

THE BOSTON SUN

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SERVING BACK BAY - SOUTH END - FENWAY - KENMORE

Virtual meeting held to discuss ongoing crisis at Mass. and Cass

By Dan Murphy

The South End, Newmarket, Roxbury Working Group on Addiction, Recovery, and Homelessness held a virtual meeting Monday, Dec. 13, to discuss the ongoing public health crisis at Mass. and Cass, including Boston Medical Center's plan to bring new homelessness/addiction services and temporary housing to the Roundhouse Hotel, as well as another plan to bring a "cottage community" to provide temporary housing for patients on the Shattuck Hotel campus.

Robert Koenig, executive director of strategic programs at BMC, said, as proposed, the hotel located at 891 Massachusetts Ave. in the heart of Mass. and Cass, would be leased for two years to accommodate a Transitional Care Center, a medically supported triage for patients referred by street outreach workers and shelter staff to FASTER

Paths at BMC to receive methadone; the Stabilization Care Center, which would provide space for patients with substance abuse disorder to stabilize and connect them with permanent housing and treatment; and 60 low-threshold transitional beds on the upper guest floors to be phased in over time.

Upon hearing the plan, Steve Fox, chair of the South End Forum, said many had suggested that the services as proposed would merely duplicate what already exists in the area at BMC and at Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program. "Every time we move new services into Mass. and Cass, it ends up being permeant," added Fox, pointing to the needle exchange program and the erstwhile comfort stations, among other services.

Fox also expressed his frustration that the plan for new ser-

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CHRISTMAS CAROLING AT HAYES PARK



PHOTOS BY DEREK KOUYOUMJIAN

Shown above, neighbors and friends sing holiday songs together in Hayes Park.

Shown to the left, Elizabeth Sperr is ready to sing some carols with the official songbook in hand.



Wu talks winter preparedness in the city

By Lauren Bennett

Mayor Michelle Wu held a press conference regarding winter preparedness in the city on December 13, where she provided residents with resources for staying safe during the cold and potential snow to come.

She said that the city's Depart-

ment of Public Works, along with other departments, have been making preparations for the upcoming winter season. The press conference took place at the Public Works Yard at 400 Frontage Road, where some of the city's 40,000 tons of salt is located.

Wu said that the city has "164

pieces of in-house snow clearing equipment," and has the capability to put 800 pieces of equipment in use for larger storms.

There are also 18 pieces of new equipment, she said, including five small dump trucks, four large dump trucks, and nine

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Claremont Neighborhood Association asking for donations to South End Fridge

By Lauren Bennett

The Claremont Neighborhood Association (CNA) is preparing to give back to the community this holiday season with a twist on its usual Toys for Tots drive.

Instead of having a holiday party and the toy drive, the CNA is asking for donations to the South End Community Fridge this year.

"We didn't do much last year because of the pandemic," CNA President Bob Barney told the Sun. "We're trying to get back into social programs," he said, as they recently held a Halloween event and some park cleanups.

After a former board member approached him with the idea of helping out the fridge, he thought it would be a great way for the organization to give back during

the holidays.

The South End Fridge is located at 549 Columbus Ave., and the CNA will be there collecting donations on Sunday, December 19 from 2:30-3:30pm and Wednesday, December 22 from 6:00 to 7:30pm. If there is inclement weather, the dates will be Monday, December 20

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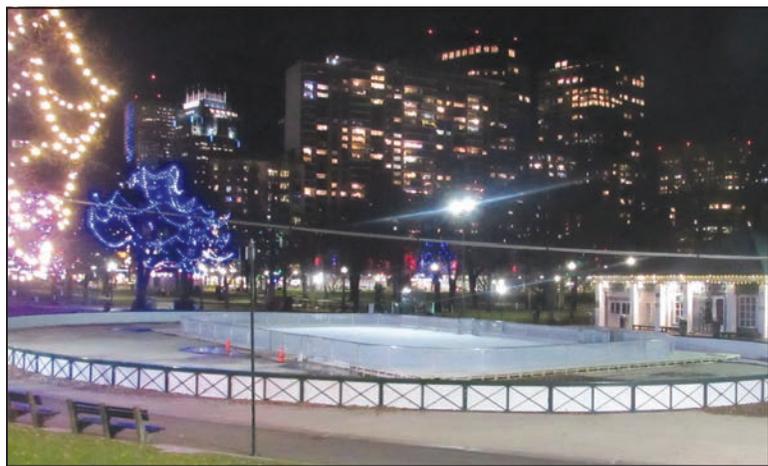


PHOTO BY D. MURPHY

The Frog Pond on the Boston Common.

Temporary rink installed at Frog Pond to allow for skating this winter

By Dan Murphy

When it looked as though there would be no skating at the Frog Pond on the Boston Common this winter for the second

consecutive season – this time, due to a mechanical issue with the rink's colling mechanism – the Boston Parks and Recreation

(FROG POND, Pg. 3)

EDITORIAL

'TIS THE SEASON FOR GIVING -- AND NEVER HAS THE NEED BEEN MORE URGENT

"It was the best of times; it was the worst of times." -- Charles Dickens, *A Tale of Two Cities*.

With Christmas fast approaching, most of us will be rushing about -- either to the stores and malls or on-line --- to do our holiday shopping in hopes of finding that "perfect" gift for our family members and loved ones.

Despite the pandemic that has ravaged our nation in so many ways, most Americans actually are doing okay, if not extremely well. Sure, the pandemic has made life inconvenient and not as enjoyable as usual for everybody, but most of us are getting along just fine.

Those who are able to work from home have not suffered a loss of income. And for those among us who have any sort of investments, from real estate to the stock market to certain types of small businesses, the pandemic has been a boon.

However, the good economic news for the majority of Americans has not been shared by all. For a sizable minority of our fellow citizens, the effects of the pandemic represent an existential disaster.

Millions of Americans of all ages, in a percentage greater than at any time since the Great Depression, are struggling financially.

To put it in stark terms, more Americans, including families in our own communities, are going hungry than at any time in our history.

Far too many of our fellow citizens, including children, live either in shelters or in similar temporary housing arrangements -- or on the streets -- because the reality of our economy has left them out in the cold -- literally -- thanks to the pandemic.

The homeless always have been among us, but the scope and depth of the problem is far beyond anything that has been experienced in our lifetime. The vast discrepancy between the enormous wealth enjoyed by some Americans and the abject poverty being endured by others is similar to what has existed in major urban centers in South America and India -- but it now is happening right here in the U.S.A.

