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The Pour House could soon be reopening at 907 Boylston St.

Landlord committed to reopening The Pour House; attorney tells NABB's Licensing Committee

By Dan Murphy

Despite a management deal recently falling through for The Pour House, landlord Charles M. Talanian remains “100 percent committed” to reopening the longstanding Boylston Street bar, which closed in September of 2020 amid the pandemic after 34 years in business, according to Attorney Jon Aieta, who was on hand for the Feb. 7 virtual meeting of the Neighborhood Association of the Back Bay License and Building Use Committee.

Talanian, the principal owner of C. Talanian Realty, the real-estate firm that owned the Pour House, has purchased the bar at 907 Boylston St. and its liquor license out of bankruptcy. He intended to reopen the bar at 907 Boylston St. “A.S.A.P.,” with Steve Brooks as the manager of record, said Attorney Aieta. (Brooks will also serve as the manager of record when the now-shuttered Lir, next door at 903 Boylston St., a property also owned by Talanian, reopens; that bar closed in September of

2020 after 17 years in business.)

“If down the road, we find a group to manage [the bar], we’ll let you know,” said Aieta, adding that any management group would need to be vetted and approved by the city, and that the applicant would come back before the LBU Committee at that time.

Previously, C and R Hospitality Managers, LLC, bought the Pour House’s assets in bankruptcy court and planned to re-open

(THE POUR HOUSE Pg. 3)

Old South Church continues celebrating Black History Month

By Dan Murphy

Old South Church will continue to celebrate Black History Month every Sunday in February, with a special program called “Roots of Black Music in America.”

During Sunday All-Church Worship throughout the month, the church is featuring Black History Moments, which tells the story behind each featured Black music genres, including Spirituals, Protest Songs, Jazz, and Gospel.

This project is a collaboration between (G)RACE Speaks leader Tracy Keene, Minister of Music Mitchell Crawford, Gospel Choir Director Tim Harbold, and Director of Children and Family Ministries Kate Nintcheu.

The first Black History

Moment on Feb. 6 focused on Spirituals and examined musicians Mahalia Jackson and Harry T. Burleigh.

On Feb. 13, Songs of Protest will “illustrate distinct moments in history, and the music that rose up to accompany those struggles,” according to the church’s website, and feature R&B singer H.E.R., as well as a tribute to Odetta (Holmes), the late American folk singer and civil and human rights activist often referred to as the “Voice of the Civil Rights Movement.”

The Feb. 20 Black History Moment on Jazz, will explore the work of two of the genre’s legends, Duke Ellington and Miles Davis.

Finally, the Feb. 27 program on Gospel music will spotlight

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South End author releases fifth book that tells stories of the neighborhood

By Lauren Bennett

Long-time South End resident and author Alison Barnet recently released her fifth book, titled South End Incident, a True Story.

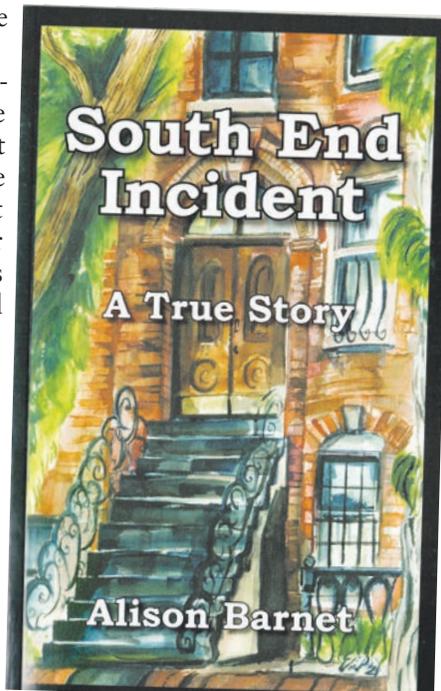
According to a blurb provided by Barnet, “It’s the story of her coming to live at the Franklin Square House in 1964 and then East Springfield St. where her landlady and the upstairs tenants were exceptional characters—eccentric and funny. (Alison fit right in.)”

Barnet said that she has always noticed her surroundings and ever since she was a little girl, she liked to write down her findings.

“When I was nine, someone in my family gave me a locked diary,” she told the Sun, and she recalls writing

about “an incident behind the house,” where a “neighbor boy” took a fake gun and “acciden-

(SOUTH END INCIDENT Pg. 5)



Old Alexandra Hotel slated to become condos, instead of previously approved hotel

By Dan Murphy

Citing a downturn in the hospitality industry expected to last until at least 2025, the team behind the redevelopment of the old Alexandra Hotel is now proposing condos, instead of the previously approved hotel, for the historic building located at Washington Street and Massachusetts Avenue.

“It would be inconceivable to build a hotel there for many

years to come,” said Marc LaCasse, the attorney representing Alexandra Partners, during a virtual meeting sponsored by the city on Feb. 3.

Since the proposed 150-room boutique hotel was approved for the location by the Boston Planning & Development Agency board in March of 2019, the pandemic upended the world’s economy, with hospitality being one of the hardest hit industries. Alexandra Partners had even

considered selling the property after investors pulled out of the proposed hotel, said La Casse, but the developer was eventually able to find financing for a residential project.

Dartagnan Brown, an architect on the project, said the height (13 stories) and massing of the 71,000 square-foot project would remain the same as what was previously proposed, and

(ALEXANDRA, Pg. 6)

EDITORIAL

THE 1887 ELECTORAL COUNT ACT MUST BE AMENDED

Americans always have taken for granted the sanctity and integrity of our electoral system. For decades, we routinely have sent observers to countries where democracy is a new thing to ensure that those nations conducted their elections on the up-and-up, using our electoral system as a model.

America's democratic process, we have assumed, is the gold standard for democracies around the world. We never considered that our own democracy, the world's oldest, was anything but rock-solid.

However, the 2020 Presidential election upended all of those assumptions. It turns out that what we had thought were firmly-embedded procedures are not so clear, and could be subject to a wide range of interpretation.

This lack of clarity is thanks to an arcanelly-worded statute, known as the 1887 Electoral Count Act.

The Act was enacted by Congress in 1887, 10 years after the disputed 1876 presidential election, in which several states submitted competing slates of electors and a divided Congress was unable to resolve the deadlock for weeks. Though it took Congress more than 10 years to finally pass the act, the effort to clarify some of the ambiguities contained in the Constitution concerning the Electoral College only served to create deeper ambiguities.

Up until 2020, there never had been a serious challenge to the results of a presidential election. However, as we all know by now, former President Donald Trump, aided and abetted by a large number of members of Congress, attempted to use the lack of clarity in the Electoral Count Act to overturn the Electoral College results of five states.

Fortunately, Trump's shenanigans -- as usual -- were neither well-organized nor well-focused. Further, vice-president Mike Pence was not willing to be a participant in Trump's charade.

However, Trump's gambit brought to the attention of legal scholars and our elected officials the potential for unscrupulous -- and better-organized -- actors to wreak havoc with our democratic process. All of us have come to realize that the guard rails that we had thought existed to protect our democratic norms are nothing more than a chimera.

Amending the 1887 Electoral Count Act is a non-partisan issue. Future Democrats are equally as likely as future Republicans to try to exploit the weaknesses of the act to the detriment of our democracy.

We urge both of our U.S. Senators, Ed Markey and Elizabeth Warren, as well as our members of Congress, to join with Republican colleagues such as Maine Senator Susan Collins to amend the act expeditiously.

In view of the events that took place in the aftermath of the 2020 election, this is the most urgent business that Congress can undertake in order to preserve the viability of our democracy.

A SILVER LINING TO INFLATION

We saw a report on the news the other night about the effect that inflation is having on food prices thanks to supply chain issues that have arisen during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The report highlighted that inflation is taking a bite (no pun intended) out of Americans' wallets because of higher prices for items such as bacon, snack foods, and soft drinks.

"That's a bad thing?" we thought to ourselves.

Americans are among the most obese and unhealthiest people in the world principally because we eat bad food -- and lots of it. The average American male today weighs 30 pounds more than the average male did 50 years ago and the average American woman today weighs as much as the average man did 50 years ago. The single-biggest risk factor -- after old age -- for a poor prognosis for a COVID-19 patient is being overweight.

In our view, if the direct and indirect effects of COVID-19 have the result of forcing Americans to cut back on our consumption of highly-processed and junk foods, then that would be at least one good thing to come out of the otherwise ongoing tragedy of the pandemic.

