

THE BOSTON SUN

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SERVING BACK BAY - SOUTH END - FENWAY - KENMORE

'Blessing of the Athletes' returns to Old South Church on Easter Sunday

By Dan Murphy

One day ahead of next Monday's 126th Boston Marathon, Old South Church will again honor participating runners at its annual "The Blessing of the Athletes" on April 17, which also falls on Easter Sunday this year.

Three identical "Blessing of the

Athletes" services will take place on Sunday at 9 and 11 a.m., and 1 p.m., respectively, at the church located at 645 Boylston St. in the Back Bay (an ASL interpreter will be present at all three services, and the 11 a.m. service will also be livestreamed at youtube.

(BLESSING OF ATHLETES Pg. 5)

Chester Square Neighbors will not seek further review of Hotel Alexandra redevelopment project

By Dan Murphy

By a majority vote of nine against, three for, and with two abstentions, Chester Square Neighbors rejected a motion put forward at the group's virtual meeting on Wednesday, April

6, to send a letter to Mayor Michelle Wu asking that the redevelopment of the Hotel Alexandra undergo further review by the "appropriate city agencies" in light of its proposed change in use from a boutique hotel to a

(HOTEL ALEXANDRA Pg. 2)

PALM SUNDAY AT ST. CECILIA



The Palm Sunday Mass inside of St Cecilia Church on Sunday, April 10. See more photos on Pages 6 and 7.

BERKELEY COMMUNITY GARDEN



Shown above, Berkeley Community Garden plot owners pose for a group shot in the garden's common area. Shown to the right, Irene Huang and Al Ocampo work hard to clean out a plot.



Berkeley Community Garden celebrates gardening with community potluck and cleanup

By Lauren Bennett

Plot owners at the Berkeley Community Gardens gathered on April 9 for an annual spring cleanup and potluck, where they shared food and each other's company.

Many gardeners were out and about in their plots on Saturday afternoon, cleaning out from the winter and preparing for the spring and summer growing season. The garden common area was also abuzz with activity as people enjoyed a potluck lunch while chatting with fellow gardeners.

The garden, which is locat-

ed on E. Berkeley St. between Tremont St. and Shawmut Ave., features 15 plots of varying sizes, and gardeners grow everything from beans and tomatoes to fresh flowers and figure out creative ways to keep animals away from the crops.

In 1965, the city razed a block of row houses to use the land for Urban Renewal, but immigrants from China and Lebanon began using the land for gardening, and Berkeley Community Gardens was founded in 1974 through the city's Revival Program.

In 2009, a new fence was installed around three sides of the garden, which earned the

garden the National Night Out Community Service Award from the Boston Police Department.

In 2014, the garden became protected indefinitely due to a takeover by the Trustees of the Reservation. According to a sign in the garden, "Gardeners continue planting Chinese plants that have been successfully cultivated since the 1960s: bitter melon, yard-long bean, and winter melon, to name a few."

Many gardeners today speak Cantonese and Mandarin, so meetings and documents are translated into Chinese, and

(COMMUNITY GARDEN Pg. 8)



GOOD LUCK TO ALL THE RUNNERS!

GET ALL YOUR MARATHON MONDAY INFO ON PGS 4, 5 & 9

EDITORIAL

AMERICA IS STILL THE LAND OF THE FREE

One of the things that we take for granted as Americans is our freedom to worship -- or not to worship -- as we see fit.

What brings this thought to mind is the plethora of religious-oriented observances that are occurring this month: the Muslim holy month of Ramadan has been ongoing since April 2; the week-long Jewish celebration of Passover begins this Friday; Easter Sunday, preceded by Good Friday, for Catholics and Protestant denominations is this Sunday; and the Orthodox Christian observance of Easter is set for next Sunday.

In addition, the Cambodian community will be celebrating the Cambodian New Year for three days this week from April 14-16.

This confluence of religious holidays serves as a reminder to all of us that the concept of freedom of religion began -- and still exists -- in America.

We wish to take this opportunity to wish our readers of all religious preferences a happy and healthy holiday season.

BAA IS RIGHT TO BAN RUSSIAN RUNNERS

We applaud the decision of the Boston Athletic Association (BAA) to ban runners from Russia and Belarus from competing in this year's Boston Marathon.

We recognize that the move casts a wide net and may serve to punish ordinary Russian citizens who have had nothing to do with Vladimir Putin's barbaric invasion of Ukraine.

However, we wish to make two points:

First, athletic and other organizations all over the world have banned Russian nationals from participating in their events. If the BAA uniquely were to do nothing, it would send the signal that the BAA tacitly was indifferent to the barbarous Russian invasion. Obviously, that is a message that no organization should be sending.

Second, to those who suggest that sports transcends political differences and ideologies, we say this: Get your heads out of the clouds.

There may have been a time when "sport" could turn a blind eye to what was happening in the world. But the reality is that athletics long have been used as political vehicles, starting with Hitler in the 1936 Olympics, the Soviet-bloc during the Cold War, and the Russian government itself when it hosted the 2014 Winter Olympics and devised an elaborate scheme to conceal the doping of its athletes.

Most recently, Russia has detained U.S. basketball star Brittney Griner in a Russian jail just as she was trying to leave the country, a move that can only be described as politically-motivated by the Putin regime.

In our view, every single person and entity in the civilized world -- especially the sports world -- should take the opportunity to make clear our united opposition to the barbarism of the invasion in Ukraine.

Imposing sanctions on Russian athletes is just an extension of the sanctions that have been imposed on Russia itself that likewise are impacting ordinary Russian citizens.

Yes, it may be true that individual Russians are collateral damage, so to speak, of our broad-ranging sanctions policies. But the effect upon them, which hopefully will trickle up to the Russian government, pales in comparison to the suffering of the millions of innocent Ukrainian citizens who are the victims of the genocidal war being waged by the Russian government.



HOTEL ALEXANDRA (from pg. 1)

condo development.

The developer, Alexandra Partners, now intends to transform the historic building located at Washington Street and Massachusetts Avenue into "Alexandra Residences," a mixed-use project with ground floor restaurant and café space, a rooftop level bar/restaurant, and 76 condo units, 33 of which would be compact (eight studios, 24 one-bedrooms, and one two-bedroom unit), and 10 would be designated as affordable housing under the Boston Planning & Development Agency's Inclusionary Development Policy (IDP).

Since a proposed 150-room boutique hotel was approved for the location by the BPDA 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, but the developer was eventually able to find financing for a residential project, said Marc LaCasse, the developer's attorney, during a virtual city-sponsored

meeting on Feb. 3, when the intended project change in usage was discussed.

Dartagnan Brown, an architect for the project, also said at that time the height and massing of the 71,000 square-foot project would remain the same as what was previously proposed, and that the "historic façade, which underwent major scrutiny, will remain intact."

The South End Landmarks District Commission (SELDC) approved the project on Oct. 30, 2019, while the BPDA board approved it on Oct. 14, 2021.

The project is scheduled to go before the city's Zoning Board of Appeal on April 26 as the developer is now seeking several variances related to its proposed change in usage.

In a letter from neighborhood residents and organizations to Mayor Wu, dated March 23, asking for expedited further review of the project by the city, the signatories "urge [her] to require the design be again reviewed given the substantive change in use" and further states "not to do so will inevitably set a

precedent not only for the South End, but for developers wishing to ignore construction guidelines which have well served the city."

The letter also asserts that the pending approval of the project now relies on approvals previously made by the BPDA and SELDC, which were "for a different use than what is now proposed."

According to the letter, the increased height of the project, now at more than 150 feet, is twice the height limit for new construction in the South End Landmark District, while the developer had applied for and was granted a height variance for the purpose of accommodating enough rooms to attract a major hotel chain to acquire or "franchise" the building.