For these millions of Americans, the holiday season brings no joy.

Psychologists tell us that the Biblical directive, that we should give to those who are less fortunate, actually is the best gift that we can give to ourselves. Helping others activates regions of the brain associated with pleasure, social connection, and trust, creating the so-called "warm glow" effect.

Never in the lifetime of anybody reading this editorial has the need for donations to local food banks been more urgent. There will be ample opportunity to do so in the coming days to make the holidays brighter for those who are less fortunate -- and there is no excuse for failing to do so.

GOP'S OPPOSITION TO RACHAEL ROILLINS WAS RACIST AND MISOGYNISTIC

The unprecedented opposition, accompanied by unprecedented vitriol, by the Republican members of the U.S. Senate to the nomination of Suffolk County District Atty. Rachael Rollins for the position of U.S. Attorney for the Massachusetts district has laid bare their racist and misogynistic-driven agenda.

Here is what Tom Cotton, the odious Arkansas Senator, said during a hearing of the Senate Judiciary Committee in opposing Ms. Rollins's nomination:

"Miss Rollins appears to measure success as a prosecutor not by how many victims and innocent people she protects, but rather by how many criminals she keeps from facing consequences. If she, as confirmed as the US attorney, the cartels and the gangs that are fueling violence and death in our communities will be gleeful. Rachael Rollins wants to destroy the criminal justice system from within. That, as not hyperbole."

Cotton's last line -- "That's not hyperbole" -- ordinarily would be laughable, but unfortunately it is illustrative of the way that leading GOP politicians are gaslighting the country these days to appeal to the basest of their base.

Senator Cotton's sham statement also has put on full display the propensity among leading GOP politicians to bully women, and that is doubly so for women of color. We recall the vote by Mitch McConnell and the GOP-controlled Senate in 2017 that silenced Senator Elizabeth Warren during the confirmation hearing for Jeff Sessions as U.S. Attorney General when she read a letter (which already was part of the Congressional Record) by Coretta Scott King in 1986 about Sessions. Later, a male senator read the same letter -- but without a peep from McConnell.

These GOP politicians are like the "tough" guys who have no hesitancy to engage in road-rage behavior when the other driver is a woman, but they shrink from honking, gesticulating, etc. if the other driver is a male.

Rachael Rollins had the full support of both of our U.S. Senators, Ed Markey and Ms. Warren, as well as the endorsement of many others, including former governor William Weld (who served as the U.S. Attorney in Mass. in the 1980s), Wayne Budd (another former U.S. Attorney here), Winthrop Police Chief Terence Delehanty, and Revere Police Chief David Callahan (both of whom work directly with the Suffolk D.A.'s office on a daily basis).

Despite the roadblocks thrown up by the GOP senators, the nomination of Rachael Rollins finally was approved, though only because of a tie-breaking vote by vice-president Kamala Harris.

We wish to congratulate Ms. Rollins upon her confirmation and we look forward to her tenure as our U.S. Attorney for the Massachusetts district.

GUEST OP-ED

Somehow, some way, may this be a Christmas worth remembering

By Dr. Glenn Mollette

We had difficulties when we were growing up in Martin county, Kentucky but overall, we thought we were doing okay. President Lyndon Johnson came to Inez, Kentucky in 1964 to let us know we weren't doing very well. He began his campaign in our community and we became the poster child for American poverty. We hadn't really thought of ourselves as poor until we started hearing about ourselves in the news.

I had numerous friends who didn't get much for Christmas. Often it was one or two small gifts or nothing at all.

Several classmates at my elementary school in Tomahawk, Kentucky were fortunate if they had a coat to wear in the winter. Ragged looking shoes on a kid's feet during the winter was a common sight.

Several classmates came to school to wash their faces and hands in the boys' bathroom. The school lunch was the only decent meal some of the kids ate during the week.

It was a while before President Johnson's 1964 promises started helping our area. Even with the roll out of government assistance many families subsisted until the coal boom of the seventies which has almost died. Today our county is reinventing itself with agriculture, a service center to aid bitcoin mining, tourism and small businesses.

I don't remember every Christmas, but I remember one. My dad broke his back falling off a barn when I was a child. He was

out of work for several months and in those days, we didn't have government safety nets to see us through tough financial times. Christmas came as usual and we did put up a tree. Our family gathered on Christmas Eve and we had food, fellowship and laughter. We always raised a garden and my parents stored food so it came in handy during tough times.

I expected nothing for Christmas that year because the heaviness of family financial pressure was obvious even as a child. Surprisingly, my mother handed me a small wrapped box that Christmas Eve and said Merry Christmas. I was shocked because I expected nothing that year. Opening the box, I found a watch that had numbers that glowed in the dark. It may have cost \$5 but it was priceless to me. I was thrilled and wore it every night to just look at the glowing numbers.

Dad was recuperating that Christmas. His temporary disability and our financial stress made life gloomy for us that year. Yet, here I am remembering that Christmas as one of the best of all. It was during that Christmas that I remember the presence of family. Mom and dad were alive. We had food to eat. We had a roof over our heads and our family had each other.

This may not be your best Christmas, but maybe, just maybe you can still have Christmas.

The empty chair is painful. Depression is real. Financial or

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Councilor Lydia Edwards wins State Senate Primary Election

By John Lynds

District 1 City Councilor Lydia Edwards came out on top Tuesday night and made history once again as the first female woman of color to be nominated to the First Suffolk & Middlesex Senate seat. If there is no Republican challenger for the January

11 General Election, Edwards is on her way from City Hall to Beacon Hill.

"This is a moment to celebrate," said Edwards at her victory party at Spinelli's in East Boston. "I'm just overwhelmed by this moment, but I can assure you no one will forget this race. When I first ran for Senate in

2016 people asked, "Who is this girl?" but now this girl is the Senator for the First Suffolk & Middlesex District. I'm just so grateful to all of you, my entire universe. I want to thank my entire team because without them I wouldn't be here. They always had my back."

Edwards won Boston wards

and precincts in Bay Village, South End, Chinatown, Beacon Hill, the North End and East Boston, as well as wards and precincts in Cambridgeport.

In Ward 5, which includes Bay Village, the South End and Beacon Hill, Edwards received 1,068 votes to Revere School Committee member Anthony D'Ambrosio's 148 votes.

