahead because the structure of our police contract made it functionally impossible to achieve bigger allocations in this year's budget," she said, "but we plan to renegotiate the police contract in a way that we can achieve reprioritization in next year's budget to a greater degree."

Besides managing the city's budget, which included chairing around 50 related hearings and working sessions, Councilor Bok



District 8 City Councillor Kenzie Bok.

has still found time to help deliver more than 3,000 boxes of food to the undernourished in her district and led volunteers who made more than 3,000 well-being calls to area seniors. Now, she also looks forward to writing new policy proposals.

"I'm particularly excited to support Councilor [Lydia] Edwards in her fair-housing zoning amendment," Councilor Bok added.



Events planned for Esplanade go virtual in response to pandemic

By Dan Murphy

While the state's Department of Conservation and Recreation

has postponed group events on the Charles River Esplanade through the end of this month, some organizations that had events planned

in the park during this time have taken a cue from the Esplanade Association, which successfully reimaged its annual 5K as a virtual footrace for the first this year in response to the ongoing pandemic.

From June 1 to 7, 300 runners from three countries (the U.S., Brazil and India) and 13 states participated in the virtual race by running or walking 5K (3.1 miles) anywhere in the world at their own pace. And while the number of participants this year was only a fraction of the 1,000 runners the event typically draws, the virtual race was still seen as an unqualified success.

"For us, it was a successful

event, but not on par with a typical 5K, but in experimenting with something new, we were pleased with the results," said Michael Nichols, executive director of the Esplanade Association. "We certainly thought that a virtual race was the responsible way to hold the event, so we're not surprised to see other organizations that had their events planned for the Esplanade follow suit."

Among them is the American Podiatric Medical Association Run, which was originally scheduled for Saturday, July 25, but instead became a virtual event that continues through Aug. 8, and the AIDS Walk & Run, which was scheduled to take place on the

Esplanade June 7, but will now take place virtually as well.

In lieu of performing on the Esplanade, the Boston Landmarks Orchestra staged a virtual concert called "Simple Gifts" last night, July 15, and has another entitled "Dances and Delights" planned for Wednesday, July 29, from 7 to 8 p.m. that will stream live on its website at www.landmarksorchestra.org.

"Even as Massachusetts begins to reopen and more things are being allowed outside, we join DCR in recommending caution in holding any group activities on the Esplanade," Nichols said.



A view of Back Bay from the Charles River Esplanade.

PINE STREET INN (from pg. 1)

bad choices," she said. "I understand people's frustration. I do. I'm grateful for the people in the South End we've worked with. We do see this as a bridge to housing and as a way to a supportive housing system. In the short-term, this is the solution. This pandemic has forced a lot of decisions quickly that I don't think any of us want. Unfortunately we're still in this. The numbers have leveled off, but we're still watching the numbers very closely."

She said she knows it is a compromised area, one that no one thought would be the site of an additional shelter to spread out clients – as many in the institutional community and residential community (including Pine Street) have met monthly for years trying to figure out how to reduce services like shelters and Methadone clinics in the area. Adding one there is not what Downie wanted to do, but she again stressed there was no other option.

They did hire a hotel broker, and made tons of phone calls. She said the search was hampered by hotels that weren't interested, and those that had better, more lucrative offers, from colleges and universities looking to supplement dorm space.

She said it was apparent that spreading out clients worked in reducing COVID-19 numbers. She said they had more than 35 percent positive tests in the homeless population at the end of March. After they spread them out in the dorms, that number went down substantially and is now below 2 percent. She said the hotel was a rushed situation, and they need to be in there by Aug. 1, but she said the other option is that these folks would be on the street, likely on

the street in the South End.

"We would have had to say not everyone can go back to the shelter and good luck," she said. "In our opinion, a significant number of those people would have ended up on the street in the South End. We understand this isn't what anyone wanted, but the pandemic has forced us to make short-term decisions and try to put long-term solutions into place."

That might be the situation, but few in the neighborhood are impressed with the outreach and transparency in the matter – something Pine Street has done excellently to date. Some have said not even Mayor Martin Walsh was fully aware this was happening, and likely wouldn't have supported it had he known it was coming to Mass/Cass.

A request for comment from the Mayor's Office was not returned by press time.

Some neighbors said a private meeting of elected officials, Pine Street officials and other stakeholders on Mass/Cass did not go well earlier this week, and though the plan seems to be going forward now, Pine Street has not won any friends – and has likely disappointed many ardent supporters.

Bob Minnocci, a board member for Worcester Square Area Neighborhood Association (WSANA), was outraged by the plan, and he said he counted himself a supporter of Pine Street before.

"Pine Street Inn couldn't have chosen a worse location for placing nearly 200 highly compromised individuals," he said. "They're putting these individuals in the middle of the worst open air drug market in the city and these people will be in harm's way...These individuals could have been placed

in separate locations, such as shelters that had space. Pine Street had been thought of as being a good neighbor...In a major respect, I feel they have been disingenuous and it will be difficult for them to recover their reputation, which previously had been stellar."

South End Forum Moderator Steve Fox said the decision was a "gut punch" and was something that went against years of community meetings with Pine Street and other providers working to stabilize Mass/Cass. Those meetings, known as the Opiate Working Group, have taken place almost monthly for four years, and this is the type of plan everyone at the table – including Pine Street – sought to prevent, he said.

"From a public health perspective, selecting a place where vulnerable homeless or those struggling with addiction or in recovery or suffering from mental health issues are placed in the most active opioid trade area in the city defies logic," he said. "It is true that Pine Street has enjoyed a terrific reputation and partnership with the South End, but for those of us who have been working Mass and Cass issues for over a decade, the selection of this location for a new shelter operation is a gut punch in terms of our initiatives to try to reduce the concentration of services and activities in this part of the South End. Before this announcement by PSI, I do not think that a single member of the Working Group would have supported the addition of any new provider or service at Mass and Cass."