The letter also asserts that the BPDA assembled an Impact Advisory Group (IAG) "comprised almost exclusively of South Enders, many of whom lived quite distant from the building, and for the most part ignored representatives from

(HOTEL ALEXANDRA Pg. 3)

HOTEL ALEXANDRA (from pg. 2)

Roxbury, in which the property resides, suggesting a racial bias.”

Likewise, “the BPDA only considered property owners within 300 feet of the site overlooks the issue that a 150-foot tower will impact others more distant,” according to the letter, while “renters more immediate to the building site were also not notified, suggesting that property values take primacy over the human health of the neighboring community. As the majority of renters proximate to the Hotel Alexandra are persons of color, the taint of racial bias is suggested.”

The project also includes no on-site parking provisions, and, according to the letter, “without the Massachusetts Legislature authorizing such a restriction, it will certainly be successfully challenged, and the resulting increase in parking demand will be a problem for many already living within the immediate neighborhood, and in particular the several churches in the area.”

Carol Blair, president of Chester Square Neighbors, wrote in an email: “The letter requesting that Mayor Wu initiate a new review for the Alexandra project is clear, and the signatories indicate significant support, including two Chester Square neighbors. So, when the two asked that CSN join their call for a new review process, I took it to CSN’s monthly Executive Committee meeting, which sets the agendas. They found the letter compelling, especially concerning the idea that all voices be heard.”

Lloyd Fillion, who helped write and signed the March 23 letter, told this reporter that the initial motion he put forward to the Chester Square Friends last week wasn’t for the group to sign on to the earlier letter, but instead for the group to write their own letter to Mayor Wu on the matter, which would’ve been in the same spirit of the earlier letter he helped draft. (“I believe the final motion, which was defeated, was for CSN to send a letter requesting a new review,” added Blair, who also served on the IAG.)

During the April 6 meeting of Chester Square Neighbors, Quanda Burrell, who had served on the IAG and also signed the March 23 letter, said she hadn’t received any notices about the project since the proposed change in use and likely wouldn’t have known about the change to the project, if someone had not called it to her attention.

Burrell assumed the plan had been “put on pause” due to the pandemic, she said, and “didn’t know there was a whole new plan, per se.”

“It feels kind of like a betrayal a little bit,” said Burrell, especially since she wanted to continue participating in the process.

“It’s kind of just shock and awe,” said Burrell. “It’s just kind of astonishing to me to see how the city moves in certain ways.”

In contrast, Bud Lariiev, a Massachusetts Avenue resident since 1985 and an abutter to the Hotel Alexandra building, said he was “concerned we’re having the conversation again,” especially since “it’s gone through a well-documented process.”

Lariiev, who said he’d seen the developer delivering fliers to everyone on his block, as well as to homes on Northampton Street, added, “I’m an abutter directly, and I know we were all informed with fliers when anything was going on.”

Donald Ward, executive director of the Tenants’ Development Group, a nonprofit property management and development organization, said although a member of his group had signed the March 23 letter, “that’s not our request, and I’m not sure what a review would get us.”

The developer also has been “very forthcoming” with the Tenants’ Development Group, as the most immediate abutter to the Hotel Alexandra, including having several meetings with them, said Ward.

“We’re trying to figure out what we’d get from prolonging this process,” added Ward.

Will Krause said he was “troubled” with the Chester Square Neighbors putting forward a motion that seems “hastily constructed and meant to delay something.”

Krause added that he doesn’t believe “an unconstructed motion can be voted on,” and that he doesn’t know “if this is an appropriate way to go about business as a neighborhood association.”

After Blair rejected the developer’s offer to make a comprehensive presentation to the group ahead of their scheduled April 26 ZBA hearing, Attorney LaCasse said, “[This] was a pre-determined outcome. Your motion was drafted in advance. I have never participated in such a one-sided meeting in my 33 years of practicing law. It’s a disgrace.”

Other real-estate projects

Regarding an existing deck and stairs at the rear of a home at 541 Massachusetts Ave., Carol Blair said the Chester Square Neighbors had approved plans for the project “a couple of years ago, but what’s built out there doesn’t look like the plans.”

Blair said after visiting the city’s Inspectional Services Department, she was unable to find any plans resembling the existing conditions, although she does have the concept design and the original plans approved by Chester Square Neighbors.

The applicant, John Burns, said the initial plans for the project were approved by the ISD before the process with the Boston Landmarks Commission started.

“They didn’t love the metal railings and wanted something more historic, so we transitioned to what’s here now,” said Burns, adding that it was meant to look like an historic deck from the 1930s.

The door leading out to the deck resembles a window, said Burns, while the existing window was kept in place. An egress off the stairs, which is required for fire safety, could only be installed in its current location, he added.

In an effort to obscure views of the egress, it was constructed from the same metal as the wrought-iron railings and built behind a “tall and opaque” brick wall, said Burns.

“Basically, it’s a code requirement for safety, and that’s what we’re left with,” said Burns.

Blair asked Burns to provide the group with “a tracking of the progression of the plans from one stage to the next with the date and who approved it, so we can see how things change and how the system might work better.”

In another matter, the group discussed the current status of plans to redevelop the Ebenezer Baptist Church building at 157 West Springfield St.

The developer was expected to defer appearing at the April 5 ZBA hearing, after their meeting with abutters and Councilor Tania Fernandes Anderson “concluded the project would harm the neighborhood,” according to Chester Square Neighbors.

Valerie Fletcher, who lives next door to the former church, said the building’s one bidder intended to convert it into nine-market rate apartments, but that plan was later opposed by the city’s Board of Appeal.



COURTESY OF THE BOSTON PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

A rendering of the proposed Alexandra Residences.

“Our hope is that we can secure something that looks like it has more community benefits [rather than] another Black church that becomes luxury condos,” said Fletcher.

If the city ultimately rejects the would-be developer’s appeal, the building would then go back on the market for its previous asking price of \$4.7 million, said Fletcher, and stakeholders could “take a concerted effort to assess the future uses for the building that benefit the community and leave the church whole.”

Fletcher added, “It’s clear that the church would need to sell the building to do this.”

While she said it seems as though the process with the current developer has reached its conclusion, Fletcher added she would like to see affordable housing in the building, with units similar in size to assisted-living accommodations.

“We believe it’s doable,” said Fletcher. “We’ve watched so much of this neighborhood broken apart by market-rate conversion that we just wanted to toe the line on this one.”

On the subject of trees

Michelle Laboy said prior to the pandemic, she and Joshua Fiedler had worked on a tree inventory of the two pieces of Chester Square’s park, which led to a discussion about connecting with the arborist from the city’s Parks Department on replacing trees that have been lost over time for a variety of different reasons. (Laboy and Fiedler’s work didn’t include street-trees or empty street pits, however.)

Around this time, a “really beautiful” Maple Tree had been lost in a storm, said Laboy, and now, all of the remaining large-canopy trees are Oaks.

This could “present vulnerability ecologically,” she said, because if a single Oak tree “suffers from illness, they could all get decimated at once.”

Laboy said there are spaces for three large-canopy trees, adding that, “in the future, we could have more variety of taller trees.”

The smaller tress haven’t been inventoried or identified yet, she said, although they are more varied than the large-canopy trees.

“There are spots for the smaller trees, but right now we’re focused on the taller trees,” said Laboy.

Since she and Fiedler completed their tree inventory, the effort has stalled, she said, due to a variety of reasons, such as the pandemic, as well as “some turnover at the Parks Department,” which might have included a change in the city’s arborist.

Laboy said she attempted to set up an appointment with the city’s arborist on three occasions – all to no avail.