In her home neighborhood of Eastie, Edwards received 1,958 votes with D'Ambrosio receiving 774.

As expected, D'Ambrosio, who was elected to the Revere School Committee in 2019, won his home city handily with 3,121 votes to Edwards's 933 votes, but the turnout there was lower than expected.

In Winthrop, where some felt D'Ambrosio might pull off a win, Edwards won Winthrop with 1,189 votes to D'Ambrosio's 873, and carried all but one precinct in the Town.

Councilor Edwards, an Eastie resident, previously ran for the

Senate seat after former State Senator Anthony Petrucelli left office in 2016. While unsuccessful in that race, Edwards went on to run for the District One City Council seat, which includes Eastie, Charlestown, and the North End, the following year. She went on to win that race and has served on the council ever since.

D'Ambrosio was gracious in defeat at a gathering of his supporters at Casa Lucia in Revere.

"Going forward, we're going to be represented by a really good person, a really smart person in Lydia Edwards," said D'Ambrosio. "It's in all of our best interests, it's in our community's best interest to have a vested stake in her success here. I really want to emphasize this: she's one of the smartest people I've ever met. And that's pretty clear. And she's going to do really, really great things."

Cary Shuman contributed to this story.

FROG POND (from pg. 1)

Department and the city worked together with The Skating Club of Boston, the private entity that manages the facility's year-round operations, to remedy the situation by installing a temporary rink there.

Ryan Woods, commissioner of the Boston Parks and Recreation Department, said the Frog Pond, which usually opens for skating the week of Thanksgiving, "wasn't freezing because the chiller couldn't get through the ice."

Woods added, "In order to

locate the leak, we would have to tear up the concrete to do some studies. We decided that having a temporary rink for skating was more important than not having it for two years in a row."

Skating at the Frog Pond, the oldest outdoor skating rink in New England, was cancelled last winter due to the ongoing pandemic, but Woods said the Parks and Recreation Department worked "hand in hand to find the temporary rink solution" (which is smaller than the traditional rink).

The temporary rink was installed this month, which unfortunately was too late to accommodate this year's annual Tree Lighting Skating Spectacular, which had been scheduled originally been scheduled for Dec. 2 to coincide with the Common tree-lighting.

"As soon as the skating season ends, which is usually in mid-March, around St. Patrick's Day, engineers will conduct a study on the rink's pressure so hopefully next season, we'll be back to full capacity," said Woods.

WINTER PREPAREDNESS (from pg. 1)

pickup trucks, all equipped with plows and salt spreaders. There are also some new plows to replace ones that are old and worn out.

Wu also said that Public Works employees will be following COVID restrictions to keep themselves and others safe, and have a system where employees and contractors are allowed to start work remotely to "avoid large group gatherings at our facilities," she said.

"As we are headed into snow, if a snow emergency is declared, please be sure to move your vehicle if necessary," Wu said.

Additionally, she reminded residents that snow removal and

de-icing of sidewalks in front of private property are the responsibility of the property owner. She encouraged residents to help out and check up on their older neighbors or those with disabilities, and to help shovel out fire hydrants.

"This is a time when we can truly work together and show what it means to be a city of neighbors," Wu said.

Eligible seniors can also receive help with things like utility discounts, home repairs, and fuel assistance, as well as transportation, health insurance, and food access, Wu said. She encouraged seniors to reach out to 311 for access to the city's Age Strong

Commission. Wu said that additional 311 call takers will be on hand during snowstorms.

A Winter Weather Guide will be mailed out to residents this week, Wu said, which includes more information and resources in English and 10 other languages.

She also encouraged residents to sign up for the AlertBoston system, either by visiting boston.gov/alertboston or by texting ALERTBOSTON to 888-777.

Tenants are also encouraged to reach out to their landlords or property managers with any issues with heating, and if they are unresponsive, reach out to the city's Inspectional Services

Department at 617-635-5300.

When it comes to the COVID-19 pandemic, Wu encouraged residents to continue to get tested, and recommended vaccinations and boosters as well.

Chief of Housing Sheila Dillon said that organizations like Pine Street Inn, St. Francis House, the Boston Public Health Commission, and others have been working on resources for unhoused people this winter. Right now, there are more than 1000 emergency shelter beds available for men, women, and young adults. She said these organizations are "making sure everyone who shows up at the

front door has an accommodation." She also said that the city is aiming to "house as many individuals as we can before the winter months" to help reduce demand in the shelters.

Chief of Civic Engagement Aisha Miller also spoke about space savers, reminding residents that they are only permitted when a snow emergency has been declared, and are banned altogether in the South End. Residents have 48 hours after a snow emergency ends to use space savers.

For more information about winter in Boston, visit boston.gov/snow.

OP-ED (from pg. 2)

other personal difficulties may have disabled you. Millions have died from Covid-19. Thousands are suffering from horrific tornadoes and loss of life. Hurricanes have pounded us in the East and fires have incinerated our West. In the midst of all this inflation eats away at America's paychecks like an unchecked malignancy.

The message of Christmas is the story of peasant parents, enduring difficult travel, taxes

to be paid and no place to sleep but a barn and a cow's trough for their newborn baby. Somehow, they found strength in each other and in God who brought them and their baby through a very difficult time. We never forget their story and their plight, it's truly a Christmas worth remembering.

We are going to remember this Christmas, no doubt. Somehow, someway, with God's help and

each other, may this be a Christmas worth remembering.

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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MASS. AND CASS (from pg. 1)

vices makes no mention of the BMC Institutional Master Plan – a process that “looked at BMC in terms of space, building, and capacity” – while adding that the BMC has sufficient space for the new services in its existing buildings.

“To ask for a brand-new facility is pretty inconsistent with IMP process and personally disappointed me as someone who spent a lot of time on the process,” said Fox.

Yahaira Lopez of the South End-Roxbury Community Partnership also expressed her frustration with the current situation and said after advocating for more than a decade to improve the conditions, she said she “feels unsafe and feel like no one’s listening.” The ongoing crisis at Mass. and Cass, she added, has resulted in “constant car breaks” and has “robbed Black and brown communities of the ability to use local parks” due to the proliferation of drug use and other nefarious activity that has migrated there from the problem area.

“We’re duplicating services and wondering why we see an influx of individuals coming to this location,” said Lopez. “It’s not working, and we all know it’s not working, and we have individuals on Mass. and Cass who don’t want help – what are you going to do about that?”