GUEST OP-ED

You can at least say howdy

Dr. Glenn Mollette

"Howdy," was a common everyday word where I grew up. Raised on old Stidham, now known as Milo road in rural Appalachia, I spent a lot of time at my Grandpa and Grandma Hinkle's store. People came and went buying gasoline, sandwich meat, snacks or groceries for the week. There were cane bottom chairs in the store. Often people would sit and chat for a while.

Regardless of how many times during the week I walked down the road to that store, the opening salutation was typically, "howdy."

People were in and out of the Hinkle store doing business. A family member was often coming or going because my grandparents had raised ten children and there were many grandchildren who frequented the Hinkle business. Often, family members were buying a soda pop or just stopping in to say "howdy."

We grew up on Milo speaking to most everyone who came and went. When a car drove by, we usually waved even though we didn't always know them. At family or church gatherings we typically talked to everyone for a minute or two and shook hands or hugged a few people.

The only time I can remember our family being speechless was when fifteen or twenty of us were sitting on the porch and a man from New York City pulled up in an older car. My grandpa had received an advertisement in the mail about a great used car he could buy for \$500. He ordered the car to surprise my grandma and we were all really surprised when this man pulled in front of the store in an old beat up looking car. He had driven the car from New York City, which was a long drive on those roads back then. After being drop jaw stunned silent for a few minutes, everyone loosened up and eventually started talking to the man who was just doing a job but now had to get back to New York. By this time, some of us were chuckling just a little. A couple of the family members took the guy over to Kermit, West Virginia to catch a Greyhound bus to begin his long journey back home.

A part of American culture has been hand shaking and embracing those we know. A part of most American religious gatherings has been shaking hands. One church I attended insisted on everybody hugging each other.

Covid-19 has impacted our

world with death, sickness and business failures. The distancing for many of us continues to be tough. We wear our masks and seldom know who else is in the grocery store. We're fearful of going to the funeral home to honor and respect the deceased. Shaking hands or embracing anyone anywhere is typically totally unwelcome. Many holiday parties of large gatherings were fewer over the past holidays. People don't want to be sick and so the distancing continues.

We do have the telephone, social media and email which helps us at least stay connected.

However, please keep in mind, when you do recognize someone at the grocery or any public place you may not feel comfortable embracing or shaking hands, but you can still convey a greeting and kindness by at least saying "howdy."

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.

BVHDC approves security gate at 49 Winchester St.

By Lauren Bennett

The Bay Village Historic District Commission (BVHDC) on Feb. 8 approved a request for a security gate for the basement door at 49 Winchester St.

"The owners of this property asked me to manage this building and some construction going on there right now," said Eric Hersum of Back Bay Properties, who presented the proposal.

He said the owners would like

to install a gate—similar to others on the street—for both security and to keep trash out of the doorway.

He said that the owners want to have the hinge on the outside so the door can be swung fully open in order to get construction materials into the building.

"They really want to make it historically correct if they can," Hersum said.

Joe Cornish, Director of Design Review for the Bos-

ton Landmarks Commission, showed a photo of an existing gate down the street that was more decorative than the one being proposed here.

"The guidelines state that they should be mounted inside," Cornish said of the gate. However, he said that he understands that it needs to be opened "as wide as possible" for construction purposes and "there is a prece-

(BVHDC Pg. 3)

THE BOSTON SUN

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Baker administration to lift mask mandate in schools on Feb. 28

By Lauren Bennett

The Baker administration on Feb. 9 announced that the state-wide mask mandate for K-12 schools will be lifted on Feb. 28, the date it was set to expire.

Gov. Charlie Baker said at a

press conference on Wednesday morning that guidance has been issued by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) for schools “for using masks in specific scenarios.”

He continued, “our adminis-

tration’s pulled out every stop to keep kids in classrooms where they can learn safely.” Baker spoke about state efforts with regards to vaccination clinics at schools and the school testing programs, both of which he said will continue moving forward.

“We’ve learned a lot about how safe schools are and about how to keep kids in class learning over the course of this pandemic,” Baker said, adding that “young people are at very low risk of getting seriously ill from COVID,” as are individuals who are fully vaccinated.

Baker also said that Massachusetts is second in the country “for highest share of kids fully vaccinated at this point in time,”

and that “school settings are very rarely sources of COVID transmission.”

With the number of resources available to students, families, and teachers at this point in the pandemic, Baker said that “almost every single COVID restriction or mandate at the state level” has now been able to be lifted. He said it is “time to give our kids a sense of normalcy.”

Baker addressed the fact that many students and teachers will continue to choose to wear masks. “We fully support those individual decisions,” he said, and “urge everyone in K-12 education to do the same.”

DESE Commissioner Jeff Riley

said that the mask mandate will be lifted in every school district on Feb. 28, “unless a school district decides to establish a local requirement.”

He also said that “this decision was made in consultation with infectious disease physicians, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, and other medical experts.”

According to Riley, 82 percent of kids ages 16-19 have gotten at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine statewide.

“Please make sure to create a supportive environment that respects everyone’s choice to do what is most appropriate and comfortable for them,” Riley said.

THE POUR HOUSE (from pg. 1)

it under the same name and concept, while Talanian would have acquired its liquor license via his entity. Representatives for C and R Hospitality Managers came before the LBU Committee on Dec. 6 to make their pitch, which the committee voted not to oppose, said Aieta.

In another matter, Café Landwer, located at 665 Boylston St. in the former Ora Trattorizza space next to the Charlesmark Hotel, is seeking an agreement with the city for managing the food and beverages at the hotel.

Nir Caspi, CEO of Café Landwer, which he describes as a “Mediterranean diner café,” said they already operates in two other Boston locations – one at 900 Beacon St., and the other in Cleveland Circle – along with several additional outposts in Los Angeles and in Canada. “We really love Boston,” he said, adding that he has lived in the city for the past six years.

The Boylston Street location had opened about a week earlier, Caspi said on Feb. 7, and its operating hours are currently 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily. Beginning on Feb. 15, the closing time will be changed to 9 p.m., and it will eventually be extended to 10 p.m., he added. (The restaurant would remain open to 1 a.m. for guests of the Charlesmark Hotel only, serving a light menu and beverages)

Caspi indicated that the patio could be open as last as 11 p.m., but after the restaurant’s proposed 10 p.m. closing time for the general public, it would only be accessible to hotel guests.

Café Landwer serves breakfast, lunch and dinner, said Caspi, but they’re currently not serving alcohol.

Trash would be stored in a dumpster in the rear of the establishment and removed from the premises on a daily basis, said Caspi.

Attorney Aieta, who also represented Café Landwer, said the applicant had appeared before

the city’s Licensing Board last week, although the board has yet to vote on their application.

Lastly, Attorney Dennis Quilty was on hand representing 39 Dalton License LLC – a joint venture between Värde Partners and Hawkins Way Capital that is reportedly purchasing the Sheraton Hotel for \$233 million - to discuss their future plans for the property, which comprises two 29-story towers.

The south tower, whose fifth through 29th floors are temporarily occupied by 550 Northeastern University students and staff members across 427 hotel rooms via a special arrangement with the BPDA, is proposed to remain as dormitory space. But Quilty made assurances that only students from one university would be living there, and that Northeastern has already expressed interest in continuing its current arrangement.

The north tower, which has been vacant for nearly two years largely due to the pandemic, would remain a hotel, and Quilty said he believes it would likely stay a Sheraton.

“They want to renovate all the rooms and the common spaces, so it depends on how long that takes, but they want to occupy it as soon as possible,” said Quilty, who added that the applicant, who also recently purchased the Copley Square Hotel, hasn’t filed anything with the city yet for this proposal.

An application would require a full process and review by the city, including by the BPDA, in the near future, so Quilty was merely providing the committee with an informational overview of the current proposal.

Conrad Armstrong, chair of the LBU Committee, told applicants he would get back to them after NABB’s Executive Committee’s scheduled meeting today, Feb. 10, to inform them of the determinations on their respective applications.

BVHDC (from pg. 2)

dent for front-mounted fates on the street, I think as long as it’s mounted in mortar joints so it doesn’t damage the face of the brick and it’s reversible and they get as narrow a plate as possible,” he said it would be approvable.

“The building to the left is the last building before you get to Arlington St.,” Cornish said. “This is kind of a vulnerable location for trash and things to blow down into that opening.”