Fox said he hopes that the greater community will resist making it a NIMBY issue, especially since the plan has been to reduce services at Mass/Cass for years –



Workers had already emptied out the Best Western Roundhouse Hotel on Mass/Cass in the South End Monday morning in preparation for a one-year lease with Pine Street Inn to use it as a homeless shelter for 180 people. Neighborhood leaders and some in City Hall are furious, but Pine Street says it had no other choice.

and that the South End has been so accommodating to new services located there over the past 15 years. But enough is enough, he said, and without any outreach until last Friday, it's a bad idea.

"This is not about meeting need," he said. "All of us who have been working on these issues for many years, were not only surprised, but incredibly disappointed – including our local elected officials – that notice was only given to us last Friday."

Bob Barney of Claremont Neighborhood Association agreed with Fox, and said they are in alignment on the issue.

"This siloed decision by PSI is disturbing and disappointing," he said. "I hope this decision is re-evaluated."

Downie said the shelter is not a long-term solution, but rather a bridge to get these 180 clients into supportive housing without putting them out on the street. She said the Housing Placement team will be working in the Roundhouse with clients to help locate

them to permanent, supportive housing during the year-long lease. Some have said there is a plan for Pine Street to buy the Roundhouse for permanent, supportive housing – which would fall more in line with published plans for the Mass/Cass area. However, Downie said there isn't a plan for that now, and it is too early to say if that could happen.

She said the push has to be getting housing for very low income people in a much faster way than has been done in recent years.

"We've done everything we can to reduce shelter beds, reducing our beds by 30 percent," she said. "We've moved towards housing in an incremental way. I don't think we have the luxury of incremental anymore."

City officials have indicated that with the plan going forward, they would institute some sort of agreement to protect the neighborhood, including no backfilling rooms when clients leave, providing detailed statistics about housing placements and potentially providing a shuttle service for clients.

USES EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAM REOPENS

Courtesy photos

The USES children's programs opened back up this week for the Early Childhood Education program and the Club48 program. The programs had closed quickly in March due to COVID-19 restrictions.



A young member of the Early Childhood Education program plays on the equipment after many months away from USES.



Shown above, staff members in the Early Childhood Education program prepared to welcome back children to the program. Shown right: Back into the slide of things...a student in the Early Childhood Education program at USES in the South End enjoys playing on the slide this week after being gone since March.



MUDDY RIVER (from pg. 1)

of the Muddy Water Initiative, along with several other residents, upset, as they believe the tree canopy should be preserved.

"A critical element of the work is the protection of the existing trees and the landscape along the river," Flanagan said. "In the four plus years of design for the Phase Two project, the Corps has worked extensively with the project sponsors and our landscape architect to determine the specific trees for removal and also the protection during construction."

She said the primary goal for the tree portion is to protect as many trees as possible using wood chips and matting to protect trees against soil compaction and trunk damage from heavy equipment.

"Careful consideration and deliberate thought was put into the design to minimize removal of the trees," Flanagan said, "however, some of the trees slated for removal are either in the direct path of the flood risk management channel slope or in a location where access must be provided in order to get equipment in to dredge the river."

She said that in areas where equipment access "requires tree removal," trees that are diseased, damaged, or non-native have been

chosen "to minimize overall... impact."

Caroline Reeves said in a statement that all 123 trees were initially slated to be cut down at once beginning on July 1, "although the work will not be commencing in many of the work areas for more than two years," she said. "The destruction of Canopy, the destruction of wildlife habitat, the noise and harm to the local communities are all unacceptable, when what might happen in the future to the project, to the plans might all change due to unforeseen circumstances," she wrote.

Reeves told the Sun that "many trees were removed" in Phase One, which she believes caused damage to the ecosystems of local wildlife.

"From my point of view, I noticed because the magnificent birds of prey—hawks, falcons, and owls—that lived in those trees were displaced to the Back Bay because their habitat had been completely destroyed."

She said that that is why she and several others "decided we needed to watch out for the trees" during Phase Two of the project. She said that while she did not expect every tree to be saved during construction, she wanted to make sure that the process was carefully thought

out. Reeves said that the Charlesgate Alliance, Speak for the Trees, and Gas Leaks Alliance have been working with her to get more information about the tree removal process and its effect on public health and climate resilience.

The Emerald Necklace Conservancy has also been a big proponent of the Muddy River Restoration project and protecting tree canopy.

"The Emerald Necklace Conservancy supports the very important work of the Muddy River Restoration, which has been greatly needed for over 20 years to prevent repeat of the devastating flooding in 1996," President Karen Mauney-Brodek said. "This flood management project is essential for Boston and Brookline, and we will continue to listen, advocate and communicate for the needs of the park and the park users in the coming months and years."

Reeves said that the project team said at previous public meetings that they would replace trees that were cut down, but "planting trees is risky at best," she said. Doing so would not immediately replace the tree canopy or habitats for wildlife, she added. There is also a chance that many young trees would not survive.

Reeves said that the MMOC held a meeting "that's supposed to be open to the public" on May 13, but she said the public was "muted" during the online meeting when they tried to bring up the issue of the trees. She also said she believes the MMOC did not "communicate our concerns to the right people." The MMOC did not respond to a request for comment by press time.

After the public meeting on June 30, Reeves said she began writing letters the next day stating that she did not want to see all the trees cut down at once, and received a call back from the US Army Corps of Engineers saying that they heard what she had to say.