Rep. Jon Santiago called the plan “a great idea” while also expressing concern about locating the services at Mass. and Cass, given the ongoing call to decentralize services there.

City Councilor Ed Flynn said the crisis at Mass. and Cass is

also a “quality-of-life crisis” in that residents there are now afraid to walk down the street, and he said he wants to see a “major commitment” from both the city and the state to address quality-of-life issues in the affected communities.

In response to how the proposed services would differ from what’s there now, Dr. Miriam Komaromy, the Medical Director of the Grayken Center for Addiction at Boston Medical Center, said these ones are “specifically geared to stabilizing people in the encampment now who have greatest challenges affecting them and haven’t been helped move out of area by existing services.”

Sue Sullivan, director of the Newmarket Business Association, however, disputed Dr. Komaromy’s assertion that afflicted individuals can’t get better without intervention and countered that a better solution would be to put a permanent end to the area’s open-air drug market.

“Until we stop open-air drug trade down here, nothing is going to change,” said Sullivan. “They’re not going to get better until that stops on the street here. We’re not getting to root cause of a lot if it, too, and we need to get the drugs off the streets.”

Likewise, George Gstergios, vice president of the Worcester Square Area Neighborhood Association, disputed the widely held belief that Housing First is the most-effective approach to getting people of the street and said once placed in Housing First, many of these individuals would continue to resort to petty crime

to fuel their addictions. Instead, Gstergios said he believes a Treatment First approach would have a more effective outcome.

City Councilor Frank Baker also said he doesn’t agree with the Housing First model, and that he objects to the new services being located at Mass. and Cass.

Councilor Baker also said those who receive services at the Roundhouse would immediately leave the facility and step onto the streets of Mass. and Cass, where they likely be targeted by drug dealers.

“We can’t be any more clear – look somewhere else – and it’s falling on deaf ears,” said Councilor Baker, who also speculated that the services provided at the Roundhouse would likely become permanent once the two-year lease is up.

Domingos DaRosa, a Hyde Park resident and small business owner, asked for a timeframe on when BMC expected to begin providing services at the Roundhouse because, he said, “it already seems to be a done deal.”

Meanwhile, Fox outlined the state’s creation of a “cottage community” to temporarily house patients on a small portion of the grounds of Shattuck Hospital, with patients expected to move in beginning Dec. 20.

Work on the “cottage community,” which is being “built from scratch” using pre-fabricated structures with no existing infrastructure in place, got underway Nov. 30, said Fox, who called the project’s abbreviated timeline “pretty impressive.”

The “cottage community” will comprise 18 sleeping shel-

ters, said Fox, with 12 one-bed shelters and five two-bed shelters, as well as three hygiene shelters equipped with showers and restrooms, a 4,000 square-foot community room, a security cabin, and a shared outdoor gathering space. It would also offer 24/7 security, which would ensure that patients don’t wander into adjacent Franklin Park, as well as to and wraparound social and support systems during the day administered by Eliot Community Human Services, Inc., the contractor for the project.

The program also allows for easy expansion, said Fox, since the “cottage community” would only occupy a small portion of the hospital’s 13-acre campus, but the state wants to try it out first as a pilot program for a target period of 60 days.

This would be a first in Boston, but “cottage communities” have been successfully implanted in other cities and states, said Fox, who added that the model was first used to provide temporary housing for oil workers in remote locations.

Fox also said he would like to see an inventory of properties owned by the state, Massport, and especially the Boston Plan-

ning and Development Agency “that could be easily converted into ‘cottage communities.’”

Just ahead of unveiling of her plan on Wednesday, Dec. 15, for addressing the ongoing public health crisis at Mass. and Cass, “with a focus on connecting those experiencing homelessness and living in tents into low-threshold, supportive housing and bolstering area residents and businesses,” Mayor Michelle Wu was also on hand for the meeting.

“The vision is this winter we will see a change in the situation there...with people connected to services and a very different experience for residents and business as well,” said Mayor Wu, who added that once the area has been cleared on encampments, the city would put out a bid “to fix the streets to truly transform the area.”

Mayor Wu described this as a short-term solution to the problem and said that her team had met earlier that day at the Long Island rehab facility to survey the conditions of long-vacant buildings there, as well as to look at possible ferry service and other transportation options to access the site, as part of the medium- and long-term solutions.



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CHRISTMAS CAROLING AT HAYES PARK

Photos by Derek Kouyoumjian

Residents and neighbors new and old alike gathered at Hayes

Park in the South End on Dec. 12 to spread holiday cheer in the form of Christmas Carols.



Now residing in Cambridge, former resident of the Hayes Park neighborhood Willis Emmons returns as official choirmaster of the caroling.



The sculpture in Hayes Park is adorned with holiday decorations.



Barry and Angie Hayes with Boston City Councilor Ed Flynn and his wife Susan.



Andrea and Francesca Cafarelle donate food for the South End Service Center.



Mindy Barber with daughters Millie and Lizzie and their friend Hayden Farmer check out the cookie table



Jan Geddes sings while holding the official songbook for Hayes Park caroling.



Neighbors and friends sing holiday songs together in Hayes Park.



Frances Blair (center) encourages her daughter Hazel to sing while friend Riley Farmer lets be notes loose.



Leo Purvis explores the playground at Hayes Park with his mom Elizabeth.

CHRISTMAS CAROLING AT HAYES PARK



Aiden and Cole "take turns" at ownership of the Santa's hat.



Amanda Emtee and Poppy relax while enjoying the holiday songs.



Maggie Blair is happy her dad Noel is wearing the holiday hat.



Emily Cotton watches as her daughter Margie enjoys a cookie.



Neighbors and friends sing holiday songs together in Hayes Park.



Cara and Corinne Merrill get some brownies before they're gone.



Donations accumulated for the South End Service Center.

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VOAMASS' Men's Hello House reopens after renovations; ready to provide support

By Lauren Bennett

Volunteers of America of Massachusetts (VOAMASS) celebrated the reopening of its Men's Hello House at 686 Massachusetts Ave. in the South End on December 13 with a ribbon cutting ceremony. In attendance were state Sens. Cindy Friedman and John Keenan, state Reps. Jon Santiago and Steven Owens, among other officials and staff of VOAMASS.

"Located just blocks away from encampments used by people experiencing homelessness and substance use disorder in the area known as 'Mass. and Cass,' the Men's Hello House is a 28-bed space designed to provide integrated care and supports to men with co-occurring mental illness and substance use disorder," according to a press release from VOAMASS.