“This conversation goes nowhere,” she added. “You can only follow up so many times before you get frustrated.”

Due to other commitments, Laboy and Fidler are no longer up to leading the tree effort, she said, so now they’re hoping to find someone else to help out with this task.

Alma Smith said she’d be “happy to work with someone else because [she] think it’s a really important issue,” but she’s not sure if she wants to do it “single-handedly.”

Laboy thanked Smith for her offer and said she’d be in touch with her to discuss the matter further when Laboy’s schedule permits.

Carol Blair asked Laboy and Alma to let her know when to put trees back on the agenda for a future Chester Square Neighbors meeting.

Meanwhile, Laboy encouraged neighbors to water street-trees for the first year or two “until they can get established,” she said, since the city doesn’t regularly water the trees it plants.

“Any water would help, to be honest, if it makes it to the ground,” said Laboy.

2022 BOSTON MARATHON ROAD CLOSURE INFO

The Boston Marathon and the Patriots Day Parade will take place on Monday, April 18, 2022, and the the B.A.A 5K & Invitational Mile will be held on Saturday, April 16, 2022. Street

closures and parking restrictions will be in effect in the Back Bay, Beacon Hill, Brighton, Fenway-Kenmore, North End and Government Center. The city has urged those com-

ing into the city for the events to not drive, but rather use public transportation. Information on Bluebike rentals may be found at bluebikes.com and public transit information can be found at

mbta.com. For a faster return trip, the MBTA advises riders to purchase a round-trip rather than a one-way ticket. Walking is also a great way to move around Boston.

The city advises people to read all posted signs and variable message boards carefully for updates.

NO STOPPING APRIL 6 TO APRIL 21

- Blagden Street, (south side, opposite side of Library) Huntington Avenue to Exeter Street for HP parking
- Boylston Street, (both sides) Exeter Street to Dartmouth Street
- Boylston Street, Dartmouth Street (from Dartmouth Street to Clarendon Street)
- Exeter Street, Boylston Street to Blagden Street

• NO STOPPING APRIL 11 - 21

- Blagden Street, Dartmouth Street to BPL Drive-way

NO STOPPING APRIL 13 - 19

- Exeter Street, Alley 441 to Boylston Street

NO STOPPING APRIL 14 - 18

- Trinity Place, St. James Avenue to Stuart Street

• NO STOPPING FRIDAY, SATURDAY, AND MONDAY - APRIL 15, 16, 18

- Beacon Street, Charles Street to Joy Street
- Boylston Street, Dalton Street to Arlington Street, unless otherwise posted
- Clarendon Street, Newbury Street to Saint James Avenue
- Dartmouth Street, Boylston Street to Commonwealth Avenue
- Exeter Street, Newbury Street to Huntington Avenue, No Stopping Thursday to Monday, and east side from Boylston Street to Blagden Street.

NO STOPPING SATURDAY TO MONDAY - APRIL 16 - 18

- Beacon Street, Bay State Road to Brookline Town Line (both sides)
- Berkeley Street, Stuart Street to Newbury Street
- Boylston Street, Arlington Street to Charles Street
- Cambridge Street, Court Street to Sudbury Street
- Charles Street, Boylston Street to Beacon Street
- Saint James Avenue, Arlington Street to Clarendon Street
- Stuart Street, Huntington Avenue to Arlington

Street

NO STOPPING SUNDAY AND MONDAY APRIL 17 AND 18

- Clarendon Street, Newbury Street to Public Alley 436
- Newbury Street, for Media Vehicles from #29 Newbury Street crossing over Berkeley Street to #69 Newbury Street

NO STOPPING SATURDAY 12:01 A.M. THROUGH 3 P.M. ON APRIL 16

- Newbury Street, Dartmouth Street to Exeter Street

• NO STOPPING MONDAY, APRIL 18

- Arlington Street, Beacon Street to Stuart Street
- Arlington Street, Columbus Avenue to Isabella Street
- Beacon Street, Brighton from Chestnut Hill Avenue to Brookline Town Line
- Beacon Street, Back Bay from Charles Street to Arlington Street
- Berkeley Street, Columbus Avenue to Commonwealth Avenue, unless otherwise posted
- Belvidere Street, Huntington Avenue to Massachusetts Avenue
- Blagden Street, Huntington Avenue to Exeter Street, unless otherwise posted
- Boylston Street, from Massachusetts Avenue to Dalton Street
- Charles Street, from Boylston Street to Beacon Street
- Charles Street South, from Park Plaza to Boylston Street
- Chestnut Hill Avenue, from Commonwealth Avenue to Beacon Street
- Clarendon Street, from Commonwealth Avenue to Columbus Avenue, unless otherwise posted
- Cleveland Circle, (Parking area adjacent to Cassidy Playground & parking area adjacent to Sutherland Road) from Beacon Street to Chestnut Hill Avenue, 24 hours
- Columbus Avenue, from Arlington Street to Dartmouth Street
- Commonwealth Avenue, from Charlesgate West to Deerfield Street (outbound)
- Commonwealth Avenue, from Beacon Street (Kenmore Square) to 80 feet east of Hereford Street.
- Commonwealth Avenue, from Lake Street to Chestnut Hill Avenue (inbound)
- Congress Street, from State Street to Hanover Street
- Dalton Street, from Boylston Street to Clearway Street
- Dartmouth Street, from Newbury Street to Commonwealth Avenue and Saint James Avenue to Columbus Avenue
- Deerfield Street, from Commonwealth Avenue to Bay State Road
- East Dedham, Street from Harrison Avenue to Albany Street
- Exeter Street, from Commonwealth Avenue to Newbury Street
- Fairfield Street, from Boylston Street to Com-



Workers erect scaffolding on Boylston Street, opposite the Copley Branch of the Boston Public Library, on Sunday, April 10 – just more than one week ahead of the 126th Boston Marathon.

monwealth Avenue

- Gloucester Street, from Commonwealth Avenue to Boylston Street
- Hereford Street, from Commonwealth Avenue to Boylston Street
- Hanover Street, (both sides) from Congress Street to Commercial Street
- Huntington Avenue, from Blagden Street to Massachusetts Avenue
- Kenmore Street, from Newbury Street to Beacon Street
- Nassau Street, (both sides) from Washington Street to Harrison Avenue
- New Chardon Street, from Merrimac Street to Cambridge Street
- Newbury Street, from Arlington Street to Brookline Avenue
- Plympton Street, from Harrison Avenue to Albany Street
- Providence Street, from Arlington Street to Berkeley Street
- Raleigh Street, from Bay State Road to Beacon Street
- State Street, (both sides) from Congress Street to Washington Street
- Stanhope Street, from Berkeley Street to Clarendon Street
- Scotia Street, from Dalton Street to St. Cecilia Street
- St. Cecilia Street, from Belvidere Street to Boylston Street
- Tremont Street, (both sides) from Cambridge Street/Beacon Street to Stuart Street
- Washington Street, Both sides, from Oak Street to Nassau Street. East side (even side), from Nassau Street to Kneeland Street
- Washington Street, (both sides) from Winter Street to State Street
- Winter Street, (both sides) from Tremont Street

to Washington Street

To find the best Marathon viewing location on the T, customers are encouraged to visit the MBTA's Boston Marathon Guide at [mbta.com/marathon](https://www.mbta.com/marathon), which highlights MBTA stations closest to the Marathon route and includes helpful information on purchasing fares, parking, and more.

The MBTA also reminds customers that face coverings are required on all MBTA vehicles and within the system with more safety information available [atmbta.com/ridesafer](https://www.atmbta.com/ridesafer).