"Since we've been able to communicate with the Army Corps directly," Reeves said, "they've been receptive and we've been given information." She said that while trees were cut down that morning, it was only in one particular area, and the other areas will follow later, rather than cutting all 123 trees down at the same time.

She said she would like to see the trees to be cut down "on an as-needed basis. We're not unreasonable," she said. "Don't cut them down before you need to."

The project page on The US

Army Corps of Engineers website offers information on construction activity for the next 90 days.

"The removal of existing trees greater than 4" caliper identified to be removed will begin in early July for Work Areas #7-#11 as the contractor starts installing site fencing," a document on the website states. "Trees identified for removal in other work areas will take place as the contractor mobilizes in each work area in preparation of channel excavation." More information, including a project map showing the work areas, can be found on the website.

"We are grateful and we are impressed with the US Army Corps of Engineers' willingness at this late date to hear us and to work with us," Reeves said. She added that she and others will still continue to "push them for an assurance that they might push those dates for the staging even further into the future."

Reeves said she has worked with Parks Commissioner Ryan Woods and City Councilor Kenzie Bok on this issue and will continue to do so. She said she is "grateful that [the US Army Corps of Engineers] are willing to dialogue with us," and is "grateful for our city officials who are backing us up."

More Than Words receives Library of Congress State Literacy Award

Staff Report

More Than Words (MTW) of Boston and Waltham has been announced by Massachusetts Center for the Book as the recipient of the 2020 Library of Congress/Massachusetts State Literacy Award. Funding for the state literacy awards program is made possible through the generous support of David M. Rubenstein, co-founder of The Carlyle Group and a major benefactor of our nation's library.

Founded more than 15 years ago by Jodi Rosenbaum, CEO, More Than Words is a social enterprise that empowers youth ages 16-24 who are court-involved, in the foster care system, out-of-school, or homeless to take charge of their lives by taking charge of a business.

"More Than Words is honored to be recognized by the Library of Congress Literacy Awards and grateful to Mass Center for the Book for its nomination," said Rosenbaum. "The young people we employ are bursting with potential, but are frequently denied the access to the resources, opportunities, and compassion they need to thrive. At MTW, they work



More than Words CEO Jodi Rosenbaum and MTW grad London.

approximately 20 hours per week learning critical customer service, technology, inventory management and leadership skills."

More Than Words has established retail bookshops in Boston and Waltham as well as online, pop-up, and wholesale bookselling businesses and a high-end event space in Boston. All of these operations are staffed by the young people at the core of the MTW mission.

It has been three months since MTW made changes to their program in response to COVID-19. They closed their doors but continue to support youth by con-

tinuing to pay stipends so they can count on income to pay bills and buy food. Youth receive a base stipend for attending check-ins with Youth Development Managers and team meetings, and earn additional stipend payments by participating in workshops. As they begin to map reopening, MTW is no longer talking about going back, they are focused on building forward.

As MTW Boston Partner Yonis describes, "Regardless of everything that has been going on with the world today, MTW has been continuing to support youth by still paying us and having virtual

sessions. Every Wednesday and Friday we have You time and Youth Development shifts. During these shifts we have been talking about how to manage time and keep ourselves busy during quarantine." Similar to the hourly stipend that youth received prior to the COVID-19 crisis, this pay incentivizes engagement and participation in programming.

Sharon Shaloo, Executive Director of Massachusetts Center for the Book, joined in the accolades, saying, "MTW is a thriving example of the way books change lives, and a lesson in the commitment to mission and agility during

crisis that is a model for all of us. We hope that the award we have been able to make on behalf of the Library of Congress State Literacy Awards will support their fundraising during these unprecedented times."

Shaloo continued, "We admire MTW for the way that it delivers multiple literacies and competencies to youth most at risk, integrating them with business partners and customers throughout the community of the book in our commonwealth. We are heartened that the business model provides an important window into the occupations in the community of the book, a vital part of the commonwealth cultural and educational economies."

The Massachusetts Center for the Book, chartered as the Commonwealth Affiliate of the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress, is a public-private partnership charged with developing, supporting and promoting cultural programming that advances the cause of books and reading and enhances the outreach potential of Massachusetts public libraries. For more information, contact info@massbook.org or visit <http://massbook.org/>.



More Than Words Grads Sarita and CeCe.

PUBLIC GARDEN (from pg. 1)

Greenhouses and nurseries were built across the city to grow plants for the garden beds each year, as well as other parks in the city.

This tradition continues today, and not even COVID-19 could get in the way of Parks Department Greenhouse Manager Winfield Clarke's eagerness to plant this year's beds, making the Garden feel like a tropical getaway.

Walk into the Public Garden now, and you'll be met with bright splashes of red, yellow, pink and purple, as well as palm trees that are replanted each year. Clarke explained to the Sun that the palm trees are planted in the summer, then removed in September and transported to a greenhouse, where they are kept dormant until the next year.

Clarke, who is from Barbados, said that he wanted to incorporate some of his roots into the plantings this year, and create a tropical feel right in the middle of Boston for those who may have had to cancel vacations due to COVID-19.

He said plants like cordyline, ficus, hibiscus, alocasia, and even a banana and a mango tree are some of the many plants featured in this year's beds.

He said that some of the plants



PHOTOS BY DAN MURPHY

Vibrant tropical plants fill the garden beds this year in the Boston Public Garden, thanks to Greenhouse Manager Winfield Clarke and his team.

were grown in the greenhouse, harkening back to Doogue's days, and others were specially ordered from a nursery. The whole garden, which has nearly 60 flower beds altogether, took about a month for his team to complete, Clarke added.