Mindy Miller, Vice President of Integrated Services for VOAMASS, told the Sun that the rehab project took about 14 months to complete, and the facility had never had a full renovation since it opened in the late 1960s.

"It wasn't ADA accessible," Miller said, as there was no ground level and no elevator. "That was really a priority for us at Volunteers of America—making sure it was accessible to everybody," she said.

The facility is located in a 4800 square foot South End brownstone, and the rehab included two new beds and "several additional bathrooms," according to VOAMASS, as well as new safety features, new furniture, and a

new HVAC system. The facility has 28 beds total.

"The building's design maximizes meeting spaces for clients, environmental efficiency and safety with the most updated technology," the release states.

Miller said that clients for this program are required to be at least 18 years old, need to identify as male, and must be diagnosed with a substance use disorder. Many clients come from referral sources like CSS, DSS, and inpatient units, she said.

"Typically it's voluntary; clients want to come in and do treatment," Miller said.

Clients remain in the program for as long as they need to "stabilize" and "go back into the community so they don't return to the facility or return to a facility like ours."



PHOTO COURTESY OF VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA OF MASSACHUSETTS

Officials and dignitaries shown above at the ribbon cutting.

At the Men's Hello House, clients are offered services like recovery education, counseling, and case management.

"After a stay that affords participants the individual time needed to move through stage-based treatment, they reintegrate back into their families and communities as sober individuals

who are employed and committed to an ongoing recovery process," according to VOAMASS, which also offers further support to men who graduate from the program.

"As the opioid and behavioral health crises continue to worsen in communities across Massa-

(HELLO HOUSE, Pg. 9)

Baker, officials and dignitaries cut ribbon on old YW building project

By Sun staff

Gov. Charlie Baker joined Mayor Michelle Wu, among other elected officials and dignitaries, on Thursday, Dec. 9, at the old YW Boston (formerly YWCA Boston) headquarters at the corner of Clarendon and Stuart streets in Back Bay for the redevelopment project that will transform the building into affordable housing, with 111 of its 210 planned units expected to go to people experiencing homelessness.

"This project is a great example of public and private partners coming together to deliver a unique asset to the neighborhood by maintaining a cultural institution and providing a solution to homelessness: housing with services for our most vulnerable neighbors," said Gov. Baker.

"We are pleased to support Beacon Communities and Pine Street Inn on this dynamic project that will benefit hundreds, and we are eager to continue working with local partners to create new housing and pursue innovative projects across the state to meet the diverse needs of our Commonwealth."

Beacon Communities and the Mount Vernon are partnering with the Pine Street Inn to renovate 50,000 square feet of space now comprising the existing 66-room Hotel 140 and 118 apartments into studio and one-bedroom rental units while the site's three largest commercial tenants, the Lyric Stage Company of Boston, a nonprofit performing arts center; the Snowden International School; and YW Boston itself, will remain there

as part of the plan. Numerous other lenders and partners helped make this project possible, including the City of Boston, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Massachusetts Department of Housing & Community Partners, the Boston Housing Authority, Bank of America, BlueHub Capital, Metro Housing, and the Massachusetts Housing Partnership, among others. Financing for the project includes \$6 million in funding from the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development; a \$37.2 million permanent loan, a \$20.3 million bridge loan, and \$500,000 in Capital Magnet Fund financing from Mas Housing; \$8,039,955 in funding from the City of Boston Department of Neighborhood Development;



The old YW building at 140 Clarendon St., which will be transformed into affordable housing.

households in every unit.

"Housing stability must be the foundation of our recovery," said Mayor Wu. "Today's groundbreaking shows what's possible when we collaborate across different sectors and levels of government to create much-needed affordable housing in our neighborhoods. This project will provide much-needed housing and services for residents experiencing homelessness."

The Pine Street Inn and Beacon's Community Engagement team will provide formerly homeless resident with on-site services at the building.

"Pine Street Inn is thrilled to partner with Beacon Communities to provide permanent housing for over one hundred individuals experiencing chronic homelessness," said Pine Street Inn President and Executive Director Lyndia Downie. "This partnership is a huge step forward in our efforts to provide every person with a safe, stable place to live, ensure they receive the services they need, and ultimately end homelessness in Boston."

Beacon Communities, in partnership with Mount Vernon Company, will own the new development, which will be managed by Beacon Residential Management Limited Partnership. Construction on the project is expected to be completed in 2024.

a Federal Low Income Housing Tax Credit and Historic Tax Credit equity in the amount of \$43,975,833 from Bank of America; and \$23,575,000 of State Low Income Housing Tax Credit equity from the Commonwealth.

Moreover, The city's Department of Neighborhood Development is providing \$8 million in direct subsidies for the project, while the BHA is providing 210 Project-Based Vouchers (PBV) to support tenancy of low-income



PHOTOS COURTESY OF MAYOR'S OFFICE PHOTOS BY ISABEL LEON

Gov. Charlie Baker and Mayor Michelle Wu join other elected officials and dignitaries on Dec. 9 for the ribbon cutting for project that will transform the old YW building into affordable housing.

NEWS IN BRIEF

BPD DISTRICT 4 NOW COLLECTING HOLIDAY TOYS FOR TWO GOOD CAUSES

Boston Police District 4 headquarters, located at 850 Harrison Ave. is currently accepting holiday toy donations in two bins in its lobby to accept two worthy causes.

One collection bin supports the Boston Police Toy Drive other, while the other goes to Smart from the Start (<https://smartfromthestart.org/>), a non-profit committed to family support and community engagement that one of the D-4 officers is affiliated with. The deadline for the BPD Toy Drive is Thursday, Dec. 16, while the deadline for Smart from the Start toy drive is Friday, Dec. 17.

The station is open 24 hours a day, but if it's not convenient for someone to drop off a gift, Boston Police will happily come to pick it up. Contact the District

4 front desk at 617-343-4250 for more information.

CELEBRATING THE WINTER SOLSTICE WITH MUSIC AND SPOKEN WORD

First Church in Boston, Unitarian Universalist, continues its tradition of offering a Celebration of the Winter Solstice on Tuesday, December 21, at 7 PM at the church, 66 Marlborough St. in Back Bay.

