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# THE BOSTON SUN

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## Walsh calls on Bostonians to 'be good neighbors' as city heads towards surge

By Lauren Bennett

Mayor Walsh continues to stress the importance of social distancing, especially as the state prepares for a surge in cases of COVID-19. He also provided some updates on programming and resources the city is offering residents through press conferences and releases.

"We are at the most vital point of the outbreak," Walsh said on Wednesday afternoon. "Slowing the spread of the virus right now is critical in saving lives."

As of April 14, Boston had 4,286 cases and 84 deaths. So far, 547 people have recovered from the virus.

Mayor Walsh said on April 13

that "the next two weeks are very critical to achieving our goal," and that the number of cases in Boston have "more than doubled in the past 7 days."

He said that new projections put the peak's arrival "closer to the end of April."

As some states and the federal government talk about reopening the economy after May 1, Walsh said that this is "not only unrealistic; it's impossible. 'This is not the time to talk about going back to normal,' he said. 'We will start to continue to move forward after the surge passes.'"

He said that as of Sunday evening, 29 patients are in the hospital side of the Boston Convention and

Exhibition Center field hospital, and 16 are on the homeless individuals side.

Walsh also said that there has been "quick progress" on the small business relief fund, and the City has received nearly 3000 applications. Businesses can use this money towards rent, payroll, or other challenges this virus has presented. Walsh said that this round of funding has closed, but he will make an announcement when more funds are available, and the federal aid should be "coming down soon" as well as state aid, he said.

So far, the Boston Resiliency Fund has distributed \$10.4 million: \$4.7 million for children,

families, and seniors, \$3.7 million for healthcare for vulnerable populations, and \$2 million for home learning and other technologies.

Walsh announced another \$1.7 million in grants for the Boston Resiliency Fund on Wednesday afternoon, and said that the funds will continue to go to "organizations serving the hardest hit communities."

In one month, the fund has raised over \$25 million, and will

continue to grow. To donate to the fund or apply for funds, visit [boston.gov/coronavirus](https://boston.gov/coronavirus).

"This is what a strong city does," Walsh said. "We see a need, we work together, and we meet it."

Additionally, starting on April 15, the City will post race and ethnicity data for deaths, and is working on reaching more communities with resources in more languages.

According to the City of Boston

(WALSH UPDATE, Pg. 3)

## 29-year Boston Police veteran dies of COVID-19

By Lauren Bennett

Mayor Walsh and Boston Police Commissioner William Gross on Tuesday announced the passing of 29 year veteran officer Jose Fontanez.

Fontanez passed away from COVID-19 at the age of 53 and was an officer in District E-13 in Jamaica Plain.

"First and foremost, this is a devastating blow to



Officer Jose Fontanez.

(FONTANEZ, Pg. 4)

## South End emerges as Boston 'hot spot' in newest neighborhood stats

By Seth Daniel

The South End emerged as a major 'hot spot' for COVID-19 infections in the latest neighborhood statistics released by the Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC) on Friday evening, buoyed by a great increase in the numbers of homeless individuals testing positive at Boston Medical Center (BMC) and the Pine Street Inn.

The statistics were taken as of Thursday, April 9, at 4:12 p.m.

The infection rate grew quickly over the past week in the South End, jumping to 78.9 per 10,000

(HOT SPOT, Pg. 6)

## Boston Ballet joins series of institutions facing critical times

Suspension of season could result in loss of up to \$10 million

By Seth Daniel

The ranks of the Boston Ballet and Artistic Director Mikko Nissinen had been preparing for months to premiere 'Carmen' last month, but when the stage was set, the preparations complete and opening night had come - COVID-19 put an end to it all.

In fact, like many arts organizations in Boston, Boston Ballet ended up suspending its entire spring season, including the huge 'Swan Lake' production, and are now trying to figure out how they might make it through despite the loss of millions in revenues.

"The day of the premiere I went to the stage," said Nissinen. "My executive director Max Hodges was there. Basically, we were told we were not performing and were suspending operations."

The performance, luckily, was

able to re-schedule for August 20-30 later this summer, but that disappointment was only the start of a cascade of challenges the Boston Ballet is now facing, challenges that are about survival for the Ballet.

With the cancellation of the spring season this month, it meant the loss of their second most popular ballet, 'Swan Lake.' Were 'Carmen' also not able to go on in August, he said it could be a major

(BOSTON BALLET, Pg. 5)