While the virus did not stop the planting from happening, it did change the way it had to be done. The planting team had to work in shifts due to the virus, with three to four people working six feet

apart to get it done. Clarke also said that hand sanitizer was readily available for the team to use.

"We try to bring something different each year to the garden," he said, but this year called for something extra special.

"I wanted to do something different because of COVID-19 going on," he said of this year's plantings. "It gives people a nice thing to look at since vacations are cancelled." He said he tried to include lots of color in the garden to make



Plants like these that thrive in warm climates can only be planted in Boston during the summer, as they will not survive the harsh winters, Clarke said.

people happy. "Take a walk, enjoy it," he said.

"The horticultural beds in the Public Garden are spectacular this year," Friends of the Public Garden's Executive Director Liz Vizza said in a statement to the Sun. "Despite the challenges of Covid-19, Winfield Clarke's designs and the greenhouse team's installation are delighting visitors in a year when we all yearn for this kind

of beauty more than ever. Many thanks for the creativity that went into these beautiful displays!"

Clarke said with this year's garden all planted and ready to enjoy, he's already thinking about what to do for next year. Again, he said the design would be "totally different," and will feature some plants that have been growing in a greenhouse from seed this year.

Whittier Street Mobile COVID testing hits Back Bay, Newmarket

By Seth Daniel

The Whittier Street Health Center on Tremont Street has wheels, and their mobile COVID-19 testing lab is coming to the area for free testing of all residents – no appointment necessary.

The Mobile testing facility travels through the area and takes walk-up patients for COVID-19 testing, just this week performing its 5,000th COVID-19 test – and landing near the South End in Newmarket (1000 Mass Ave.) and in the Back Bay (29 Stanhope St.).

Whittier Director of Nursing Melissa Leaston staffs the Mobile

unit in her haz-mat suit and tests patients who want to check their status. She said results were coming in quickly, but now it has gone to about four or five days because of all the testing that needs to be done in other hot-spot states like Texas and California.

They test everyone age 5 and up.

“Obviously, we want to diagnose people so they can quarantine and not make other people sick,” she said on Monday while setting up at Newmarket outside Alianza Hispana. “The big thing is asymptomatic carriers and identifying them so they don’t make others sick.”

The test is a quick nasal swab, and once registered with the mobile clinic, it takes only a few minutes and patients are on their way.

“The mobile unit helps because we have several folks who may not have the ability to get to us at Whittier and may not be able to afford a test,” she said. “Our testing is free and it’s been invaluable, especially for people who live in congregate living situations.”

The unit began operations in June and has been travelling to a number of locations throughout the city. Leaston said a lot of people might be leaving this summer for vacation or to see family or to go back to work. Getting a quick and free test clears them to do those things without worry.

“A lot of folks have said they were going to be travelling or they’re returning to work and need to be tested,” she said. “They want to be cleared before leaving or returning to work.”

They expect to continue testing throughout the summer at least.

The upcoming schedule includes:

- Thursday, July 16, Boston Living Center, 29 Stanhope St. (Back Bay). 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.



The Mobile COVID-19 testing van on Monday. The van has tested more than 5,000 people as of this week, free of charge.



Set up and ready to go, Director of Nursing Melissa Leaston in her protective suit poses with members of the staff before testing begins.

- Tuesday, July 21, Nubian Bay). 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Saturday, July 25, Tropical Food Market, 450 Melnea Cass. (Roxbury). 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Friday, July 24, Boston Living Center, 29 Stanhope St. (Back Bay). 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.



Director of Nursing Melissa Leaston helps to set up the Mobile testing unit on Monday.

HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE DROP-OFF

Millennium Park | 315 Gardner Street | Saturday, July 25 | 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.

If you come to our event, please keep in mind:

- face coverings must be worn
 - we don't take latex paint, and
 - you must place your waste in your trunk or the bed of your truck.
- For safety reasons, we won't remove materials from back seats.

This event is weather permitting. For the latest updates, visit our twitter feed @BostonPWD

To check a list of acceptable items, visit: boston.gov/hazardous-waste



Outdoor dining surges on Newbury, hopes for longer-term situation

By Seth Daniel

Outdoor dining is a great luxury in some American cities, but it took a pandemic for it to become a potentially permanent feature of the Boston dining scene, and now many restaurant operators clinging to anything they can get to survive, say they would like to see places like Newbury Street become more outdoor oriented for the long-term.

When outdoor dining was approved originally in early June, only a smattering of restaurants on Newbury Street were taking advantage of it. Fresh off a protest-fueled looting spree on the corridor in early June, few of the establishments had recovered enough to put tables outside and serve food. Only a couple, and most of them were doing it symbolically.

Now, on Newbury Street and Boylston Street in the Back Bay, outdoor dining complementing

reduced indoor dining has exploded – with warm weather and outdoor spaces providing a “safer” alternative for diners and a new-found vibe to Newbury that some hope will remain.

As of this week, there are 20 establishments on the Newbury and Boylston corridor in the Back Bay that are approved for expanded outdoor dining by the License Board.

Some 13 of them are on Newbury Street, and they’ve staged some elaborate setups to lure diners back.

At Grand Tour on Newbury, Steve Earle said they’ve had umbrellas, flowers and an expanded dining area on the street for about three weeks. The restaurant – part of a group operated by Michael Serpa – had just opened five weeks before COVID closures, and they have only room for three or four tables inside under the regulations now, so they are hanging their hat on the outside.



Steve Earle of Grand Tour on Newbury Street said their restaurant is small, so the street is their dining room now. He hopes to have the expanded outdoor seating continue long-term.

“Having the outdoor location and sidewalk seating, we get more foot traffic and people really see it,” he said. “It definitely can be a draw for people. Our restaurant is very narrow and small, so we can get only about three or four tables in there. This is our dining room. This is where we are going to welcome people and they can have great food and wine. We hope to be doing this at least through September.”