In time-honored tradition, we will welcome the darkness but also anticipate the return of the light with music, song and spoken word. Participants include Irish Harpist Aine Minogue, pianist Jacqueline Schwab, First Church Interim Minister Edmund Robinson and Music Director Gigi Mitchell-Velasco, tenor Noel Velasco and bass William Thorpe. (The audience will be required to wear masks during the performance, and

all performers will be masked except when performing.)

The event is free and open to the public, but donations are accepted.

BACK BAY, SURROUNDING AREA'S COVID CASES INCREASE

The Back Bay and the city's weekly COVID positive test rate continues to rise dramatically post Thanksgiving and ahead of the Christmas Holiday.

A week after Mayor Michelle Wu announced several measures to help combat the explosive rise in cases in Boston, the Back Bay and the surrounding area's weekly positive test rate approached 5 percent last week and the city-wide weekly positive test rate neared 7 percent. Last Monday, Wu said Boston health officials will distribute 20,000 free rapid antigen home tests, offer free masks to neighborhoods with the highest rates of COVID-19 and appointed a 17-member COVID

advisory board to help with the latest outbreak.

According to the weekly report released Monday by the Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC), 2,267 Back Bay, Beacon Hill, North End, West End and Downtown residents were tested and 4.8 percent were positive. This was a 55 percent increase from the 3.1 percent that tested positive between Nov. 29 and Dec. 6.

The citywide weekly positive test rate also increased dramatically last week. According to the BPHC 21,26 residents were tested and 5.2 percent were COVID positive--this was a 30 percent increase from the 4 percent reported by the BPHC on November 29.

All together, 109 addition-

al residents have been infected with the virus between December 6 and December 13 and the total number of cases in the area increased to 4,679 cases overall since the pandemic began.

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

Citywide positive cases of coronavirus increased 3 percent last week and went from 89,745 cases to 92,481 confirmed cases in a week. There were eight additional deaths in Boston from the virus in the past week and the total COVID deaths is now at 1,480.

SOUTH END FRIDGE (from pg. 1)

from 6:00 to 7:30pm and Thursday, December 23 from 6:00 to 7:30pm.

The fridge accepts perishable items such as fruits, vegetables, dairy items, and properly packaged and labeled prepared foods, but the CNA is asking for donations of more non-perishable items such as canned goods and other shelf-stable food products, as well as personal care products such as soap, toothpaste, menstrual products, and shampoo and conditioner.

The fridge does not accept, under any circumstances, opened or partially consumed foods, expired foods, prepared foods without proper labeling of ingredients and preparation/expiration dates, alcohol, or medicines.

"If it works well, we want to repeat it," Barney said. He said in the past, the Toys for Tots dropoff was done in conjunction with other organizations like USES and Cradles to Crayons, but this is a "totally new venture."

Barney added that "if we get more word out there about it, I'm hoping that it will result in more food drop-offs. I'm excited about it; it should be fun."

Barney said that he's planning on donating some canned goods and some liquid body soap and shampoo. "Whatever people have," he said, would be appreciated, as would people considering picking up a few extra items to donate on their next grocery run if they are able.

He said that the fridge has been "used quite a lot," and he's "seen people there all times of the day and night," both looking for food and dropping food off.

If folks are not able to make the dates that CNA will be at the fridge, they can always bring donations to the fridge at any other time, or reach out to Bob Barney at robert.L.barney@gmail.com or 617-875-0311, or Jen Kimball of the South End Fridge at jenniferkimball@gmail.com to arrange a pickup before December 24.

FAMILY CHANUKAH NIGHT AT BOSTON SYNAGOGUE



In the spirit of the holiday season, these are scenes from the recent family Chanukah celebration at the Boston Synagogue in our Downtown neighborhood. Stay tuned for other family events.

For more information about upcoming family events: office@bostonsynagogue.org. A wonderful spirit is alive at The Boston Synagogue! We are a warm, friendly, pluralistic small, neighborhood community in Downtown. Welcome to people of all Jewish denominations-- singles, couples, as well as interfaith couples and LGBTQ.

HELLO HOUSE (from pg. 1)

chusetts, including at Mass. and Cass in Boston, we need more programs like the Men's Hello House available and ready," Charles Gagnon, President and CEO of VOAMASS, said in a statement. "Through integrated, whole-person care, anchored by trauma-informed behavioral

health supports, the Men's Hello House helps participants to turn their lives around."

Miller said that with all the attention on Mass and Cass recently, "it's exciting to get these beds back online." She said that while the building is ready to go, more staff needs to be hired and then an admit

date will be set for clients. She said that will happen "very soon."

Overall, she said VOAMASS is "excited to be able to open this up also while we're doing the next phase of VOA," including "integrated care, behavioral health and addiction services" to participants of the program.

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At Boston Premier Dentistry, patients are like family

By Dan Murphy

What sets Boston Premier Dentistry, PC (formerly Ficociello and Ficociello D.D.S, PC) apart from the competition, according to Dr. Kourosh Asha, DMD, the owner of and one of the practitioners at the longstanding downtown dental office, is the warm, familial kinship they share with their patients, who are often kin themselves.

“We’re a family practice in that we treat the whole family – kids, adults, and seniors –and the second part of this is that we treat our patients like family,” said Rose, the office manager. Dr. Asha, affectionally known to his patients as “Dr. A” who added the feeling seems to be mutual judging from the many invitations from to weddings and other family events he and his staff have received from their patients.

The dental practice got its start in 1958, when, upon graduating from Georgetown Dental School, Dr. Ralph Ficociello began his

professional practice in at 102 Prince St. in the North End, the neighborhood where he grew up. When his brother, Michael Ficociello, graduated from Georgetown Dental School in 1973, he too signed on with the practice, and they relocated their office to 1 Bullfinch Place in Government Center. Ficociello and Ficociello D.D.S. PC continued at that location for 21 years, until Dr. Ralph Ficociello retired from the practice in 1994. Afterwards, Dr. Michael Ficociello moved to their current home at 10 Tremont St., Suite, #402.

Several years ago, when Dr. Michael Ficociello wanted to find another dentist to join the practice, he interviewed many potential candidates, looking for someone he was comfortable leaving entrusting his patient with, before he found the perfect candidate in Dr. Asha.

Dr. Asha, who earned a Doctor of Medicine in Dentistry from Tufts School of Dental Medicine, and is a member of American

Dental Association, Academy of General Dentistry, and Massachusetts Dental Society, said he is “a firm believer in the concept of family dentistry with a strong focus on ethics and providing quality care for the patients and the community.” With his genuinely gentle and caring manner, he focuses on building relationships with all of his patients, explaining each individual case in detail and keeping his patients well informed and comfortable during every dental procedure.