Commissioner Anne Kilguss

said she would “recommend” some sort of mesh in between the bars to really keep trash out.

Tom Perkins of the Bay Village Neighborhood Association asked if there is a joint easement with the neighbor where the door is, because oftentimes in Bay Village buildings, property lines can go “down the middle” of these doors.

Hersum said that “all of the windows they had in the back are barred up and closed up,” and he does not know whether or not

there is an easement. He said that once construction is complete, he will be managing the property and is willing to work with the abutter and let them use the door if necessary.

The Commission voted to approve the gate with the proviso that the applicant consult with staff on installing the gate in the mortar joints and to select the “smallest front-mounted metal plate as possible.” Additionally, this approval hinges on approval by the abutter as well.



Virtual Public Meeting

80 East Berkeley Street

Wednesday, February 23
6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Zoom Link: bit.ly/3AX4hvp
Toll Free: (833) 568 - 8864
Meeting ID: 161 501 9801

Project Proponent:
The Druker Company, Ltd.

Project Description:

The BPDA is hosting a Public Meeting on the Notice of Project Change (NPC) and the First Amendment to the Development Plan for Planned Development Area No. 95 for the 80 East Berkeley Street Project located in the South End. The proposed project consists of an approximately 265,000 SF 10-story office, laboratory and research and development building with ground floor retail and 200 parking spaces. The NPC is being filed to address the change in use from office only to office, laboratory and research and development use, along with associated minor design changes to accommodate laboratory use.

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Close of Comment Period:
3/17/2022

BPS Superintendent Cassellius to leave at end of school year

By Lauren Bennett

On Monday, Feb. 7, Boston Public Schools (BPS) Superintendent Brenda Cassellius announced that she would be leaving the role at the end of this school year after three years.

In a statement, Cassellius said, “Working alongside so many people - parents, educators, community and faith leaders, and philanthropic partners - all dedicated to helping our children achieve their dreams has given new meaning to my vision of all hands on deck. Together, we’ve laid a stronger foundation upon which BPS can continue to build. I love Boston and I’ve loved this job. My commitment to the district remains as strong as it was

on the first day I arrived, and I will forever be a champion and supporter of the Boston Public Schools.”

At a press conference at Brighton High School on Tuesday, Mayor Michelle Wu said that “I am so grateful to Superintendent Cassellius for her steadfast leadership, her grace, her courage, her unwavering commitment to equity for our young people. She has truly led this district through what I believe are the three most challenging school years that we’ve ever seen in Boston, and we are all stronger and better off for her leadership and I’m so excited for the work that we will continue to do together through the end of this school

year and continue to benefit from her guidance and wisdom as we manage this transition process over the next couple months.”

Reporters asked Cassellius why she was leaving, as she had previously said she would like to stay in the role for a number of years.

“I’m just as committed to this district and city as I have been since the day I walked through it,” Cassellius said at the press conference. “Nobody could have anticipated a pandemic and three mayoral changes and just an incredible amount of headwind. It has been an incredible opportunity to lay a strong foundation and to work with Mayor Wu now as she transitions her new

leadership team, and I can’t be more excited to be able to support her and to continue on this really exciting foundation that we’ve laid.”

In the last 10 years, Boston has seen four different superintendents: John McDonough as Ais interim, Dr. Tommy Chang, Laura Perille as an interim, and Dr. Brenda Cassellius.

“Nothing’s pushing me out the door,” Cassellius said. “I’m still here for five months, rolling up my sleeves, getting this work done each and every day and just excited about the work that we’ve been able to accomplish...”

When asked about her next steps, Cassellius said “My next

steps are to continue to do the work that I’m doing here in Boston Public Schools each and every day to make sure our students are getting everything they need.”

In a letter dated Feb. 7, Wu said that the transition was a “mutual decision.”

She also said that “I am grateful that Superintendent Cassellius will continue to lead BPS through the remainder of this school year to ensure a strong finish to the semester and a smooth transition for our BPS students, families, and dedicated school leaders and staff. The reforms that the Superintendent will continue to lead during this time will set our course for the coming years.”

OLD SOUTH CHURCH (from pg. 1)

musicians Thomas A. Dorsey and Aretha Franklin.

Black History Moments are taped in advance and shown in the sanctuary on a large screen as part of the sermon and also broadcast via Zoom, said Keane.

Community Hour - a forum discussion at 11 a.m. every Sunday in February, both in person and on Zoom - will continue to explore that week’s selected

genre of Black Music.

The first Community Hour on Feb. 6 focused on Spirituals and included a discussion of the 1982 documentary film, “Say Amen, Somebody,” directed by George Nierenberg, about “the history and significance of gospel music as told through the lives and trials of its singers,” according to the church’s website.

Upcoming Community Hours

include a discussion on “Marian Anderson: The Whole World in Her Hands,” a documentary available on Amazon Prime and PBS Passport exploring the life and legacy of the famous singer who became an icon for the civil rights movement, on Feb. 13; a conversation about “Respect,” a film available on Amazon Prime that follows the rise of Aretha Franklin’s career from a child singing in her father’s church’s choir to international superstardom, on Feb. 20; and “Paying it Forward: The Negro Spiritual Royalties Project,” which looks at how United Parish in Brookline is recognizing and paying “royalties” to the Black creators of Negro spirituals commonly sung in churches by directly supporting the development of young Black musicians on Feb. 27.

In anticipation of the final Community Hour on Feb. 27, Keane said, “Old South Church is just starting to get educated on what reparations mean and finding a starting point for the dialogue.”

The (G)RACE Speaks Committee will also be hosting a four-part anti-racist curriculum on the last two Sundays of this month - Feb. 20 and 27 - as well as the second and third Sundays of next month: March 13 and 20, said Keane.

Learn more about Old South Church’s programming, commit-

tee, and projects on racial justice at oldsouth.org/racial-justice

To promote Black History Month at Old South Church, Jamie Garuti, the church’s multimedia director, is creating a poster to spotlight each week’s musical theme, which will be posted outside the church at the corner of Boylston and Dartmouth streets.

Minister of Music, Mitchell Crawford, is also selecting psalms for each Sunday sermon that are pertinent to each week’s music genre.

“We’re taking a holistic approach to how we’re doing this,” said Keane.

The ministers preaching each Sunday throughout February are even peppering their sermons with references to the selected genre.

Rev. Nancy S. Taylor, senior minister at Old South Church, preached on the topic of Spirituals during her Feb. 6 sermon.

Members of the church were descendants of four enslaved individuals, so for her sermon, Rev. Taylor said she touched on “how Spirituals would’ve spoken to them and how life-affirming they were.”

“Spirituals were everything to the enslaved,” she said. “They were the hope that had been denied by their oppressors, they were an open door, and they were a taste of freedom.”

Moreover, Spirituals come

largely from the Bible, as Rev. Taylor is quick to point out.

“Look at Daniel in the Lion’s Den, when the slaves would say, ‘if God can save Daniel, why can’t he save us?’ and ‘if God can free the Israelites from slavery in Egypt, why can’t they free us from slavery on this soil?’” she said.

In her sermon, Rev. Taylor also looked at the legacy of Howard Thurman, who became the first dean at a mostly white university when he was named the dean of Marsh Chapel at Boston University, and was a mentor to Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. when the future civil rights leader was pursuing his PhD in systematic theology at BU.

Thurman once described the Spiritual as “proof of us, also existence of songs is a monument to one of most striking instances on record in which a people forge a weapon of offense and defense out of a psychological shackle,” while Rev. Taylor defines the genre as “redemptive music helped oppressed people rediscover real Christianity.”

Meanwhile, Keane encourages the public to take a tour of Old South Church in February to “get a history lesson during Black History Month.”

To learn more about Black History Month at Old South Church, visit <https://oldsouth.org/black-history-month>.

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BRIGHAM AND WOMEN'S HOSPITAL
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BOSTON MEDICAL CENTER

BHV executive director offers tips on how to get a senior still living on their own to accept help

By Dan Murphy

When it comes to convincing an aging parent still living on their own to accept help in even the most-simple ways, their adult children are often first met with obstinate resistance.

“Many seniors are fiercely independent, and they want to stay on their own to their own detriment,” said Gina Paglucia Morrison, executive director of Beacon Hill Village (beaconhillvillage.org), a membership-based organization that provides programs and services for residents of the Back Bay, Beacon Hill, Downtown/Waterfront, Fenway/Kenmore, and the North End, South End, and West End, over 50, who want to continue living healthy and vibrant lives in their own homes.