But he also said he could see it happening long-term – like others.

Veteran restaurateur Kathy Sidell operates The Met, Saltie Girl, and Stephanie’s on Newbury Street, and they have pivoted quickly to offer patio and expanded outdoor dining at their locations to complement reduced indoor dining – which she said is still risky for some diners. She said all restaurants are hurting right now, hanging on for dear life in

fact, but that there is an opportunity to make Boston more fun if this could last.

“There’s so much energy on the street,” she said. “It’s been so different. I want to live in a place like Rome where people are outside eating together. We have the potential to do that in Boston...I think the outside dining mostly is really fabulous and makes the city feel more vibrant. Ultimately, when it gets extended, I certainly hope that when COVID-19 goes away, we can still do this a summer or two or maybe permanently.”

Right now, Sidell said, one of the challenges is to convince people to come out to eat, and to give them an exciting experience. As with anything during COVID-19, there is a risk/reward factor in deciding to leave home. Giving a safe experience to diners that is unique is key to a restaurant revival – which is where outdoor dining

comes in.

“You need to create an experience,” she said. “It’s risk/reward. People want an experience or they won’t go out. It’s very different decision making than it was a few months ago...Outdoor is breezy and seems safe. People are reluctant to go inside. I think we don’t have all the answers yet regarding aerosols and whether it can be in the HVAC units. Right now we can be outside. I’m hoping when October rolls around and chillier weather comes around we’ll have answers that are positive. We have three months. If we don’t, it will be very tough waters for everyone... There is a deep concern about the winter right now in this industry.”

For now, the idea is to create an experience to dine in a new and different way – on the street surrounded by plants and people walking on the sidewalk in what has become a cozy, very non-Boston, atmosphere.

If they have it their way, it will continue.

“I love it,” Sidell said. “For us, it’s opened up new possibilities for our Saltie Girl location that didn’t previously exist within the framework we have.”



At Sola’s on Boylston Street, every table showed a reassuring message to would-be diners.



A staff member wipes down tables on the street on Newbury Street last week. It’s just one of dozens of expanded outdoor locations approved.



The new expanded dining room for Piattini on Newbury St. has created a cozy atmosphere very separated from the street, but very cozy and intimate with the restaurant and sidewalk.



Stephanie’s on Newbury Street has tried to create an experience for diners, which includes expanded and cozy outdoor dining opportunities, said owner Kathy Sidell.

The Grande Dame of Worcester Square: Rose Mehegan passes at 98

By Seth Daniel

If one searched hard enough, somewhere in the center of Worcester Square park in the South End, they would likely still find the thumbprint of Rose Mehegan – a former resident of the Square who ran traditional lodging houses there and elsewhere in the South End, headed the Worcester Square Area Neighborhood Association (WSANA) for many years and was the kind of colorful character so common in old-time Boston but increasingly extinct these days.

After more than 60 years, Mehegan left the South End in 2005 due to increasing health complications, and passed away in a Rhode Island nursing home on May 29 at the age of 98.

Born in Rhode Island, she came to Boston in the 1940s and found a base in Worcester Square. She ran multiple lodging houses on the Square and through the South End – with the full experience of providing her lodgers one meal a day, transport to appointments

and even haircuts. It was much more common in the South End those days to have “roomers” and Mehegan’s base was 5 Worcester Sq.

She was a member of WSANA for many years, serving as president for a time, and being credited with keeping it all together over the many years she lived there. She gave her heart and soul to caring for Worcester Square park, keeping it up and beautifying it at a time when the South End didn’t do that often. Her forte, however, was Christmas in the Square.

Adrienne Kimball moved to the South End with her young family in 1991, and lived next to Mehegan until she had to leave – actually buying her home at 5 Worcester Sq. at Mehegan’s request.

“She loved the Square and the tree lighting was her pride and joy, always with lots of colored lights,” she said. “It was charming, very 1950s, but it was the highlight of her year. She lived for it and loved it. I’m glad they continued on that legacy...She was a character. It

was very hard to see her declining. She had a short-term memory loss. She was really important to Worcester Square when she was younger and energetic. She was constantly in City Hall, lively and always happy.”

Pamela Mason, who still lives on Worcester Square, met Mehegan in 1973 when she moved to the South End. She said Mehegan was very politically connected, fair and nice to everyone.

“She was the grand dame of Worcester Square,” she said. “You would always see her puttering and cleaning up the park. She had a big and good network in informal politics. She could call any politician and they knew who she was. None of the mayors ever missed the tree lighting, from Mayor White on to Mayor Menino. Halloween in the Square was always a big deal too, and we’ve kind of continued that too.”

Greg Jackson, who moved to East Springfield Street 40 years ago, said there are no others like Mehegan.

“Rose was one of a kind,” he said. “My partner and I moved to East Springfield 40 years ago and Rose was here 60 years altogether. She kept Worcester Square going. She was a ball of energy. She would go out and sweep the whole square, maybe one or two times a week. When nobody else cared too much, she was out doing it. She also swept and shoveled other people’s steps...Politically, she was a force to be reckoned with.”

That was the case in 1978 when she was arrested near a polling location at the Bethel Tabernacle Pentecostal Church. She was handing out leaflets with others, and apparently caught the ire of Police Sgt. Peter Larffarello. After he gruffly told her to move, they began to argue. According to one account, the officer grabbed her and twisted her arm and hurt



Rose Mehegan (center) receiving an award from late Mayor Tom Menino in the 1990s. Mehegan was a pillar of Worcester Square in the South End more than 60 years before leaving due to health complications in 2005. She passed on May 29 at the age of 89.

her. She was traumatized, and he ended up arresting her. According to the neighborhood account, few realized how roughly she had been treated until they saw her injuries. A newspaper account confirmed she did get treated, and said she was arrested for resisting arrest. The case was continued without a finding.