Additionally, Dr. Asha, who is certified in nitrous sedation, digital dentistry, Invisalign, and dental implants, uses the latest state-of-the-art technology, as well as the most advanced dental materials available. He remains truly devoted to his profession and often attends specialized courses in surgical and cosmetic dentistry.

In September of 2018, Dr. Asha bought the practice formerly known as Ficociello and Ficociello D.D.S from Michael Fico-



PHOTO COURTESY OF BOSTON PREMIER DENTISTRY

A look inside the offices of Boston Premier Dentistry at 10 Tremont St., Suite, #402.

ciello and rebranded it as Boston Premier Dentistry, PC, which now boasts the latest in state-of-the-art machinery, including digital intraoral cameras and a cone beam CT scan machine.

“Our philosophy is to offer conservative and gentle dentistry,” said Dr. Asha. We’re here to treat and help people.” Boston Premier Dentistry also continues to welcome new patients, he added.

And above all else, Boston Premier Dentistry always focus-

es on its patients’ oral health as an ongoing commitment, rather than simply performing dental procedures on a one-off basis. “We not only treat the teeth, but we also go step by step with the patients and try to help the patients improve their oral health.” said Dr. Asha.

Boston Premier Dentistry is located at 10 Tremont St., Suite, #402. For more information, visit bostonpremierdentistry.com, call 617-523-2459, or email info@bostonpremierdentistry.com

BBAC continues application for electric vehicle charging station

By Lauren Bennett

After approving one last month, the Back Bay Architectural Commission (BBAC) on December 8 heard another application for an electric vehicle charging station. As more and more residents purchase electric vehicles, it is anticipated that more of these kinds of applications will come before the BBAC.

This application differed from that one, however, as the previous application requested a Tesla branded charging station which only came in one color and material.

For this proposal, applicant

Josh Marantz proposed to install a cabinet and an electrical conduit on the brick wall where the parking spot is located at 273 Beacon St. However, there is a private patio for Unit 1 that does not allow for electrical access, so the conduit is required to provide power to the charging station, he said.

The proposal is to place the charging cabinet, which will hold the charger and the cable pulley, to the left of the sign denoting the parking spot on the brick wall. He said the cabinet will remain closed except when being used, and “will not be visible to people driving down the alley.”

Marantz also said the propos-

al includes painting the conduit the color of the brick “so it is as unobtrusive as possible,” and it will be made of PVC.

A few Commissioners expressed their dissatisfaction with the conduit on the wall, and Commissioner John Christiansen suggested that both the conduit and the box be “buried” in the wall. Marantz said that the box would be eight inches deep to keep the cable inside, and Joe Cornish, Director of Design Review for the Boston Landmarks Commission, said he wasn’t sure if the box would be too deep to fit inside the wall.

During public comment, Sue

Prindle of the Neighborhood Association of the Back Bay (NABB) said she believes a material other than PVC “might be more appropriate” for the cabinet.

Marantz said that other materials were discussed with an electrician, including metal, but he said the electrician didn’t think that as a good choice because of heat as well as the ability to access the charger via Wi-Fi.

He also said that they considered weatherproof wood, which is still on the table.

“This is probably one the first of many applications of wall mount chargers,” said resident John Tankard, adding that “PVC

doesn’t sound very substantial or permanent compared to a metal. My take is as soon as you approve whatever you’re doing with this application, there are going to be many more in the future and it would be worth really trying to understand the best possible choice.”

John Christiansen made a motion to continue the proposal “and allow the applicant to work with staff to explore running the conduit through the wall and in some way recessing the box in that wall.” He said that way, when the applicant comes back at another hearing, “we know what the problems are.”

Imagine Van Gogh exhibition extended through March 19 at the SoWa Power Station

Boston has declared its love for Imagine Van Gogh the Original Immersive Exhibition in Image Totale©, and with demand soaring, organizers have extended the exhibit through to March 19, 2022 at the SoWa Power Station.

The exhibit, created in France by Artistic Directors Annabelle Mauger and Julien Baron, has captivated audiences and received rave reviews from critics. This stunning immersion into 200 of Van Gogh’s paintings

has travelled coast-to-coast and dazzled North American audiences. It will be making its U.S. Premiere in Boston on Tuesday, December 21, 2021 – and due to popular demand the exhibition has been extended.

Filling 24,000 square feet of the SoWa Power Station, Imagine Van Gogh the Original Immersive Exhibition in Image Totale©, allows the viewer to enter and roam the luminous dreamscapes conjured by Vincent Van Gogh,

projected in infinitesimally fine detail and at the grandest scale, accompanied by the music of Prokofiev, Saint-Saëns, Schubert, Mozart, Satie, and more. Invented by Albert Plecy in 1977, Image Totale© has been adapted by Mauger and Baron to offer passage into the visionary works of a beloved genius, where we become engulfed by those famously tactile brushstrokes.

Annabelle Mauger is the original creator of the first immersive

Van Gogh exhibition, presented in 2008 at Cathédrale d’Images in France and in 2011 at the Art-Science Museum in Singapore. Her creation inspired various digital Van Gogh exhibitions that toured around the world in the years since. In 2017, Mauger and Baron presented a new, elevated version of Imagine Van Gogh in Image Totale© at Halle de La Villette in Paris.

Imagine Van Gogh the Original Immersive Exhibition in

Image Totale© is designed as a contactless experience and will have timed entries and will operate in full accordance with current safety guidelines established by the CDC and the Massachusetts government – all visitors are required to wear masks both inside and outside the SoWa Power Station regardless of vaccination status.

Tickets are on sale now at www.imagine-vangogh.com.