The initial challenge is often just getting seniors to accept help in the first place, which should focus on making their homes safer for them, according to Paglucia Morrison.

“We could try all the preventive things, but [some seniors] are totally resistant,” she said. “You need to find things that you could get an older adult to work with to make their homes safer. It takes collaboration and trying different things.”

First, Paglucia Morrison rec-

ommends getting a home safety assessment, or a home safety checklist by Googling the CDC, AARP, or the National Council on Aging to “find things that you could get an older adult to work with to make their homes safer.” They go through every room in the house, she said, making suggestions like installing a grab-bar or two in the bathroom, or keeping throw rugs to a minimum in other rooms.

“Falls are a big risk, but what can you do to prevent them?” asked Paglucia Morrison. “The biggest thing that leads to people having to leave their homes, is they fall, then their health deteriorates, and their mobility goes down.”

A medical alert system can be a lifesaver in the event of a fall, but many seniors resist wearing one.

“Apple Watch has a fall detector, or other new devices are less offensive [than the old ones],” said Paglucia Morrison. “I hope that the devices get friendlier, and that more people are willing to use them.”

Besides home safety, the next biggest concern for seniors living on their own is personal health, and one option for this is to arrange for a home health-aid via elder healthcare providers, such as Ethos or Boston Senior



COURTESY OF BEACON HILL VILLAGE
Gina Paglucia Morrison, executive director of Beacon Hill Village.

Home Care.

“You can get an aid a couple of times a week for a few hours each time, and they’ll work with you regardless of your income,” said Paglucia Morrison. “And if you can get older adults to accept a little help around the house – and there is help available, too – it could be a good segue way that then, maybe they need more help.”

Loneliness and lack of companionship are emotional hardships faced by many seniors, said Paglucia Morrison, and for them, the Boston nonprofit Friendship-Works, a Boston nonprofit that matches seniors with volunteers for a “friendly visit,” could offer a solution.

“Just having someone an hour a week on the phone or in person...or maybe just having some younger person take a walk with them, or run errands for them, is all it takes for an older person to have a connection,” said Paglucia Morrison, adding that connections might also notice a change in a senior’s health and alert others to it.

For seniors who can afford one, geriatric care counselors are hired consultants who give seniors an overall assessment looking at all aspects of their lives, including their finances, to determine if they live at home; if they can afford to live there; and what kind of support they need to stay in their homes.

“These companies do everything,” said Paglucia Morrison.

“They look at seniors’ finances and can help them find assisted living or a primary care physician. If the family wants to start planning in a very holistic manner, then this is an option. They can be you in another location, but it’s costly.”

In the end though, Paglucia Morrison said getting enough exercise is the key factor that enables seniors to continue living safely and independently in their own homes.

“It seems intuitive, but the more you can encourage seniors to exercise and stay active can also be preventative measure,” she said. “Exercise and fitness is super important and helps keep people independent, and there’s no question that movement can prevent falls.”

SOUTH END INCIDENT (from pg. 1)

tally shot another neighbor boy in the eye.”

Barnet moved to the South End in 1964 when she was 18 years old.

“When you’re in the same place for a long time, you get to know people very well,” she said. Her apartment contained “two or three refrigerators,” she said, and one didn’t work, so she stashed her journals full of South End stories inside the broken one. Many of those stories made it into South End Incident,” she said.

“In the 60s, I started keeping journal entries,” she said. “I wasn’t planning to do anything with that.”

She said that though the stories in South End Incident are “written like fiction, it’s actually completely truthful.”

Barnet’s other books include

Extravaganza King; Robert Barnet and Boston Musical Theater, which was published in 2004 by Northeastern University Press about her great-grandfather who was a playwright and an actor, South End Character, and Speaking Out on Neighborhood Change, which was published in 2013 about different subjects in the neighborhood that Barnet wrote columns about in the South End News.

Barnet also wrote Sitting Ducks, which was published in 2014 and is her only fiction work, but she said it is still “based on reality.” The story is about “a time in the South End where elderly women were being attacked to get their properties,” Barnet said. She said that while this was not very commonplace, it did happen around 1970.

Her fourth book is Once Upon

a Neighborhood, A Timeline and Anecdotal History of the South End of Boston, published in 2019. Barnet said it took her five years to write the book, as she had to “look into everything” and conduct research about different events.

She said that so far, South End Incident is doing well, and she has sold 35 copies. She has placed another order of books.

“South End Incident is not simply South End—it’s about me in the 60s,” Barnet said. “Most of the stories in the book are funny.”

Barnet is also working on a sixth book, which she is calling Shopping Carts on Brick Sidewalks. The book will be “based in reality about real people,” she said.

South End Incident is available now for \$25.

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CITY of **BOSTON** Public Works

Fenway Civic Association spotlights life and legacy of John Boyle O'Reilly at 60th annual meeting

By Dan Murphy

The Fenway Civic Association (FCA) held its 60th annual meeting virtually on Tuesday, Feb. 8, which included a spirited discussion on John Boyle O'Reilly, the 19th century Irish journalist, writer, and civil rights activist immortalized with a multi-figure bronze sculpture on the Back Bay Fens.

The meeting's feature presentation on O'Reilly was moderated by WGBH's Brian O'Donovan and also including Peter Drummey, chief historian and Stephen T. Riley librarian for the Massachusetts Historical Society; and Patricia Gilrein, the city's art collection manager.

Born in 1844 in Dowth in County Meath, Ireland, O'Reilly immigrated to Lancashire, England, at age 15 and soon found work as a reporter. He enlisted with the English army shortly thereafter, but he was so appalled by the army's treatment of the Irish, that he left and

returned to Ireland in 1863.

O'Reilly joined the Irish Republican Brotherhood the following year. He remained with the group until early 1865, when he, along with many other members, was arrested and charged with treason.

O'Reilly was transported to and imprisoned in the British colony of Western Australia, but he was there for a little more than a year before he escaped on Feb. 18, 1869. He then fled to the U.S. with the help of New Bedford walers.

O'Reilly arrived in Philadelphia in 1869 and then spent a short time in New York before settling in Boston at age 26. He found work in Boston as reporter with The Pilot newspaper and would go on to serve as its editor and then co-owner. During his tenure with the newspaper, O'Reilly used The Pilot as a "pulpit to confront bigotry," according to Matthew Brooks, vice president of the FCA board.

O'Reilly would continue to run The Pilot until his untimely death at age 46 from an overdose of sleeping medication on Aug. 10, 1890, at his residence in Hull.

Despite his accomplished career in journalism, it was his poetry, as well as his devotion to collecting Irish poetry and song, that made O'Reilly a celebrity during his lifetime, according to Drummey.

And as one of the founders of the Boston Athletic Association, which sponsors the Boston Marathon, O'Reilly hoped to impart his interest in Irish field sports on the American public, added Drummey.

Following his funeral at St. Mary's Church in Charlestown on Aug. 13, 1890, O'Reilly was honored during a public memorial service on Sept. 2 of that year at Tremont Temple in Boston.

In 1892, David Chester French, the sculptor who designed the statue of Abraham

Lincoln in the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., as well as the sculpture of John Harvard in Cambridge's Harvard Yard, was commissioned to build a monument to O'Reilly.

On June 20, 1896, French's multi-figure bronze sculpture of O'Reilly was unveiled during a ceremony attended by many elected officials and dignitaries at its original location at the entryway into the Fenway. (The sculpture was moved to its current location at the corner of Boylston Street and the Fens, across the street from its original site, in the 1980s.)

French's memorial consists of two castings - allegorical representations of Erin (Ireland), Patriotism, and Poetry on one side, with a bust of O'Reilly on the other side. The pedestal for the memorial is adorned with Celtic imagery, including a Celtic cross and Celtic knots.

An inscription on one side of the monument reads: "John

Boyle O'Reilly, 1844-1890, Poet, Patriot, Orator."

Gilrein said the Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture will supplement the FCA's efforts to restore the O'Reilly monument, and has identified funding for the project. The City Council would then have to approve the expenditure, she said.

The FCA has already allocated \$35,000 from the Fenway Park Demonstration funds in 2021 to repair and conserve the O'Reilly Monument.

The O'Reilly sculpture was also singled out as one of the top statues in need of attention during a recent audit of the city's public statuary, said Gilrein.