Both Jackson and Kimball shared that she likely single-handedly saved Worcester Square park at one point – using her political pull to fight the City turning the park into a parking lot. No one was quite sure how she did it, but Kimball affirmed it was true.

“If it wasn’t for Rose, it may well right now be a parking lot for the hospital and it would have destroyed the Square,” said Kimball.

Mehegan also cared for her parents in her lodging house, with her father being an alternative healer and psychologist – specializing in hypnosis and mesmerism. Her brother, Edward, also lived with

her for a time, and she had one son, Lawrence, and was married to Charles Mehegan.

In 2006, WSANA decided to name the Square after Mehegan, and a plaque naming it Rose Mehegan Park now stands for all to see.

In a poem written by long-time resident Helaine Simmonds, she bid Mehegan farewell in 2005, and it is just as appropriate at her passing.

To quote a portion, “She cared not if you were not straight; long as you stepped up to the plate. And with Joe and Jim and others like them; they pols you could hear her berate. You might think that this was not much; but she sure had the magic touch. She kept us in line; But never with wine; With good will and with grace and such. So let’s drink to a lady named Rose; and bid her farewell as she goes. She’s done so much good; In this neighborhood; And never did stick up her nose.”



Red Sox give grants to ten Fenway organizations

By Seth Daniel

Ten community organizations in the Fenway will receive a total of \$100,000 this summer through the latest round of the Fenway Park Demonstration Project Community benefits fund – a fund maintained by the City and Red Sox since 2013.

The list of awardees has been formulated and sent to the Boston Planning and Development Agency. Their Board is expected to vote and approve the grants at its meet-

ing on Thursday, July 16.

The funding comes through a development whereby the Red Sox got easement rights in 2013 to build Green Monster seats over the public street, and were also given easements on game days for Jersey Street shutdowns. For that approval, the Red Sox agreed to give \$100,000 per year to the Fenway community for 10 years.

It is the sixth year of funding, and 13 organizations applied for funds this year, with 10 being approved.

The grants this year will go to:

- Charlesgate Alliance - \$10,000
- Emerald Necklace Conservancy - \$10,025
- Fenway CDC - \$5,050
- Fenway Civic Association - \$14,500
- Friends of Fenway Studios - \$4,419
- Kenmore Mall Project - \$7,000
- Muddy River Initiative - \$12,000
- Operation Peace Northeast - \$20,006
- Friends of Ramler Park - \$7,000
- Trustees of Reservations - \$10,000



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ATTENTION TO DETAIL

BY PENNY CHERUBINO

THIS WEEK'S ANSWER



The decorative door detail in the last clue is on the Marlborough Street side of 11 Exeter Street. This residence was originally designed by Peabody and Stearns and built in 1872. In 1999 an unattractive metal stairway to the Marlborough Street doorway was replaced by the appropriate masonry steps you see today.

The next clue will be found in the Fenway.

Do you have a favorite building or detail you would like featured? Send an email to Penny@BostonZest.com with your suggestion.

THIS WEEK'S CLUE



Real Estate Transfers

BUYER 1	SELLER 1	ADDRESS	PRICE
BACK BAY			
Aida T	Hessler, John C	242 Beacon St #8	\$2,200,000
Shinde, Manali C	Suite Home LLC	84 Berkeley St #3	\$880,000
Sparks, Aaron	Wu, Di	280 Commonwealth Ave #G3	\$455,000
Zhou, Weioing	Threadgill, Margaret E	18 Dartmouth Pl #1	\$1,032,500
5 New Lane LLC	D Santangelo RT	86 Marlborough St #9	\$1,805,000
EHinshaw, William R	451 Marlborough Res E	451 Marlborough St #RE	\$3,662,500
BEACON HILL			
Mokliatchouk, Oksana	Nancy E Dirubbo RET 2002	27 Bowdoin St #3C&D	\$875,000
Yankee Belle RT	Fry, Jared S	127 Pinckney St	\$2,430,000
BAY VILLAGE/SOUTH END/KENMORE			
Wambach, Valaya L	Yanulis, Peter	285 Columbus Ave #604	\$800,000
Boucher, Peter B	Beck, Christopher M	26 Montgomery St #5	\$680,000
Corcoran, Ann M	Mcbride, Shelley	492 Beacon St #43	\$960,000
ckenrode, James C	Flood, Michael G	474 Columbus Ave #3	\$1,550,000
Chin, Stacy	Ransom, Randel T	529 Columbus Ave #22	\$395,000
Fusi, John	Altamura, Philip	600 Massachusetts Ave #6	\$1,075,000
Gladstone, Cole W	Bouffard, Marc A	608 Massachusetts Ave #1	\$535,000
Flynn, Ashley M	Jethwani, Kamal	668 Massachusetts Ave #G	\$776,000
Patrick, Michael	Desprez, J David	6 Milford St #1	\$1,750,000
Nallapareddy, Ravi	Mohs, David	121-127 Portland St #203	\$800,000
Liu, Zaipeng	JAW Investment	12 Stoneholm St #614	\$729,000
Dynan, William J	Rodolico, Sarah	32 Traveler St #213	\$226,512
Desprez, John D	Highline Union LLC	48 Union Park #1	\$3,150,000
Yanulis, Peter	Norman, Jay D	77 W Brookline St #3	\$1,189,000
Carlson, Sarah J	Lauer, Joshua	145 W Concord St #3	\$1,940,000
Braley, Erin M	Field, John M	82-84 Waltham St #6	\$910,000
Shum, Elton	MAW LLC	1387 Washington St #306	\$685,000
Ragland, Stephanie B	Tripp, Murray J	1411 Washington St #24	\$655,000
Chong, Paul	JP Property 1 LLC	3531 Washington St #227	\$327,900

Walsh announces in-person summer youth programming for BCYF

Staff Report

Mayor Martin J. Walsh and Boston Centers for Youth & Families (BCYF) last week announced that online registration has opened for City-operated summer youth programs and classes, all of which are designed and will be operated in accordance with current public health guidelines. All BCYF community centers have been closed for in-person programming and recreation due to the COVID-19 public health emergency, with the exception of select locations that have served as meal sites only. Some summer teen programs were transitioned to be offered virtually.