Real Estate Transfers

BUYER 1 BACK BAY	SELLER 1	ADDRESS	PRICE
First Comm Intl LLC	RWRC NT	10 Commonwealth Ave #16E	\$15,000,000
First Comm Intl LLC	RWRC NT	10 Commonwealth Ave #PH2	\$15,000,000
First Comm Intl LLC	RWRC NT	2 Commonwealth Ave #16E	\$15,000,000
First Comm Intl LLC	RWRC NT	2 Commonwealth Ave #PH2	\$15,000,000
First Comm Intl LLC	RWRC NT	4 Commonwealth Ave #16E	\$15,000,000
First Comm Intl LLC	RWRC NT	4 Commonwealth Ave #PH2	\$15,000,000
Glindmeyer, Henry W	Louis T Wells Jr T	43 Commonwealth Ave #2	\$2,100,000
First Comm Intl LLC	RWRC NT	6 Commonwealth Ave #16E	\$15,000,000
First Comm Intl LLC	RWRC NT	6 Commonwealth Ave #PH2	\$15,000,000
First Comm Intl LLC	RWRC NT	8 Commonwealth Ave #16E	\$15,000,000
First Comm Intl LLC	RWRC NT	8 Commonwealth Ave #PH2	\$15,000,000
Carter, Andrew D	James M Whiten LT	46 Dartmouth St #2	\$905,000
ANZ Investments LLC	Noonan Enterprises LLC	257 Marlborough St #7	\$697,000
Kljat, Angelina	Back Bay 473 Beacon LLC	473 Beacon St #4	\$588,000
Shihpin-Liao, Ben	Ambelotis, Nicholas M	483 Beacon St #36	\$525,000
Dangelo, Henry A	KEF Holdings LLC	382 Commonwealth Ave #11	\$1,315,000
Singh, Ajay	Deutsche Bk Natl T Co Tr	350 Marlborough St #2	\$730,000
C Hal&Bryan Croft IRT	Kasschau, Dane A	403 Marlborough St #15	\$2,729,000
C Hal&Bryan Croft IRT	Kasschau, Dane A	403 Marlborough St #16	\$2,729,000
BEACON HILL			
Shaw, Scott W	B Wolfner Nessen 2000 T	19 Charles River Sq	\$3,225,000
5050 Invs LLC	Belvoir Condo T	67-1/2 Chestnut St	\$630,000
Avalos, Andres	51 Hancock 12B LLC	51 Hancock St #12B	\$539,000
Wang, Rui	Mathisen, Jennifer L	2 Hawthorne Pl #10F	\$430,000
Martin, Peter G	Richard M Reilly T	97 Mount Vernon St #53	\$882,000
Oliver, Christopher	Petty, John E	132 Myrtle St #1	\$980,000
Boston Beacon HI Rlty LLC	Selmasson Holdings LLC	66 Myrtle St	\$4,437,500
Tekchandani, Rajesh	Scott, Laura	45 Province St #2501	\$3,800,000
Zook, Christopher J	8 Spruce Court NT	8 Spruce Ct	\$1,750,000
Odenca, Bethany J	S J Seward T 2019	15 Temple St #1	\$760,000
Page, Stephen W	Hacobian, Gaspar	61 W Cedar St #4	\$750,000
Garcia, Alexandre C	Cherry, Brayton	12 Walnut St #5	\$857,000
BAY VILLAGE/SOUTH END/KENMORE			
Ramseyer, Logan V	Callahan, Courtney	66 Appleton St #2	\$578,000
410 Boylston LLC	Assoc Of 410 Boylston St	410 Boylston St #1	\$5,200,000
Irvin, Daniel R	Savicki, Charles	144 Chandler St #3	\$1,626,000
AFY Investment Prop LLC	Contractor, Shahan	220-224 Clarendon St #12	\$600,000
Kelly, Matthew	Muthiah, Senthil	10 Bradford St #2	\$1,515,000
Skarinaka, William	Tadvalkar, Chetan	5 Dwight St #3	\$2,225,000
French, Braden	Kolman, Jason	22 Greenwich Park #3	\$2,200,000
NYT Real Estate LLC	Anagram Hunt 307 Group	270 Huntington Ave #307	\$307,000
8 Keswick Street LLC	Ahrens, G Raymond	8 Keswick St	\$2,560,000
Guan, Yongqiao	Gietzen, Kyle	100 Lovejoy Wharf #8M	\$706,600
Giannakis, George J	Mierzwicki, Leo A	77 Rutland St #2	\$1,700,000
Towns, Adam	Moss, Brett A	242 Shawmut Ave #3	\$2,985,000
Liao, Xin	Joelle M Hogan T 2017	40 Traveler St #309	\$1,300,000
Truglio, Kristen L	Haddad, Habib	141 W Concord St #1	\$1,450,000
Riotto, Nicholas	Pahavan, Daria	141 W Newton St	\$3,765,000
Smith, Elizabeth	Adair, John	81 Waltham St #4	\$823,000
Alkhereiji, Tarik A	Hawkes FT	90 Wareham St #415	\$626,000
WATERFRONT/DOWNTOWN			
2 Avery Street 25C LLC	Anderson, Lincoln	2 Avery St #25C	\$3,150,000
42-48 Batterymarch LLC	BGT T	42-48 Batterymarch St	\$1,800,000
Illuminate Building LLC	50 Broad LLC	50-52 Broad St	\$5,600,000
Orino, Conlan J	F H Strickler Jr	440 Commercial St #202	\$775,000
Thomas, Lindsay	Bihrlle, Richard	43 Commercial Wharf #6	\$1,474,000
Leung, Tommy	Isherwood, Phillip T	59 Fleet St #5	\$680,000
Hackenson, William	Schwartz, Adam	1 Franklin St #3709	\$1,555,000

ATTENTION TO DETAIL

BY PENNY CHERUBINO

THIS WEEK'S ANSWER



The roof corner detail in the last clue is on 560 Tremont Street. The curved corner is a key feature of a concave mansard roof. Some historians theorize that in places where buildings were taxed to the cornice, mansard roofs were used as a tax loophole.

You'll find the next clue in the Back Bay.

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





THE
S U D B U R Y
C O N D O M I N I U M S



BOSTON'S BEST VIEWS

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The Sudbury is a new construction luxury high-rise anchoring an unprecedented transformation in the city, the creation of the Bulfinch Crossing neighborhood. Situated at the nexus of Beacon Hill, the North End, the Waterfront, and The Financial District, Bulfinch Crossing is reweaving the urban fabric, tying a 21st century cosmopolitan hub to Boston's most historic districts. With a Walk Score of 99 and Transit Score of 100, you can get where you

need to, faster. 55 grandly-scaled condominium homes comprise the top eleven floors of the tower, each showcasing postcard views that span the Cape Ann coastline to the Blue Hills and the mountains of New Hampshire. An unparalleled 25,000 SF of indoor and outdoor amenity spaces serve as extensions of your home, offering places to unwind, entertain, and soak in the uninterrupted vistas.

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