"It's a lot of work, but it's in good hands with the conservator we work with," she said of Watertown-based Daedalus, Inc.

Tim Horn, president of the FCA board, said he "hope[s] there will be a nice presentation when it's all done."

ALEXANDRA (from pg. 1)

that the "historic façade, which underwent major scrutiny, will remain intact."

Brown described the current proposal as "in some ways, a last resort to save the project."

Of the proposed 76 condo units proposed for Alexandra Residences, 33 of them would be compact (eight studios, 24 one-bedrooms, and one two-bedroom unit), and 10 would be designated as affordable housing under the BPDA's Inclusionary Development Policy (IDP).

The first-floor retail space is being designed to accommodate a restaurant or restaurant-café combo, said Thomas Calus, another member of the Alexandra Partners team.

"We would love to get a

restaurant in there, and if we can find interested restauranters, we'd like to work with them," said Calus, adding that a couple of would-be restaurant operators have already expressed interest in the space.

If the developer can get zoning approval from the city next month, construction could start in about six months, said Calus and the project would then take around another 18 months to complete. "It'll be no sooner than two years in the best case scenario," he added.

Community benefits from the project remain unchanged from what was previously agreed upon, including a \$100,000 donation to the Boston Transportation Department for bike



A rendering of the proposed Alexandra Residences.

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racks in compliance with city guidelines, to "provide a mobility micro hub transit screen," and to help fund local yet-to-be-determined transportation projects; a \$35,000 donation to the Boston Parks and Recreation Department for improvements to Ramsay Park and Chester Square Park; a \$10,000 donation to Washington Gateway Main Street to fund sidewalk cleaning;

and \$100,000 to the BPDA to create a community benefit fund to be distributed at the agency's discretion.

"The community benefits remain the same, and all commitments remain the same," said LaCasse. "Everything remains the same except use of building that was previously approved."

There was strong support overall for this current iteration

of the proposed project among neighbors on hand for the meeting.

"Thank you for your patience and persistence in getting this done," said Bud Larievy, the Washington Gateway Main Street board president, as well as a longtime South End resident, to members of the Alexandra Residences team.

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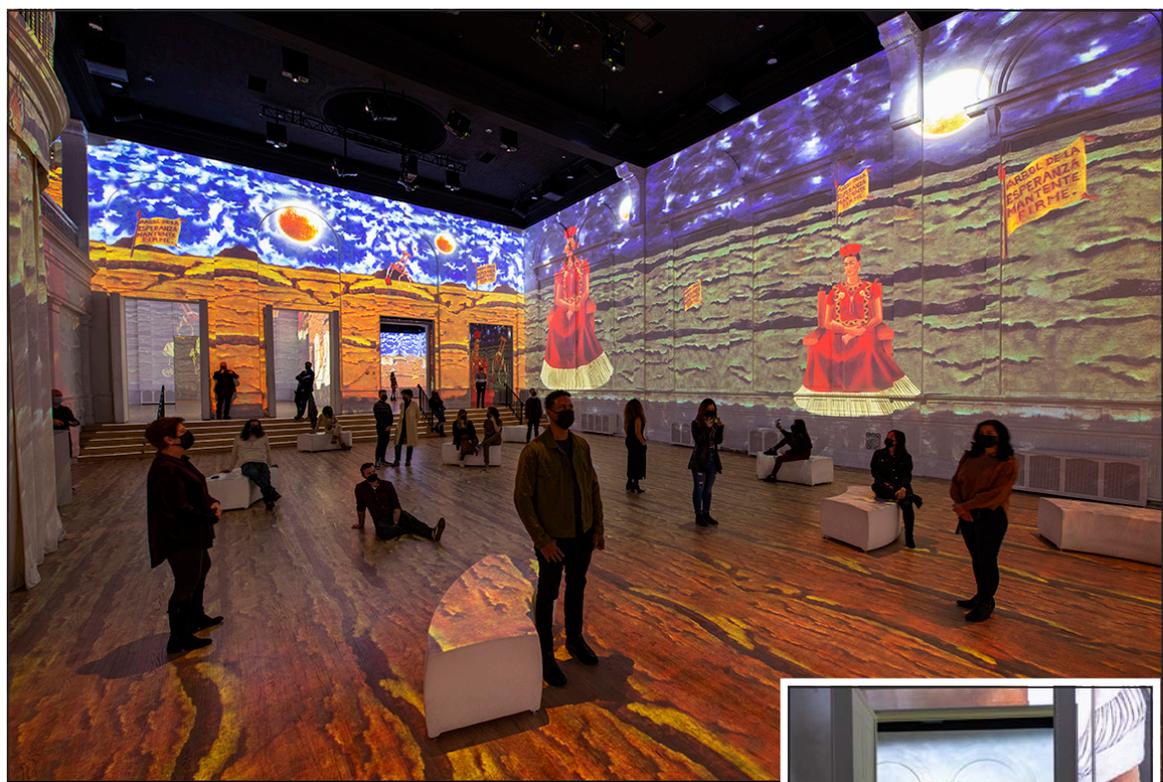
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The team behind Immersive Van Gogh directs its lens to the life and work of Frida Kahlo

Special to the Times

Lighthouse Immersive, North America's leading producer of ground-breaking experiential art exhibits, and Maestro Immersive Art today announce its new-

est immersive art installation, Immersive Frida Kahlo. On the heels of its critically acclaimed blockbuster Immersive Van Gogh (now on-view in 15 cities), the Lighthouse Immersive team has set their sights on the art and life of Frida Kahlo (1907-1954),



PHOTOS BY MICHAEL BROSILOW

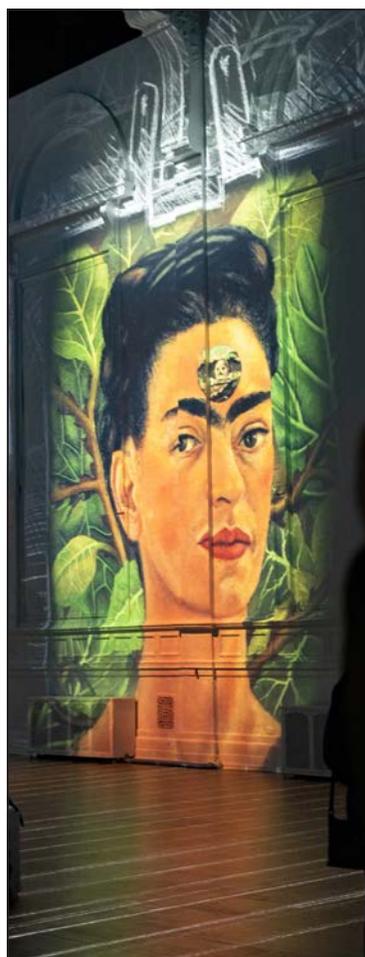
the beloved 20th century Mexican artist best known for compelling self-portraits and radiant pieces inspired by her life in her native country of Mexico.

The exhibition features some of the artist's best-known works "brought to life" by the world-renowned master of digital art, Italy's Massimiliano Siccardi, again accompanied by composer Luca Longobardi's resonant score. Vittorio Guidotti is the Art Director. A brilliant, bold and uncompromising painter, Kahlo's work

is globally recognized for its raw emotional vitality, vibrant color work and unflinching intimacy.

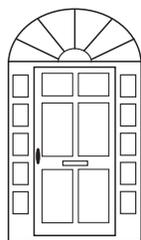
Immersive Frida Kahlo arrives in Boston at the Lighthouse ArtSpace at the Castle (130 Columbus Avenue) Thursday, February 10 through Sunday, May 8, 2022. Ticket prices start at \$39.99 with timed and flexible options available.

For more information about Immersive Frida Kahlo, visit immersive-frida.com.



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Greg Wilmot appointed EBNHC's new President and CEO

By John Lynds

The East Boston Neighborhood Health Center's Board of Directors voted this week to appoint Greg Wilmot as the Health Center's new President and CEO. The board announced Tuesday that Wilmot, who has been serving as interim President and CEO since the departure of Manny Lopes in late October, will begin serving immediately.

"Greg assumed leadership of the health center seamlessly in his interim role and has expertly guided our organization through a very challenging time that has included a major COVID surge," said EBNHC Board Chair Rita Sorrento. "He has led our Executive Team in managing our complicated day to day operations and has represented himself well as a leader with all staff. His work has made a lasting impact on our patients and our community. Furthermore, Greg has earned our trust and confidence in his ability to lead this organization and continue the health center's mission in the months and years to come."