\$15 Commuter Rail Marathon Pass:

On April 18, the MBTA will offer a special \$15 Marathon Pass valid for all-day, unlimited travel on all Commuter Rail lines through all zones. This special \$15 Marathon Pass is available for purchase beginning April 11 through April 18 on the mTicket app and from ticket offices at North, South, and Back Bay Stations. The \$15 Marathon Pass is also available aboard trains via cash or credit card on April 18 only. Customers should note that the \$15 Marathon Pass cannot be purchased at fare vending machines, and is not valid for subway or bus travel.

MBTA Service Information for the 2022 Boston Marathon:

For public safety reasons, Copley Station is closed for the entire day on April 18. Customers are instead encouraged to use Arlington Station (serving all Green Line branches), Prudential Station (Green Line E branch), Hynes Convention Center Station (Green Line B, C, and D branches), or Back Bay Station on the Orange Line. From approximately 10 AM to 6 PM, above-ground Green Line stops at South Street (B branch), Kent Street (C branch), and St. Mary's Street (C branch) will be closed.

The Red, Orange, Blue, and Silver Lines will operate a regular weekday schedule on April 18 with additional service before and after the race.

Buses will operate a regular weekday schedule on April 18, though some bus routes will be detoured to accommodate the Marathon and other festivities. Customers are encouraged to subscribe to T-Alerts for more information on these changes.

All Commuter Rail lines will operate a regular weekday schedule on April 18

All commuter boat and ferry service as well as The RIDE service will operate a regular weekday schedule. The RIDE may be detoured to accommodate the Marathon and related events.

Bicycles are prohibited onboard all MBTA subway vehicles (including folding bicycles) for the entire day on April 18. Backpacks, coolers, cans, bottles, and large items are not permitted at the Marathon.



A sign posted outside the Copley Branch of the Boston Public Library notifying drivers of special restrictions in effect for the 126th Boston Marathon on Monday, April 18.

BLESSING OF ATHLETES *(from pg. 1)*

com/OldSouthChurch) while as the “Church of the Finish Line,” Old South will also ring its Great Tower Bell as the winners of the four elite competitions cross the finish line on Monday.

This annual tradition dates back to 2005 during Rev. Nancy S. Taylor’s first year at Old South Church. Some members told her at services two weeks ahead of the Boston Marathon that they wouldn’t be seeing her the following Sunday due to the challenges of getting to the church the day before the footrace. But in their place, Taylor realized that 30,000 Marathon runners would be descending on the neighborhood who could instead fill the pews.

Since its inception, Old South Church has held “Blessing of the Athletes” every year except for 2020, when like the Marathon itself, it was sidelined by the pandemic.

(For last year’s 125th Boston Marathon, Old South Church held two identical “Blessing of



PHOTO BY BRIAN FLUHARTY
Rev. Nancy S. Taylor, senior minister and CEO of Old South Church, is seen during a past “Blessing of the Athletes” service.

the Athletes” services on Sunday, Oct. 10, with the capacity capped at 400 for each service due to social distancing.)

The inaugural “Blessing of the Athletes” in 2005 attracted less than a dozen runners, said Rev.

Taylor, while in subsequent years, three services were typically held for the athletes on the day before the race, with each one filling the church’s sanctuary with capacity for up to 850.

And with “The Blessing of

the Athletes” falling on Easter Sunday this year, Rev. Taylor said, “It means we’ll have a full house, and unfortunately, we’ll be turning people away.”

This isn’t an unprecedented event, however, since Rev. Taylor said “The Blessing of the Athletes” typically falls on Easter Sunday about every three or four years. “We understand it, and we’re ready for it,” she said.

As in years past, “The Blessing of the Athletes” services will include a piece of music called “Highland Cathedral,” which Rev. Taylor said was “written for Scottish games and composed for competition,” and is performed on bagpipes, organ, brass, and percussion. Athletes in attendance are asked to rise when this piece is performed by musicians, including bagpiper David Methven.

“It’s stirring,” Rev. Taylor said of the composition.

The musical piece has remained a mainstay of “The Blessing of the Athletes,” since it

was first introduced several years after the event’s inception. Harry Huff, the church’s now-deceased former director of the music, had personally selected and arranged the composition for the occasion, said Rev. Taylor.

With Rev. Taylor set to step down from her role as senior minister and CEO of Old South Church next month after nearly two decades, she reflected on not only what a special event the Boston Marathon continues to be, but also on the innate spirit of inclusiveness and equality in running as a sport.

“The Marathon is the oldest peaceful, international competition in the world, and athletes race for many reasons – some because they want to win, many because they beat cancer, or they’re running to raise money, or they’re running for some cause,” said Rev. Taylor. “And almost anyone can run. It doesn’t require the cost of playing golf or tennis. It’s something that anyone can do.”



126TH BOSTON MARATHON®



The Boston Athletic Association, organizer of the Boston Marathon®, thanks residents of the City of Boston for their patience and cooperation as we work with many partners to plan this year’s race. The 126th Boston Marathon will be a historic event for the Greater Boston area and our sport as a whole. For more event information, please visit www.baa.org.

RACE WEEK EVENTS

Boston Marathon Fan Fest presented by Amazon

Located in Copley Square just steps from the finish line, Fan Fest is the place to soak in the race-week atmosphere and have fun as you gear up for race day. Fan Fest features sponsor experiences, live music, race champions, photo-ops, and more. Visit Fan Fest from Friday, April 15 to Sunday, April 17.

Boston Marathon Expo

Visit the Hynes Convention Center to experience the Boston Marathon Expo and shop from race sponsors and exhibitors. The Expo is where runners receive their bib numbers, and is home to the largest Boston Marathon adidas shop in all of Boston. The Expo is open Friday, April 15 through Sunday, April 17.

SATURDAY, APRIL 16

B.A.A. 5K | 8:00 a.m. | Boston Common

Starting and finishing at Boston Common, 10,000 entrants will take part in the 2022 B.A.A. 5K, a scenic tour through Back Bay which crosses the Boston Marathon finish line. The B.A.A. 5K will be run on Charles St., Arlington St., Commonwealth Ave., Hereford St. and Boylston St.

B.A.A. Invitational Mile | 10:30 a.m. | Copley Square

Some of the world’s fastest runners will compete in a one-mile race starting and finishing on Boylston Street. Sholastic athletes from the eight cities and towns of the Boston Marathon course will also take part in one-mile and 1,000 meter races.

126TH BOSTON MARATHON® -- MONDAY, APRIL 18

30,000 entrants will participate in the 126th Boston Marathon, starting the 26.2-mile route from Main Street in Hopkinton to Boylston Street at Copley Square near the Boston Public Library.

Race day road closures will be in effect on roads in the vicinity of Kenmore Square, Copley Square, Boston Common, and other areas in the Back Bay. Please visit www.cityofboston.gov for more information as closures become available.

Crowd barriers will be set up along Boylston Street and areas of the course within the City of Boston. Spectators are asked for their cooperation in following reasonable and common sense guidelines that will help ensure the safety and security of participants, volunteers, and spectators. For more information, please visit www.baa.org.

Taking public transportation is strongly encouraged. The following nearby MBTA stations will be open:

- ▶ Hynes Convention Center Station (MBTA Green Line)
- ▶ Prudential Station (MBTA Green Line)
- ▶ Back Bay Station (MBTA Orange Line / Commuter Rail)
- ▶ Arlington Station (MBTA Green Line)

Please note, Copley Station (MBTA Green Line) will be closed for the entire day on race day. For more information on MBTA service, please visit www.mbta.com/events.

CELEBRATING PALM SUNDAY AT ST. CECILIA



Father John Unni reads the Palm Sunday Sermon from The Bible as Christine DesAutels holds it for him.