"It is very important that our youth in every neighborhood can continue to have access to programming this summer as many families rely on them," said Mayor Walsh. "BCYF has worked hard to create a menu of recreational activities at each center, both virtual and in-person, that will offer youth a variety of fun and enriching opportunities."

Programming for Boston youth ages 7 and above is available for registration now at Boston.gov/

BCYF-Summer. The free programs will be held both remotely and in person at BCYF community centers across the city. A wide variety of options are available, including arts and computer activities, recreational programs, virtual field trips, workshops, and more. At this time, BCYF centers and indoor pools will be available only for youth during registered in-person summer programming, following public health guidelines.

"While this summer will certainly be different, we are committed to providing safe, healthy, and engaging summer activities for our youth," said William Morales, Commissioner of Boston Centers for Youth & Families. "We are carefully reviewing programming guidelines as they are released and updated and all of our summer programs were designed and will be operated in accordance with current public health guidelines. We can't wait to see your children in our buildings--and virtually."

Parents will be able to search for one-time classes or on-going programs where they can then narrow down their search by community center, age group, category,

and more. As more programs and activities are finalized they will be added to the website and available for registration.

Overnight camps will not be permitted until Summer 2021 due to State regulations during the current COVID-19 public health crisis. For current summer day programs there can be no field trips, activities are restricted, enrollment is restricted, volunteers are not allowed, visitors are not allowed, no outside groups can come to centers and very strict cleaning and sanitation guidelines need to be followed.

These programs are in addition to a variety of expanded BCYF programming for teens which began on Monday, July 6 and includes over 600 youth jobs through the Mayor's Summer Jobs Program. Job applications are still available for youth between the ages of 15 and 24 in the City of Boston.

BCYF community centers will also continue to distribute meals to youth throughout the summer as part of the Boston Summer Eats program. The complete list of meal locations can be found here.

BBAC approves condensers, screening wall; denies penthouse

By Lauren Bennett

The Back Bay Architectural Commission met virtually on July 8, where only three projects were on the docket for design review at 285 Clarendon St., 184 Beacon St., and 126 Marlborough St.

285 CLARENDON ST.

At 285 Clarendon St., applicant Katherine Spriggs presented several options for the installation of air conditioning condensers on the roof of the building.

The existing roof condition has one condenser on the Beacon St. side and two on the back on the alley side, she said, and presented three different proposed locations for the new equipment.

Location A was Sprigg's preferred location, as the downstairs neighbor said it would cause the least amount of noise. In this location, the condensers would be located a few feet from the edge of the building, which would make them susceptible to visibility from Clarendon St., which goes against the Commission's guidelines.

Location B puts the equipment more in the center of the building, which would make it less visible from a public way. Spriggs said that this plan came with more concern from the neighbor about vibrations from the equipment causing noise in the unit below.

Location C puts the equipment more than 10 feet from the edge and would be somewhat hidden by existing units, but upon further inspection by the Commissioners,

they realized it would be more visible in a certain location than Location B.

The Commission asked Spriggs if there were ways to mitigate the noise from the condensers by the way they are mounted, which she said there was, as they preferred Location B over the other two.

Commissioner Jerome CooperKing said he likes Location B "because it's off the edge of the roof."

When discussing Location A, he said, "you're adding to that stack that's already close to the edge. I've got a little bit of an issue with that, especially if there's room available in the center of the building."

Sue Prindle from the Neighborhood Association of the Back Bay (NABB) said that the organization's Architecture Committee "felt that B was the best solution and the contractor should be able to deal with the noise issue."

The Commission ultimately voted to approve Location B, and said that the new units should be a grayish color to match both the sky and the existing units.

184 BEACON ST.

At 184 Beacon St., Alison Cutler of Adams & Beasley Associates proposed to reconfigure roof deck railings and install a screening wall at the rear addition.

"The railings on the east and west elevation are now sitting on top of the parapet wall," Cutler said, and proposed a screening wall on the south elevation to hide the grill and its hard piping from the kitchen and master bedroom

windows.

She said that the screening wall would be located just above the railing at about 4 feet tall, and was proposed to be made out of copper to match the copper gutters and parapet wall.

"It wouldn't be a bad thing to try to integrate this into the hand-rail," said Commissioner Jerome CooperKing, adding that doing so would make it "a little more seamless." He also said that if it were to be copper, it should be slightly larger and line up with the door and grill on the facade below.

"We could set the wall behind the railing that currently exists," Cutler said. She also said a darker material may work better in reducing the visibility of the transition between the railing and the screening wall.

Commissioner David Eisen suggested painting the wall black and running it behind the railing "instead of making it a feature piece."

The Commission decided to approve the proposal with the proviso that the wall is painted black and is "integrated in some way" with the existing railing. The width will also be reduced "as much as possible."