Wilmot was recruited by Lopes in 2017 to serve as the Health Center's Executive Director of Neighborhood PACE, which saw a 48 percent growth under his leadership. Program of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly, or PACE Program, has allowed seniors in Eastie to live safely in their homes instead of in nursing homes. The Health Center has successfully implemented this national program to help seniors live with dignity and security at

home by providing them the necessary support and services.

Before becoming interim CEO he served as Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of EBNHC.

"I think our board worked so hard to really work through a comprehensive process to identify the next leader," said Wilmot. "I'm really thrilled that they agreed that the leader would be me and I'm excited for this next chapter. I've had the opportunity to serve in these different capacities at the Health Center."

Wilmot said he has already hit the ground running due to close work over the years with Lopes. While he said he has some big shoes to fill he is bringing 'different shoes' to the leadership role at EBNHC.

"Manny (Lopes) has been a colleague, he's been a friend and served as a mentor on many things," said Wilmot. "Manny recruited me to the health center and we worked together in a variety of capacities. Before I came to the Health Center and when I worked for Boston Medical Center, and Mass General we had various touch points, and so I've known Manny in a few different contexts. So coming into the Health Center we shared many of the same decisions for healthcare. Because of my background in healthcare, where I worked with community health centers and my work in state government—working for the largest Medicaid health plan in the state, Manny felt those diverse experiences would bring a lot to this organization. I'd say



Greg Wilmot was named EBNHC new President and CEO Tuesday.

I definitely have shoes to fill, but in many ways I'm bringing some different shoes as well."

After his promotion to COO in September 2020, Wilmot played a key role in helping to design and execute EBNHC's COVID-19 vaccination strategy, which resulted in over 100,000 doses administered in communities hit hardest by the pandemic. After being appointed to interim CEO in November, Wilmot has led the Health Center through the latest COVID surge.

"The pandemic story has been an evolving one," said Wilmot. "I will say our community should feel good about our response being done as part of a community effort. It took a village but our communities now have some of the highest vaccination rates as compared to any other kind of gateway community. So if you look at East Boston, Chelsea, Revere, the vaccination rates amongst Latinos in those communities were highest in the state. To date now it's over 150,000 doses of COVID vac-

cine administered. That work has really helped us to mitigate what could have been a far more deadly period during the latest surge. We know that folks got sick but those who were vaccinated and boosted for sure help to mitigate the severity of illness. That work, while still not done because we are still in a surge, mattered for our communities and we were glad to be a part of it. I grew up here in Boston and worked in health care for the last two decades around issues involving health disparities. You can predictably identify how some of this could have gone so we really created a very proactive, intentional strategy to really address equitable access to the vaccines. We built out all of our plans with a strategic purpose to really support these communities, and particularly black and brown communities, ensuring equitable access to vaccines and that strategy worked."

Wilmot added, "Now we're in this next chapter but it continues and evolves and we're continuing to evolve with it in partnership with our community leaders and residents."

Wilmot admits that the ongoing pandemic has been taxing frontline healthcare workers that serve the Health Center and one of his first orders of business is to create an environment that supports their exhaustion and mental wellness.

"It's been two years now and it's definitely been an exhausting challenge for all of us," he said. "However, it has been particularly exhausting and challenging

for our healthcare professionals that have had to work toward treating this disease while also working in a challenging environment. A lot because people are burnt out. We really want to prioritize their wellness. That's really the focus right now is making sure employees are supported, that they're continuing to have access to the resources they need to not just be great employees for the health center, but also can continue to just be well, both physically and mentally. So we're really focusing on employee wellness right now just keeping our staff as strong as possible so that we can be the strongest possible healthcare provider in our community for our patients."

Prior to joining EBNHC in 2017, Wilmot worked at All-Ways Health Partners, a member of Mass General Brigham, where he led the organization's Mass-Health Accountable Care Organization strategy and operations. Additionally, Wilmot previously served as Boston Medical Center's director of business development, where he partnered with clinical and administrative leaders at the hospital and across key partners to create new opportunities for growth and expand clinical services and quality goals. Wilmot also worked for former Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick's Executive Office of Health and Human Services as senior advisor and director of strategy and performance management and held various operational and management roles at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts.

Mayor Wu announces launch of two-year, fare-free program for MBTA Bus routes 23, 28 and 29

Staff Report

Mayor Michelle Wu on Feb. 9 announced that the City of Boston is launching the two-year fare-free program on MBTA bus Routes 23, 28, and 29 on March 1, 2022. This program extends the highly successful fare-free Route 28 pilot program and eliminates fares on two other crucial bus routes. Fare-free buses enable all-door boarding, which eases congestion and speeds up bus service. Riders will still have to pay for transfers to other MBTA routes and services. The Mayor made the announcement at Grove Hall and visit-

ed neighborhood businesses to share information about the new program with Chief of Streets Jascha Franklin-Hodge and MBTA General Manager Steve Poftak.

"Expanding fare-free transit to Routes 23, 28, 29 will better connect our communities, increase ridership, and ease congestion for all our residents," said Mayor Michelle Wu. "As we work to ensure every resident knows about the program, we hope this is just the beginning of access to fare-free public transit in Boston. I'm thrilled to partner with the MBTA to expand this successful ongoing program

and look forward to working with our partners across the Commonwealth to build a sustainable, reliable, accessible, and affordable transportation system that truly serves our residents and our local economy."

"Today's announcement is really exciting," said Chief of Streets Jascha Franklin-Hodge. "We plan to use these two years to learn how making transit free can affect peoples' travel decisions, improve the performance of the bus itself, and bring additional benefits to riders and the communities along these routes."

"We were pleased to collaborate with the City on the Route

28 pilot and now to expand the program to include these additional routes for the next two years," said MBTA General Manager Steve Poftak. "The benefits experienced by customers on the 28 are being expanded to a broader group of riders, and we appreciate the City of Boston's willingness to make this happen by providing funding."

"February is Transit Equity Month in Boston. For the past 7+ years, we as transit advocates have been developing a vision of fare free transit," said Mela Bush Miles, Director of Transit Oriented Development at Alternatives for Community and Envi-

ronment (ACE). "This is a vision whose time has come. Three free bus routes is just the beginning, we are so excited about this pilot. Public transportation needs to be free for all and should be funded in the same way as other public services. Greener, cleaner, faster and affordable buses is a win for everybody whether they use public transit or not. Free the T!"

"Fare-free bus service has been successful across the Commonwealth and in the City of Boston, helping to ease financial burdens, increase bus ridership, and speed up bus service," said Stacy Thompson, Executive Director

Elected officials of color condemn hate directed at Mayor Wu

By John Lynds

There's a fine line between freedom of speech where one's opinion is expressed during a peaceful protest and using hateful and inflammatory language to express one's views.

Since implementing the city's vaccine mandate for all indoor venues in Boston Mayor Michelle Wu has been exposed to some vile language from a group of anti-vaxxers that have camped outside her home as well as City Hall.

One can argue the language used against the City's first Asian-American female Mayor is not to express a point of view nor a disagreement with Wu's policies but language intended to intimidate.

"To have a chance at healing and building community, we can't keep normalizing hate," Wu recently tweeted. "They've shouted on megaphones that my kids will grow up without a mom because I'll be in prison. Yesterday at dinner my son asked who else's birthday it was because the

(morning) chant was "Happy Birthday, Hitler."

Anti-vaxxers outside the Mayor's home have also been heard yelling "communist c---" and a "piece of s---," as she leaves for work in the morning and returns home at night.

At a recent press conference with Wu, City Councilor Ed Flynn, who was all too familiar with protesters outside his Southie home when his father, Ray, was Boston Mayor, said the attacks against Wu are different on many levels.

"The level of intensity that's happening today wasn't there when my father was there, and I honestly believe some of it is related to an anti-Asian sentiment that we have in this country," he said.

Since announcing the mandate Wu has been quoting as saying, "There's constant calls associating me with the same hateful racist xenophobic language that the former president used in describing the virus and its origins and who was to blame."

Senator/City Councilor Lydia Edwards, who supported Wu for Mayor, was an early ally that jumped to the Mayor's defense.

"Despite this recent rash of anger and hatred, the majority of people voted for Michelle (Wu), who supported this vaccine passport mandated when she was a candidate. So I believe the majority of people in Boston support what is going on."