Photos by
Derek Kouyoumjian

St. Cecilia Church on Belvidere Street held their Palm Sunday Mass partially outside of the church the Church to signify Jesus Christ entering Jerusalem in triumph and to celebrate the start of Holy Week. It was an inspirational sight to behold and spiritually fulfilling to be a part of.



Parishoners holding blessed palm leaves respond to Father John Unni's sermon.

Fenway Community Development Corporation holds annual virtual meeting

By Lauren Bennett

The Fenway Community Development Corporation (CDC) held its annual meeting virtually on April 7, where the organization's successes over the past year were celebrated and neighbors heard an update from keynote speaker Ellen LaPointe of Fenway Health. Mayor Michelle Wu tuned in as well to speak on the importance of affordable housing across the city.

Fenway CDC Executive Director Leah Camhi presented the Year in Review video, which showed all of the CDC's accomplishments over the past year, which include things like providing food, PPE, and rental assistance to residents, as well as continuing to create affordable housing in the neighborhood.

Construction on the Burbank Terrace project is set to start this summer, and 97 units at New-castle Saranac have undergone renovations to bring them up to date for residents. The Fenway CDC has also been an advocate

for improvements to the #55 bus, and has partnered with local colleges and universities on career programming.

Up for re-election were board members Sonya Bhabhalia, Nilda Hughes, Mia Jean-Sicard, Sarah Jenness, and Joanne McKenna, all of whom were re-elected.

District 8 City Councilor Kenzie Bok, Fenway Cares, and Kris Anderson were given this year's Community Service Awards for their dedication and service to the Fenway community.

Cassie White, a community organizer for the Fenway CDC, talked about ways people can get involved with the organization through its various efforts in community organizing, resident services, housing, and more.

According to a slide presented, membership in the Fenway CDC provides perks like "deals and discounts at local Fenway shops; opportunities to build community; and access to engaging neighborhood events."

Keynote speaker Ellen LaPointe, CEO of Fenway Health, spoke about Fenway

Health's work and goals, saying that "since 1971...Fenway Health has stayed true to our original mission, which was to provide healthcare to people who could not get it anywhere else."

She explained that Fenway Health began as a "drop in center" that was located in the basement of a Huntington Ave. building and only open on Thursday nights. Volunteers saw patients in the basement that featured medical equipment donated by a doctor from the Back Bay.

"Today, we provide care to more than 34,000 patients," LaPointe said, and during the worst part of the pandemic, Fenway Health saw patients in 38 states via Telehealth.

Additionally, "about half of our patients identify as LGBTQIA+, and about 4200 of them are transgender or gender diverse," she said.

In 2020, Fenway Health participated in COVID-19 research, as well as "formally committed to becoming an anti-racist organization," LaPointe said.

A five-year strategic plan has

been created for racial equity action.

"We are really proactively and intentionally working to transform our systems, our policies, our procedures, and our protocols to center race and equity in everything that we do to eliminate the disparities and inequities that have historically existed in the services that we provide and the people that we reach and the outcomes that we achieve," she said.

A partnership between Fenway Health and the Fenway CDC has been announced—called the Fenway/Kenmore Community Collective, it is the "largest community engagement in the Fenway/Kenmore neighborhood in recent memory," LaPointe said.

She said that the partnership is funded by Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, and has three goals that were determined based on a recent community needs assessment of the neighborhood. The first goal is to "increase the financial stability of residents" because more than half of survey takers responded saying that they

"are concerned about having enough money," she said.

The second goal is ensuring that all residents are able to access nutritious food, as one in four people said that they "have trouble affording nutritious food."

The third goal is to improve access to healthcare, as one in five respondents said that they "have unmet healthcare needs."

Mayor Michelle Wu then spoke about creating more affordable housing in the city.

"A major priority of our administration is seeing, funding, and creating affordable housing as the foundation for our recovery from this pandemic," Wu said.

She said that with the budget, which was revealed this week, the goal is to "put more than \$350 million into a three year investment in housing affordability and housing stability across operating, capital, and federal recovery funds."

She also said that the administration is aiming to take an "intersectional approach," as housing is closely related to transportation equity, access, and reliability.

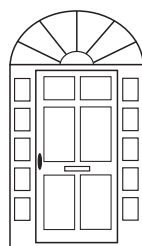
Additionally, Wu spoke about the fact that many buildings in the city need to be retrofitted for climate resiliency, which is also an important factor when it comes to housing to keep residents safe and healthy in the future.

"Housing is also deeply connected to our education system and our economy," Wu said. "It is the number one challenge I hear from employers in our city."

For more information about the Fenway CDC, including its programming and organizing, visit fenwaycdc.org.

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CELEBRATING PALM SUNDAY AT ST. CECILIA



Parishioners participate in the Palm Sunday ceremony outside of St. Cecilia Church.



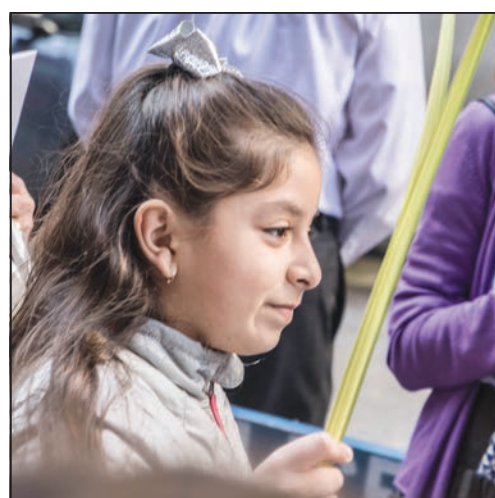
Parishioners participate in the Palm Sunday ceremony outside of St. Cecilia Church.



Parishioners line the stairs and balcony of St. Cecilia Church as they listen to Father John Unni recite the sermon.



Tara Meyers gets a good view of the ceremony perched on top of her dad Christopher.



Annabella Anselmo holds a blessed palm as she listens to the sermon.

Back Bay, city's weekly COVID positive test rate continues to rise; currently above 5-percent

By John Lynds

As the Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC) continues to recommend residents receive a second COVID booster vaccine, Back Bay and the surrounding area's weekly COVID positive test rate increased once again with Boston's test rate now surpassing 5 percent for the first time in weeks.

Last week, 1,104 Back Bay, Beacon Hill, North End, West End and Downtown residents

were tested for the virus last week and 7.6 percent were positive--this was a 29 percent increase from the 5.9 percent that tested positive as reported by the BPHC on April 4.

Eighty-four additional residents contracted the virus between April 4 and April 11 and there are now 9,612 confirmed cases in the neighborhood since the start of the pandemic.

Boston's citywide weekly positive test rate also increased last week and is now above the

5 percent threshold. According to the BPHC 14,451 residents were tested citywide last week and 5.4 percent were COVID positive--this was a 17 percent increase from the 4.6 percent that reportedly tested positive for the week ending on April 4.

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 0.93 percent last week and went from 169,673 to 171,251 confirmed cases since the start of the pandemic.

There were four additional deaths in Boston from the virus in the past week and the total number of COVID deaths is now at 1,448.



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COMMUNITY GARDEN (from pg. 1)

gardeners pitch in to keep the grounds maintained.

The Sun spoke with several gardeners including Dorothy Kelley, who said her daughter obtained a plot in 2017, and she now shares it with her after moving to the South End from Des Moines in 2018.

“Until last summer, we did mostly vegetables,” she said, but this year the goal is to grow flowers and strawberries.

She said that while there are not many challenges with having a plot in this community garden, not having a car can prove to be a little bit of a challenge depending on what supplies are needed.

“If we need dirt and they’re not bringing a load in,” she said, “it’s handier for me to have a car.”