126 MARLBOROUGH ST.

Ellen Perko of CBT architects proposed to install a headhouse, mechanical equipment, and outdoor kitchen at the roof of 126 Marlborough St. A proposal for this project was previously heard at the May hearing, where it was

denied without prejudice by the Commission.

Perko said at the July 8 hearing that the original proposal for the penthouse has been reduced to a "headhouse only" with a "stair enclosure similar to the one approved at 128 Marlborough," she said.

She said that the current headhouse is narrow and steep and does not comply with code. The proposed headhouse includes windows and a stair inside the structure to access the roof deck. The proposed headhouse is "a little over" 13 feet by 10 feet, 7 inches, Perko said.

"We kept it to the narrowest confines of what it can be at this point," she added. "We feel we have pushed it as small as we can get it. There is not a lot of latitude to push it forwards or backwards."

The headhouse contains a landing, which Commissioner Jim Berkman said was not necessary, and Commissioner Genia Demetriades agreed with him. She added that the number of windows proposed was also not necessary.

"The headhouse should be a standing seam copper with punched out windows to reduce glare," said Commissioner Robert Weintraub.

Perko said the existing outdoor kitchen and other items are all being reconfigured towards the center of the roof so they are less visible.

Neighbor Marie Lefton said that this proposed plan is "some-

what smaller," but she doesn't believe it fits within the Commission's guidelines. She said she "vigorously opposes" this project and asked the Commission to deny it without prejudice.

She said that the "plan still describes a penthouse" rather than a headhouse, and will block light from the surrounding area. She said she is also concerned about setting a "dangerous precedent" in the neighborhood.

Sue Prindle of NABB said that the Architecture Committee "reviewed this very carefully" and said that lowering the back towards the alley would be better.

"There are too many variables in this," Tom High of backbay-houses.org said. "It is clearly visible when the leaves are off [the trees]." He said that the way the proposed headhouse is designed, it will be visible from a public way.

"I would urge the Commission to deny this without prejudice and take a look at a new mockup," High said. "Any new proposal should not be as glassy as the current proposal is."

The Commission voted to deny the headhouse without prejudice, saying the applicant will have to come back in the fall when the leaves are off of the trees and present a new mockup. The other components of the proposal were approved, including the roof deck with the proviso that it "doesn't exceed the inner width of the chimneys."

For the Record

Webex:

• 201-241 Stuart Street, Back Bay. Applicant: Michael Flannery. Purpose: Redevelopment of the Motor Mart Garage, including construction of a new residential tower, all as more particularly shown on the enclosed plans.

• 1260 Boylston St., Fenway. Applicant: Andrew Flynn. Purpose: Erect new mixed-use building containing 451 apartments. Amenity spaces on levels 2 and 14. Theater and retail space to be shell space (fit-out by others). Two levels of below grade BOH space.

• 809-821 Beacon St., Fenway. Applicant: Lawrence Baker. Purpose: Remove proviso BZC-31677 for non-conforming use, conditional use permit for Children's Medical Center parking open air lot. (Parking for 249 vehicles)

BOSTON FIRE DEPARTMENT UPDATE ON PERMITS

Due to the harsh economic impact of

the COVID-19 pandemic on businesses, the Boston Fire Department is extending the expiration date on all existing Place of Assembly and Annual Permits from June 30, 2020 to September 30, 2020. Any issued Place of Assembly Permit or Annual Permit stating an expiration date of June 30, 2020 will now automatically be valid in the City of Boston until September 30, 2020. The invoices for renewal will be mailed out in mid-August, and the permitting cycle for both Place of Assembly and Annual Permits will become October 1 to September 30 of the following year from this point forward.

REPORTING WORKPLACE SAFETY CONCERNS

• Workers in any size organization have options if they feel they are being pressured into an unsafe situation. Attorney General Maura Healey has created resources for workers to report safety concerns during reopening. They include an online form at

the Attorney General's website and a dedicated Fair Labor hotline at 617-727-3465. People can also find those resources by calling 311.

HOW TO REPORT A PROBLEM PROPERTY

• Since taking office in 2014, Mayor Walsh has made fixing quality of life issues a priority in his administration. From investing in Public Works to making sure community policing is a staple in every neighborhood, we are making sure every neighborhood is clean, safe and a great place to live and work in. Unfortunately some properties in Boston need more help than others, and that's why we are here. If you know of a property that fits one of the following criteria: multiple calls to 911, one that's blighted or just a general concern, we encourage you to reach out to your neighborhood liaison.

**C O R O N A V I R U S
UPDATE:** Due to public health concerns, the hearings that normally would be held on a week have been postponed or canceled due to the guidance of Mayor Martin Walsh and the order of Gov. Charlie Baker. Some meetings, however, have been moved to an online or teleconference format under the emergency order on the Open Meeting Law issued by Gov. Baker.

From the July 16, 10 a.m., CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS WORKING SESSION: The Committee will hold a working session on a petition for a special law re: An Act Relative to the Zoning Board of Appeal. The Chair of the Committee and sponsor of the docket is Councilor Lydia Edwards.

From the July 21 Zoning Board of Appeals meeting, 10 a.m., via



FLAT OF BEACON HILL

8 BYRON STREET
4 BEDS | 3 BATHS | 2,720 SQFT
\$4,500,000



2 BATTERY WHARF #3311
2 BEDS | 2.5 BATHS | 2,039 SQFT
\$3,990,000



20 ROWES WHARF #707
2 BEDS | 2 BATHS | 1,188 SQFT
\$1,990,000



180 BEACON STREET #16E
2 BEDS | 2.5 BATHS | 1,409 SQFT
\$1,999,000



54 PINCKNEY STREET
5 BEDS | 4F 2H BATHS | 3,825 SQFT
\$5,995,000