However, the hateful rhetoric hasn't seemed to slow prompting a coalition of Boston elected officials of color to condemn the hate directed at Wu.

Last week a letter signed by Edwards, Sen. Sonia Chang-Diaz; U.S. Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley; City Councilors Julia Mejia, Ruthzee Louijeune, Ricardo Arroyo, Kendra Lara, Brian Worrell and Tania Fernandes Anderson; Suffolk County District Attorney Kevin Hayden; Suffolk County Sheriff Steven Tompkins; as well as State Representatives Russell Holmes, Brandy Fluker Oakley, Chynah Tyler, Liz Miranda, Jon Santiago,

and Nika Elugardo condemning the ongoing threats of violence and hateful attacks directed at Wu.

"From the halls of Congress, to the steps of the State House, to the chamber of Boston City Hall, we must be unapologetic in rooting out white supremacy, racism, misogyny and hate in all of its forms," read the letter. "Make no mistake, the relentless threats of violence and hateful attacks on Mayor Michelle Wu and her family have no place in our society and are a far cry from the political debate and peaceful dissent that is welcomed and necessary in a healthy democracy. Since beginning her term, Mayor Wu has met the moment and worked tirelessly to address many of the greatest challenges facing our communities—including combatting the ongoing pandemic that has robbed us of more than 1,600 lives across the City of Boston alone. It is due to her brave and steadfast leadership, her commitment to science and the public health—including her common-sense and life-saving

vaccine mandates—that the City of Boston is making necessary progress to combat this pandemic and protect our most vulnerable."

The group continued that to remain silent is to be complicit, and as elected officials of color across the City of Boston, they will not stand by and watch as openly racist, anti-Asian and sexist rhetoric is normalized in our community.

"This type of vitriol, toxicity and hate is far too common for women of color in politics, and we can't help but wonder if the same toxicity and vitriol would be directed at a mayor who wasn't a woman, a person of color, or an unapologetic history-maker like Mayor Wu is," they wrote. "We stand in solidarity with her and call for an immediate end to this dangerous and hateful behavior."

Wu said she knows the city is doing the right thing in order to curb the latest COVID surge.

"I won't be intimidated out of doing the right thing," she said.

FREE-FARE PROGRAM (from pg. 8)

of LivableStreets Alliance. "This expansion will create further momentum toward our shared goal of providing fare-free bus service across the MBTA."

The 23 Bus route (Ashmont to Dorchester Center, Grove Hall & Ruggles), the 28 Bus route (Mattapan Square, up Blue Hill Ave. to Nubian Square & Ruggles) and the 29 Bus route (Mattapan Square, up Blue Hill Ave. to Jackson Square) each serve a diverse ridership, and all three travel through and along Blue Hill Avenue, an important corridor connecting riders who are underserved by the existing transit network. Blue Hill Avenue has been identified by Livable Streets Alliance as one of the corridors that should be prioritized for improvements to increase reliability and boost ridership, which the City is working to address through the Blue Hill Ave Redesign Plan.

These three routes are some of the routes with the highest ridership throughout the City of Boston. Route 23 serves over 100,000 monthly riders, runs past Madison Park Technical Vocational High School, the Grove Hall Branch of the Boston Public Library and various places of worship. The route also

intersects with Columbus Avenue, home to the first center-running bus lane in New England, demonstrating the potential to combine fare-free transit with modern transit infrastructure to reduce local air pollution, ease congestion and speed up service. After fares were eliminated in August 2021, Route 28 saw ridership increase to over 90 percent of pre-pandemic levels with over 12,000 riders every day, making it the most popular route in the system. Route 29 intersects with Route 28 and runs past Egleston Square Branch of the Boston Public Library, and several Boston Housing Authority developments, including the Franklin Field Apartments and the Doris Bunté Apartments.

"The fare-free 28 bus has been a blessing to myself and my community," said Peggy James, MBTA 28 bus rider and Boston resident. "All of my daily activities, including going grocery shopping, heading to the laundry, and picking up my medicine, have been made easier due to this program. Since the fare-free program was implemented, my commutes have been a lot more enjoyable, with less hiccups and stalling at bus stops along the route."

"It's a huge convenience to know that I don't have to worry about some of the financial burden that this pandemic has brought," said Brittany Appleberry, MBTA 28 bus rider and Boston resident. "It feels good to know that I am able to ride for free and continue to get the same service. I would like to thank Mayor Wu and everyone who had a part in this pilot."

The Boston Transportation Department has been working with the MBTA to manage the 28 bus pilot program that was first launched in August last year, including partnering on a comprehensive evaluation of the Route 28 bus pilot. The evaluation includes analysis of ridership and service reliability data as well as interviews with bus riders to get their views on the benefits of the pilot. The analysis suggests that by enabling all-door boarding, fare-free service reduced dwell time – the amount of time the bus stopped to allow passengers to board – decreased by more than 20 percent. A full evaluation of the Route 28 Bus pilot program will be available later this month at boston.gov

The City of Boston and MBTA have been meeting regularly and partnering to work out specifics

of the program and deliver the benefits of fare-free service to riders. The program will be funded through the \$8 million ARPA allocation. Cities across the Commonwealth and the United States are already delivering the benefits of fare-free service to riders and some cities are following Boston's lead and working out how to deliver the benefits of fare-free service to their residents.

The expansion of this program will provide the City of Boston, MBTA and other transit partners the opportunity to measure the benefits of fare-free bus service, such as increased ridership, faster buses, less traffic, and business development, over a longer period of time. The duration of the program will also allow the City to make sure every resident knows about the fare-free service and provides an opportunity for

residents to integrate riding the bus into their day-to-day routines.

The two-year expanded fare free program for the 23, 28, and 29 MBTA bus routes builds on Mayor Wu's work to make public transit a public good, starting with bus service. In December, the Boston City Council voted to approve Mayor Wu's appropriation order for \$8 million in federal funds to eliminate fares on the 23, 28 and 29 MBTA bus routes for a two-year period. The City of Boston, in partnership with the MBTA, extended the free Route 28 bus through January and February using the funds from the \$8 million allocation from ARPA.

For more information on the fare-free bus program, visit www.boston.gov/free-bus.

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Andrea Campbell announces campaign for Attorney General

By Lauren Bennett

Former city councilor Andrea Campbell announced her bid for Attorney General on Feb. 2 at a press conference in Dorchester. Campbell joins attorney Shannon Liss-Riordan and former Assistant Attorney General Quentin Palfrey in the race to fill the seat currently held by Maura Healey, who is running for governor.

Elected in 2015, Campbell was the first woman to hold the District 4 City Council seat, and she also ran for mayor of Boston during the last election.

“Now, Andrea is running for Massachusetts Attorney General

to be your voice, your advocate, your champion—for fundamental change and progress,” her campaign website states. “To be an attorney general for justice for all. To be an attorney general for opportunity for all. Truly, to be an attorney general for all of us—no matter who you are, where you come from, or where you live.”

Campbell grew up in Roxbury, and her mother died in a car accident when she was eight months old—she was going to visit Campbell’s father in prison. Campbell lived in public housing and her brothers were in and out of prison, where her twin brother Andre died “as a pre-trial detain-

ee,” according to her website.

“Through all of this, Andrea persevered,” her website states. “Thanks to loving relatives, community support and a network of teachers who encouraged her, she turned pain into purpose. She graduated from Boston Latin School and then worked her way through college with the help of grants and student loans, graduating from Princeton University and UCLA Law School.”

Campbell has held various roles in the legal field, from legal services attorney for the EdLaw project to an employment attorney to General Counsel at the Metropolitan Area Planning

Commission. She also worked for Governor Deval Patrick as legal counsel.

In a series of tweets following the press conference, Campbell outlined some stops she made that day in Worcester and Springfield.

“Affordable housing is a critical building block that allows for upward mobility and opportunity,” she wrote. “I just visited the Central Massachusetts Housing Alliance to learn about their collaborative response to addressing homelessness that fosters long-term housing stability.”

Campbell also visited the Boys and Girls Club of Worcester.

“For me, after-school programs were a refuge from chaos at home. As AG, I will advocate for every child to have a place to go when the school day ends,” she tweeted.

Campbell also chatted with residents in Springfield—“We need to work collaboratively so small businesses, workers, and families partner to ensure prosperity and opportunity reach every corner of Massachusetts,” Campbell wrote.