Kelley said that “It’s the most unusual community garden I think in the city because of the creative ways people who started this many, many years ago have framed their little enclosures. It’s charming.”

Kelley pointed out that the plots do range in size and shape—“some are double wide,” she said, and people use creative items like refrigerator shelving and ceramic plates to help grow certain crops or keep animals out.

This year, it costs \$70 to have a plot at the gardens, and a person can keep it indefinitely as long as it is being used. She said if the garden is not being used by June 1, “you have to give it up,” and only about seven or eight plots are open each year.

Kelley also said that the Berkeley Community Gardens now has a “resident birder”—someone who pays dues to get a key and walk around to take note of all the birds and email gardeners about her findings.

Sarah Hutt has had a plot at the gardens for about 25 years.

“I do things that I can pick and eat,” she said. “I call it a salad garden—anything I can eat raw and feel like I’ve accomplished something when I come over in the morning.”

John McLachlan grows a number of vegetables and edibles as well, including Swiss chard, peppers, tomatoes, basil cucumbers, beans, peas, and garlic. He said he doesn’t “need more than one or two of each plant,” because it’s only him.

This is Len’s third year with a plot, and he said he enjoys growing “all different color” heirloom tomatoes, as well as cucumbers, basil, yellow beans, and radishes. He said he enjoys sharing his harvest with his friends. “They love it,” he said.

Goldberg said his favorite thing about being part of the garden is “the people. It gets me out of the house,” he said. “I live so close. It’s just fascinating to see what people have grown.”

Hutt added, “it’s the only community group that doesn’t fight.”

Gardeners have faced some challenges with rabbits and rodents in their gardens, they said.

“We’ve had a pretty persistent challenge with rabbits,” said



Various gardeners came out to the Berkeley Community Garden to clean out their plots for the start of the growing season on April 9 as part of a cleanup and potluck event.

Kim Vermeer, who has had a plot for about 15 years. She said that when she came to her plot a few weeks ago to do some cleaning, she found a dead rabbit and a “dead rodent of some sort.”

She also said that theft from gardens has been an issue in community gardens across the city, and Berkeley Community Garden “used to be a lot more relaxed about leaving the doors open during the day, especially during the pandemic years,” but “I personally haven’t had trouble,” she said.

For more information about the Berkeley Community Garden, visit berkeleygardens.org or the Berkeley Community Garden Facebook page.



Len Goldberg, John McLachlan, and Sarah Hutt.



Dorothy Kelley with her granddaughters Georgia and Sylvia Pierce.



Anyssa Buchanan and Chris Victoria.



Gardeners enjoyed a variety of different foods as well as each other’s company as part of the potluck.

Mayor Wu announces public safety preparations ahead of Boston Marathon

Staff Report

Mayor Michelle Wu on Tuesday announced public safety preparations to ensure a successful weekend as the City of Boston prepares for athletes and visitors ahead of the 126th Boston Marathon. The Boston Marathon is the world's oldest annually held marathon. This will be the first Boston Marathon held on Patriots' Day since 2019 after being canceled in 2020 and moved to October in 2021 due to the pandemic. This year's race will also mark 50 years since the women's division was first featured at the Boston Marathon. Thirty thousand participants from all 50 states and nearly 100 countries are expected to run the Marathon and nearly 10,000 volunteers will take part in the event.

"The Boston Marathon showcases our city and communities on the world stage, and I'm overjoyed to welcome this tradition back this April," said Mayor Michelle Wu. "This year we also celebrate the 50th anniversary of the first official women's field. Our public safety and first responders have been hard at work to ensure a safe, healthy race. Congratulations to all of the athletes, and see you at the finish line!"

"Two Boston Marathons in six months is unprecedented, but we are delighted to hold the 126th edition of the race on its Patriots' Day date again with the support of Mayor Wu and the City of Boston," said President & CEO of the B.A.A. Tom Grilk. "The 2022 Boston Marathon will inject more than \$200 million into a Greater Boston economy that is still recovering from the pandemic, and we are honored to do our part in the reopening of society."

Public Safety

- Boston Police Department (BPD) will have uniformed and undercover officers along the marathon route.

- Cameras will be active along the Boston portion of the Marathon route, and observation points will be set up around the finish line area in the Back Bay to monitor the crowd.

- Spectators are encouraged to leave large items such as backpacks and strollers at home. These items are not banned; however, individuals may be subject to search.

- Call 9-1-1 in an emergency situation and follow @bostonpolice for race safety updates.

- Boston Fire will have walking patrols along the course to

respond to incidents. Patrols can call-in additional assets, utilizing the alleys and adjacent roadways to the course. Air quality monitoring will also be carried-out along the route.

- Boston Fire will stage its specialized units for Tech Rescue, HazMat, Decon, and additional apparatus at strategic locations on both sides of the course.

Emergency Medical Services

- Boston EMS will have enhanced medical coverage, including additional personnel in the field, dispatch and special operations.

- Units will be deployed along the Boston route and in the finish line area, ready to serve anyone requiring medical assistance, including runners, spectators and volunteers. This will include EMTs and Paramedics working on ambulances, bikes and carts, as well as in medical stations.

- Through close coordination with medical volunteers, Boston EMS works to treat and release as many people on scene as possible, which is intended to mitigate the impact to the hospital system.

- Boston EMS plans to increase the number of ambulances city-wide to ensure there will be no disruption in services to residents.

Emergency Communications

- The City's Emergency Operations Center will be open on Monday to monitor the races. The EOC will be staffed by our City departments, state agencies and our non-profit partners to coordinate the City's operational plan. Additionally, the EOC will monitor the weather, maintain situational awareness regarding the various Marathon events, respond to any resource requests from public safety and manage family reunification if needed.

- Boston EMS, Police, Fire, and the Office of Emergency Management will have personnel assigned to the multi-agency coordination center at the Massachusetts Emergency Operation Center in Framingham.

- BPHC will have staffing at the Dispatch Operations Center and Central Medical Emergency Dispatch (CMED) Center where ambulance to hospital communication throughout metropolitan Boston is coordinated.

- Sign up for AlertBoston to receive emergency notifications from the City at boston.gov/emergency. Alerts are available in the following languages: Arabic, Chinese, Cape Verdean Creole, French, Haitian Creole, Portuguese, Russian, Somali, Spanish, and Vietnamese.

Public Health

- The BAA (Boston Athletic Association) and City of Boston have worked together this year to ensure the safety of all participants, staff, volunteers, and spectators.

- We strongly encourage everyone to practice personal responsibility for the 126th Boston Marathon. Guests traveling with athletes and spectators cheering on participants are encouraged to take efforts to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

- These efforts may include:
 - Being fully vaccinated
 - Getting tested for COVID-19 prior to any travel

- Only using B.A.A. provided course nutrition in lieu of accepting hydration or food from spectators

- This is an entirely outdoor, open-air event. It is encouraged, but not required, to wear masks.

- Individuals who are not fully vaccinated are at higher risk of suffering severe illness or death from COVID-19 infection.

- Any participant, volunteer, or spectator exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 should stay home.

- To get vaccinated, find a location near you on boston.gov/coronavirus.

Developer files new Letter of Intent with city for developing air-rights Parcel 13

By Dan Murphy

A developer filed a new Letter of Intent (LOI) with the Boston Planning & Development Agency on Thursday, April 7, for the development of air-rights Parcel 13 at the critical intersection of Boylston Street and Massachusetts Avenue, which now includes plans for the first 100-percent affordable housing project proposed for the Back Bay.

The revised mixed-use project now includes 125 new affordable residential rental units in place of the previously proposed luxury condominiums, according to a press release from the Peebles Corporation, the largest African American-owned real estate development company in the nation, and it "will support Mayor [Michelle] Wu's initiative to build more affordable and workforce housing in all of Boston's neighborhoods."