More information about Andrea Campbell can be found on her campaign website, andreacampbell.org, or her Twitter, @AndreaForAG.

ZBA approves several projects in Back Bay, Bay Village

By Lauren Bennett

The Zoning Board of Appeal (ZBA) met virtually on Feb. 8, where the board approved several projects in the Back Bay and Bay Village area, including one at 119 St. Botolph St. to add rear decks, one at 92-100 Mass Ave. to operate a 24 hour Planet Fitness, and one at 84 Berkeley St. to build a replacement roof deck.

119 ST. BOTOLPH ST.

Greg McCarthy proposed the roof decks at 119 St. Botolph St., saying that the existing building is a four story, four unit building. The proposal is to add the rear decks as well as to extend the existing head house to create a penthouse addition for the fourth floor unit. The deck will be “roughly 450 square feet,” he said. “We are also proposing exterior alterations to the front of the building and the rear of the building,” McCarthy added.

He said the existing head house is about 70 square feet,

and the reason for the extension is to create a master bedroom on that level. He also said that while most of the abutting buildings do not have this additional space on top, they do have varying sizes of head houses.

Molly Griffin from the Mayor’s Office of Neighborhood Services said that an abutters meeting was held on December 13, and that the Mayor’s Office defers to the board on this matter.

McCarthy said that there is also a “letter of support from the architectural commission.”

The ZBA voted to approve the proposal as presented.

92-100 MASSACHUSETTS AVE.

Chase Villafana of Planet Fitness presented a proposal for a Planet Fitness location at 92-100 Massachusetts Ave. the site of a former Boston Sports Club location.

He said that they are “proposing to take over the previously

operating Boston Sports Club and perform minor interior alterations to the cellar and sub-cellar spaces.”

The board asked him to keep his presentation focused on the 24 hour aspect of the club, since that is a conditional use.

Villafana said that “our staff is trained in management disciplines for overnight operating,” and there are “intelligent camera systems” on the interior and exterior of the building. For this location, he said there will be 23 cameras that will include a 90 day backup.

Villafana said that there are “anywhere from 15 to 30 members that come to utilize our gym during the overnight hours,” and Planet Fitness has several other 24 hour locations in the city, including on Winter Street in Downtown Crossing.

He said the company chooses to operate 24 hour locations “based on company ethos” and “diversity and inclusion for all members of the community.”

He said that while the entrance is on Mass Ave., all gym activity will happen “in the cellar and sub-cellar.”

ZBA Chair Christine Araujo expressed concern that this location is “very close to BU” and asked Villafana to “explain to us what the system is for controlling students or others who may be inebriated at odd hours.”

Villafana said that once someone enters the storefront, “you’d have to come down the stairs and have to physically walk past the front desk,” which will have someone behind it 24 hours a day.

“If someone came inebriated to our gym...I would venture to guess that we would probably ask them to leave for that instance,” he said.

Molly Griffin from the Mayor’s Office of Neighborhood Services said that an abutters meeting was held on December 16 and no letters of support or opposition were received. She said that the Mayor’s Office defers to the ZBA on the matter.

Conrad Armstrong spoke on behalf of the Neighborhood Association of the Back Bay (NABB), saying that this had been presented before the organization and NABB does not oppose the proposal.

He said that NABB was “impressed” that there had been “zero incidents” at the Winter St. location, which is the closest 24 hour location to this proposed one.

“There aren’t other gyms in Back Bay that are open 24

hours,” he said, but there are 24 hour 7-11 and CVS locations that do not cause issues in the neighborhood. Armstrong also said that NABB had asked the applicant about security issues and “they allayed our concerns,” he said.

The ZBA voted to approve the application with the provisos that the approval is for this applicant only as well as requiring the applicant to come back in a year to update the board on how things are going “and make sure there’s no issues.”

84-84H BERKELEY ST.

At 84-84H Berkeley St., the applicant proposed to rebuild a roof deck.

“The previous deck was haphazardly built and has since been removed for obvious reasons,” he said. He said the existing head house would be maintained for access to the roof, but the proposed deck has an expanded footprint.

Kim Crucioli from the Mayor’s Office of Neighborhood Services said that a community meeting was held on Jan. 4, where no abutters expressed opposition. She said that the Mayor’s Office would defer to the ZBA on this matter.

Councilor Ed Flynn was in support of the project, and the ZBA reported they had received one letter of opposition from a neighbor stating she was opposed because she had not been notified.

The ZBA voted to approve the proposal as presented.

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SKG Realty LLC	Yeung, Yu L	345 Beacon St	\$5,460,000
MMK 2007 Special T	29 Hexagon LLC	29 Commonwealth Ave #2	\$11,150,000
Barr, Kenneth J	Marcinowski, Raymond	110 Stuart St #27E	\$2,250,000
BEACON HILL			
Homer, Lillian	Macphee, Robert S	132 Charles St #2	\$2,950,000
Homer, Lillian	Macphee, Robert S	132 Charles St #3	\$2,950,000
O'Brien, Andrew	Hatlu 2 LLC	12 Joy St	\$3,270,000
Minassian, Hratch	Beacon HI 70 Phillips LL	70 Phillips St #8	\$521,000
Pacific Group LLC	Beacon Hill 11 Revere LL	11 Revere St #3	\$650,000
BAY VILLAGE/SOUTH END/KENMORE			
Costin, Adrian	Albanyan, Esam A	1 Charles St S #409	\$795,000
Chakar, Nadine S	Romero, Angelo	301-319 Columbus Ave #406	\$2,575,000
Appleton Grove LLC	Wheatley, Rodney R	70 Fenway #55	\$340,000
Gao, Xin	Mcnelis, Suanne	3 Avery St #808	\$680,000
Sert, Steve	Hobbs, James	99-105 Broad St #5C	\$965,000
McLane, Sarah N	Binda, Peter A	75 Fulton St #	\$794,000

ATTENTION TO DETAIL

BY PENNY CHERUBINO

THIS WEEK'S ANSWER



The glass awning in the last clue is on the Kenmore Square Bus Station. Today's answer is a 1968 photo of the station that was replaced by the current structure which offers less protection in Boston winters.

You'll find the next clue in the South End.

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



Back Bay, surrounding area's weekly COVID positive test increases slightly

Citywide deaths decrease

By John Lynds

The group of anti-vaxxers camped outside Mayor Michelle Wu's home are going to have to admit sooner rather than later that her vaccination mandate for indoor venues is working to combat the latest COVID surge in the city.

Less than a month after the mandate went into effect the infection numbers in the Back Bay and across the city have been on a steady decline. The city's anti-vaxxers are going to have to come to the realization that the science is correct and being vaccinated against COVID is the best tool we have to end the pandemic.

Those still unwilling to get the vaccine should realize they are taking a big gamble with their lives by continuing to mix with the general public because the risk of severe disease among the

unvaccinated is very real.

A month ago nearly 3 out of every 10 Back Bay residents and residents in neighboring communities tested for the virus turned out to be positive but last week only 1.3 out of every 10 residents tested were positive.

According to the weekly report released Monday by the Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC), 2,104 Back Bay, Beacon Hill, North End, West End and Downtown residents were tested and 13.4 percent were positive. This was a slight 7.2 percent increase from the 12.5 percent that tested positive between January 24 and January 31. However, the weekly positive test rate has decreased 28 percent in the area overall since January 24.

Two hundred eighty two additional residents have been infected with the virus between January 31 and February 7 and the total number of cases in the area increased to 8,230 cases overall since the pandemic began.

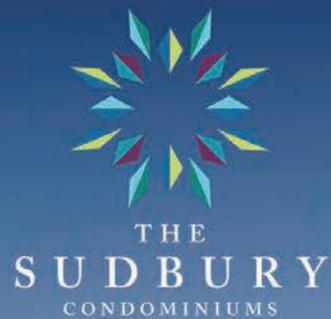
The citywide weekly pos-

itive test rate decreased last week. According to the BPHC 18,703 residents were tested and 10.6 percent were COVID positive--this was a 38 percent decrease from the 17 percent that reportedly tested positive for the week ending on January 31. The weekly positive test rate has now decreased 56 percent in Boston since January 24.

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 2.2 percent last week and went from 157,675 cases to 161,136 confirmed cases in a week.

There were 32 additional deaths in Boston from the virus in the past week and the total COVID deaths is now at 1,656. Deaths decreased 11 percent in Boston last week--four less than the 36 deaths reported by the BPHC two weeks ago.



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