An earlier proposed hotel component has been replaced with 300,000 gross square feet of lab, office, and commercial

space, and there is no parking on site, given its proximity to the Hynes MBTA station.

A new state-of-the-art, universally accessible Hynes T station, with a new entrance off Boylston Avenue, will be integrated into the project's ground floor, according to The Peebles Corporation, while "the project will provide critical funding and coordination for the renovation of Hynes Station including full accessibility for persons with disabilities, new publicly accessible station headhouses on Massachusetts Avenue, Boylston, and Newbury streets, and the opportunity for critical infrastructure upgrades to the station power systems."

The project also includes plans for a public bicycle parking area for approximately 100 commuters and other pedestrian level improvements.

The Peebles Corporation, along with the developers of other air rights parcel projects in the area, have also pledged to helping pay for the proposed

Prudential Tunnel extension.

Moreover, The Peebles Company will exceed both Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) and BPDA Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) goals for public parcels by "committing to a goal of 51 percent participation by minorities and women," according to the developer, and is partnering with Cheryl McKissack Daniel, president and CEO of McKissack & McKissack, the oldest 100-percent minority/women owned design and construction firm in the United States.

The P13 project team will also include Moody Nolan, the country's largest African American owned architectural firm, and "they will engage local M/WBE companies for the long-term management of the development, and all retail opportunities at the site will be offered to M/WBE restaurants and shops," according to The Peebles Corporation.

Don Peebles, chairman and CEO of The Peebles Corporation, said in a press release

announcing this news: "This project provides a unique ability to create transit-oriented, affordable housing units in the vibrant neighborhood of the Back Bay. We applaud the DEI guidelines put forth by both MassDOT and the BPDA and will continuously strive to ensure our team maximizes the opportunities for minority and women in our project. We believe the real estate development industry must play a major role in helping to close

the wealth and income gaps that Black Americans confront in Boston. The industry must also lead the way to a long-term sustainable solution for providing affordable housing to the residents of Boston. We are thrilled to share our updated plans for Parcel 13 in the Back Bay and look forward to the continued opportunity to work with the community, the city and the state on this landmark development."

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Bay Village Historic District Commission approves installation of electrified streetlights as part of 212 Stuart St. project

By Dan Murphy

The Bay Village Historic District Commission unanimously approved the installation of nine new electrified streetlights as part of an ongoing development project at 212 Stuart St. at its April 12 public hearing, which took place virtually.

Greystar, the developer of a 19-story residential tower at 212 Stuart St., had applied to install seven new light fixtures, which are LED replicas of the existing gas lamps, while the remaining two fixtures would be twin-globe LED streetlight poles designed to “look exactly like the existing poles along Stuart Street,” according to the city, which had asked the developer to make upgrades along Stuart Street as part of the project.

At an on-site meeting on March 14 sponsored by the Bay Village Historic District Commission, a mock-up of a proposed light fixture was unveiled set in the range of 2,500 Kelvin

and emitting an orange shade of light. In response to public feedback received, another mockup was displayed during a second on-site public meeting sponsored by the Commission on March 30 – this one set in the range of 3,000 Kelvin and emitting a whiter shade of light.

“We think with the collaboration of Bay Village residents and the Commission, we found the right balance,” said Mike Donaghy, associate electrical engineer with the city’s Public Works Department, of the second mockup. “It’s a very close match to the light rendering [of the existing gas streetlights in the area],” he added.

Of the second mockup, Commission Stephen Dunwell said, “It’s as close as you could possibly wish to achieve with the new replica situation. The new color is excellent. I think this is what restoration looks like, and I’m fully in favor.”

Thomas Perkins, president of the Bay Village Neighborhood Association board of directors,

voiced his support for the second mockup and said that the group’s Executive Committee had met last week to discuss this issue, at which time they voted to remove their previous objections to the proposal.

Perkins said “unscientifically” about four to one neighborhood residents he had spoken to are in favor of the new light fixtures, “although some people have an emotional attachment to the gas lamps.”

Added Perkins, “I have enough comfort with the second prototype as long as it’s turned down in intensity.”

In response to a question from Perkins on the “enabling legislation,” which allows for the installation of the new light fixtures, even when the Bay Village Historic District’s design guidelines specifically state that the historic gas streetlights can’t be altered, Joe Cornish, the Boston Landmarks Commission’s director of design review, said in the past, exceptions have been made to these rules in unique cases and due to

extenuating circumstances.

The city has also been working for several years now on updating the design guidelines for the Bay Village Historic District, added Cornish, and they hope to have the new guidelines ready for final review and approval in the coming months as part of a public process.

As for the city’s next steps with this initiative, Donaghy said “strategically, [the city] doesn’t have a plan” and added that the application’s approval wouldn’t give the city the power to replace existing gas streetlights with electrified fixtures elsewhere in Bay Village or in other Boston neighborhoods.

Donaghy described the streetlight pilot as a “gateway to a thoughtful and collaborative project” in Bay Village and elsewhere in the city, but he added that the process wouldn’t move forward without a “thoughtful discourse” with Bostonians.

Likewise, Ryan Souls, Greystar’s development director, said

this doesn’t have to be the “last conversation” on this matter, and that he anticipates further conversation with the public if new lighting options become available.

“We realize this is probably an ongoing conversation and something that will continue to iterate,” said Souls.

The motion to approve the application, put forward by Commission Chair Kathleen McDermott, also had several provisos, including that its approval wouldn’t set a precedent for the installation of similar lighting fixtures in Bay Village, and that future streetlight applications would require further review.

Greystar had originally filed an application for the installation of several LED streetlamps for consideration at the Bay Village Historic District Commission’s January meeting, but the developer ultimately withdrew its application amid concerns raised at that time by the Bay Village Neighborhood Association.

Concerts, upcoming baseball season discussed at Fenway Park neighborhood meeting

By Lauren Bennett

A Fenway Park Neighborhood Update was held both virtually and in person at the Ford Clubhouse on April 6, where the Red Sox gave updates on goings-on in the area of the ballpark and what to expect for the upcoming baseball and concert season.

MGM MUSIC HALL

Claire Durant, Director of Business & Government Affairs for the Red Sox, spoke about the new 5,000 person capacity MGM Music Hall, which is slated to be open early this fall for concerts.

Durant said that a conditional use permit is being sought for electronic signage on the exterior of the building, which is allowed in the area. She said that the goal is to “make sure it fits in a tasteful way that compliments the street.”

All signs are LED-based, she said, and will include a ribbon board marquee and a deco blade that will be “dynamic signage,” which includes the “ability to show some moving content and be changed out based on what events are happening at the music hall,” she said. There will also be blade signs on the sides

of the building that will be static.

The electronic signage is permitted to be on between the hours of 7am and 2am, though they likely will not be on for all those hours at a time. No sound will be emitted from the signs, she added.

The theater is set to have a soft opening this August, with a grand opening set for the first two weeks of September. She said that the existing scaffolding will come down over the next several says, and “some streetscape work is projected to start at the end of this month.”

Durant also spoke about the ballpark’s new bleacher area, which will be ready for opening day on the 15th, as well as a 600 person function space that can be divided into four rooms but will not be “super active during games,” but rather used for things like charitable events, weddings, meetings, and the like.

OFF-SEASON RECAP

The Red Sox talked about various events and ways the ballpark was used this past off-season, from a vaccination site in January and February to a distribution site for Thanksgiving meals. They also talked about the Fenway College Bowl football game that had to be cancelled due to

the Omicron variant, as well as the labor dispute with the MLB.

Sonya Bhabhalia, Government Affairs and Corporate Communications Specialist for the Red Sox, gave an update on the Red Sox’s social justice efforts. She said that there are 150 Red Sox staff that are volunteers on different subcommittees that were started in 2020 on “a rage of issues from marketing and employee support and how we work with minority owned businesses.”

At the end of last summer, the Red Sox hired a “dedicated diversity, equity, and inclusion program specialist to our front office staff,” who is “helping to take all of those ideas we came up with and turn them into actual programs. A lot of this work is internally facing and affecting our staff, so you may not see it reflected out in public,” she said.

Additionally, the Red Sox are hosting “cultural heritage nights” at certain games this summer, including May 3, which will be Asian-American and Pacific Islander Heritage Night, Pride Night in June, and Puerto Rican heritage night at the end of July. She also said that there are a “couple more in the works that have not been announced yet.”

Additionally, Neighborhood

Night will be on May 20. All themes can be found at redsox.com/themes.

Bhabhalia said that the Red Sox has also been working on increasing accessibility at Fenway Park, and has been working with an organization called Culture City on things like sensory accessibility needs, including “special sunglasses for folks with light sensitivity and weighted lap pads.” They are also working on adding closed captioning to the MLB Ballpark App.

While the Black Lives Matter billboard on the outside of the ballpark is being replaced with one celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Red Sox Foundation, there will be permanent Black Lives Matter signage and messaging within the ballpark.

“It’s obviously still something we stand behind very strongly,” said Dave Friedman, Senior Vice President, Legal & Government Affairs for the Red Sox.

Bhabhalia was excited to announce that Neighborhood 9s has returned, meaning that any resident of Fenway, Kenmore, and Audubon Circle—including the East Fens zip code of 02115—are eligible to receive up to four tickets per game for as many as five regular season games for \$9 each. If people have registered in

the past, they must re-register at redsox.com/neighborhood.

2022 SUMMER CONCERTS

Following a public comment period and a public hearing where many residents attended to provide feedback, the City of Boston Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs has approved 12 concerts for this upcoming summer, after the Red Sox had asked for 16.

Friedman said that the Red Sox believe 16 was a reasonable number to ask for since four concerts were postponed in 2020, and the typical ask is for 12 concerts. Some residents have spoken out in favor of the concerts, while others had outstanding concerns about things like noise, traffic, and the number of concerts proposed.

“We agreed with the city that 12 is an appropriate number,” he said. So far, only 10 shows have been announced, and “we don’t know if we’ll have an 11th or 12th,” Friedman added.

He then went over several things that the Red Sox will be dealing with surrounding the concerts, including volume and

(FENWAY MEETING Pg. 11)

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Levin, Mark
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Keches, Krysten A
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133 Marlborough St #11
351 Marlborough St #4
364 Marlborough St #8

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\$582,000
\$825,000
\$1,149,000
\$470,000

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Oleck, Lorna E
Lafarge, Thomas
Bailey, Eliza
Berger, David L

Hawpet LP
Dammin FT
Bonner, Kathleen
Rebecca R Corkin NT

9 Hawthorne Pl #14D
146 Mount Vernon St
5 Otis Pl #G
58 W Cedar St #1

\$827,000
\$2,875,000
\$750,000
\$1,975,000

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Steiner, David
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Hourani, Tameem
Mehta, Sumedh
Brown, Heather A
Qstech Co
Gazzola, Daniel
Hopkins, Hilani
Lillie, Becky
Hubert, Nathalie
Soto, Jason
Lee, Julia K
Ma, Ruishan
Oseran, Andrew
Rogers, Perry E

12 Cazenove Street LLC
Smith, Winston C
Naphtal, Rachael
Polins, Richard A
505 Tremont Street
Zhao, Jiajia
Mcgill, Ryan R
Curtis, Mark
Quinn South End LLC
Yang, Jianzhuang
Cote Enterprises LLC
Graham, Ronald L
Yehiav, Guy
23 Upton Street LLC
Burns, Emily V

12 Cazenove St
74 Chandler St #1
285 Columbus Ave #601
40 Lawrence St #2
505 Tremont St #210
188 Brookline Ave #21F
139 E Berkeley St #102
35 Fay St #215
370-380 Harrison Ave #14M
125 Park Dr #19
203 Saint Botolph St #2
12 Stoneholm St #518
769 Tremont St #3
23 Upton St #2
152 W Newton St

\$2,712,500
\$1,828,750
\$925,000
\$649,000
\$2,210,000
\$1,168,000
\$325,000
\$640,000
\$1,329,600
\$411,000
\$900,000
\$430,000
\$595,000
\$2,595,000
\$4,900,000

WATERFRONT/DOWNTOWN

Commercial Street 4 RT
Coppola, John
Chivukula, Mamatha V
BP3-BOSS 55 Summer St LLC
Tahelm, Douglas T

JC 2 110 Comm LLC
KAG RT
Waheedi, Salma M
Hive Property Owner LLC
Vindel LLC

110-112 Commercial St #4
55 Commercial Wharf #4
88 Kingston St #6C
55 Summer St
580 Washington St #503

\$712,500
\$1,240,000
\$695,000
\$106,646,350
\$1,175,000

FENWAY MEETING (from pg. 10)

sound levels, parking enforcement, issues with traffic and disorderly conduct, trash cleanup, end times for concerts, and the hotline for feedback and complaints.

Friedman also talked about Project Place and its work with cleaning up the Fenway Park area following concerts, as they have done in the past.

Discussion of a long-term concert licensing plan also took place, as this is a topic that has come up in recent months, with City Councilor Kenzie Bok writing a letter calling for more of a concrete long term plan.

"As far as licensing goes... we've been consistent over the years in pursuing up to 12 concerts," Friedman said. "The city has approved up to 12 shows on a regular basis for many years."

He said that moving forward, the Red Sox will ask for

their typical 12 concerts a year, though "there might be a random, unusual year" where they ask for an additional concert or two. Though they are "not promising we'd never ask for more than 12, you should expect that we're not going to be asking for more than 12 shows," Friedman said. "That's how we think of a longer-term arrangement... We think that there's an opportunity to try to make this a more stable, predictable business."

City Councilor Kenzie Bok referenced the letter she had written regarding the issue of concerts.

"My real objective is how to think about the impacts on the neighborhood, the positive impacts on the business side, and the question of sort of how to figure out something sustainable; predictable for everybody and accountable," Bok said at the meeting.

She also said that she wants

to ensure that when "negative externalities" are seen, that they are being properly addressed and "not just talked about."

She continued, "my intention is over the coming months to really be working with all of you and with those parties to think about how we come up with something that's more multi-year and stable in that way that we can all kind of rely on and not be exhausted by"—before the 2023 licensing season comes around.

Anyone with questions, concerns, or comments on any topic related to Fenway Park can reach out to Dave Friedman at dfriedman@redsox.com, Claire Durant at cdurant@redsox.com, or Sonya Bhabhalia at sbhabhalia@redsox.com. They can also provide the full video recording of this meeting. For more information on the Red Sox, including this year's game schedule, visit mlb.com/redsox.

ATTENTION TO DETAIL

BY PENNY CHERUBINO

THIS WEEK'S ANSWER



The ironwork balcony design in the last clue is on 83 Bay State Road built in 1900 and designed by Fox and Company. This address was the first home of what has now grown into the Joslin Diabetes Center. Dr. Elliott P. Joslin lived next door at number 81 and for 50 years practiced his now proven theories for diabetes care from here.

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



361 BEACON STREET, PENTHOUSE

4 BEDROOMS | 3 FULL 1 HALF BATHROOMS | 3,960 SQUARE FEET

LISTED AT \$8,499,000



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