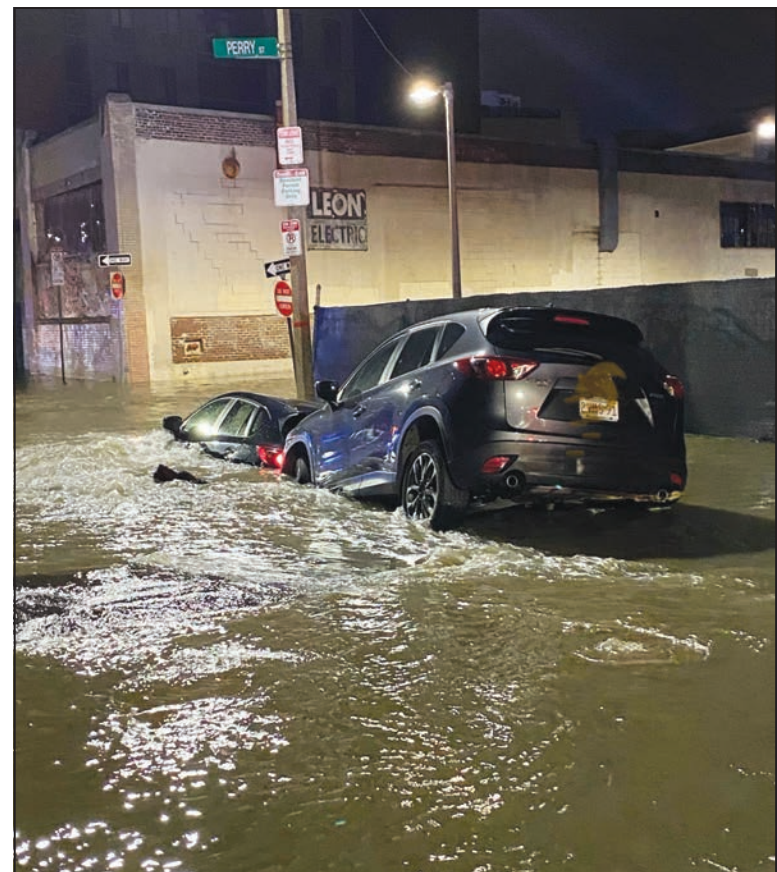
## Harrison Avenue floods out Tuesday, displacing Laconia, SoWa residents

By Seth Daniel

A rush of water came pouring down Harrison Avenue Tuesday night around 9:18 p.m., enveloping everything in its path - inundating Laconia Lofts' parking garage and turning SoWa into a lake.

Boston District Fire Chief Neil Mullane reported that a water main had broken in the area of 500 Harrison Ave. in the South End Tuesday night. The street buckled and a sink hole developed. Several cars were underwater on the street,

(HARRISON AVENUE FLOOD, Pg. 8)



ALL PHOTOS COURTESY THE BOSTON FIRE DEPARTMENT

At the corner of Perry Street, a sinkhole formed and cars were falling into it.



# EDITORIAL

## A LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL?

The United States now is the official epicenter of the coronavirus pandemic.

We have more deaths and more cases of disease than anywhere else in the world.

However, this past weekend the experts began to give us a glimmer of hope that we are turning the tide against this dreaded foe and the possibility that our lives may return to some semblance of normality in incremental steps within 30-60 days.

We are the first to concede that there are many “ifs” to any discussion of ending the shutdown of the U.S. economy and the present lockdown mandates currently in place throughout most of the nation. A vast increase in testing in order to identify both virus carriers and those who may have immunity will be essential before we can begin to emerge meaningfully from our life of quarantine.

It also is clear that even with some sort easing of the lockdowns, life still will be far from normal: Schools most likely will remain closed for the rest of this school year, professional sports will not take place anytime soon, public gatherings of all kinds will be banned, and the travel industry will continue to be in a state of non-existence indefinitely.

But the experts’ insights about the possibility of some degree of easing of our current situation brought to mind the famous words of Winston Churchill amidst the worst days of World War II when Nazi Germany’s advance had been stopped by England with the defeat of Rommel at El Alamein:

“Now this is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning.”

Our war against the coronavirus still has a long way to go. But with the outbreaks and death toll dropping in many places around the world, including New York City, perhaps we can see a pinhole of light in the long, dark tunnel in which we find ourselves.

## SO LET’S TALK ABOUT THE WEATHER

The weather this April has been full of irony. We had mild months for January, February, and March, with above-average temperatures (among the warmest on record) and few storms of any consequence.

However, April has been anything but spring-like. Temperatures have been below normal and two fierce storms, including this past Monday’s, left many of us without power.

So although April thus far has ranged from seasonably unpleasant to rather ferocious, weather-wise, at least it has provided us with a diversion from our preoccupation with the coronavirus.

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### TO THE PEOPLE OF BOSTON

Dear Editor,

The coronavirus is unlike anything we’ve experienced in living memory, and it’s testing our city in a way that it’s never been tested before. It has required a major, all-hands-on-deck response, and it has affected every aspect of daily life in Boston. Every day, we are sending our love, our support, and our prayers to everyone who’s battling this terrible illness, and our hearts break for the families who have lost loved ones.

The grief I feel for these families is coupled with an immense sense of pride for our city. The people of Boston have shown bravery, strength, and solidarity with one another since this crisis began. We’ve had to close our schools, postpone some of our most beloved traditions, and ask residents to keep their distance from the people they love the most.

I know that these changes have been very difficult for many people. But I’m not hearing complaints; the overwhelming reaction has been support and cooperation.

People are focused on protecting their fellow Bostonians, especially the most vulnerable among us. People understand that the measures we’re taking, no matter how drastic they may feel, will save lives. *That* is our top priority, and the people of Boston have rallied around it. I’ve seen people, businesses, and organizations stepping up and doing the right thing. I’ve seen wonderful acts of kindness. And I’ve seen people of all ages showing what it means to be

Boston strong.

In the face of challenges like this one, our city shows its true colors. We are a resilient city of resilient people. That’s reflected in our strong neighborhoods, in our enduring traditions, and in the way we govern at the local level.

The fact is, we’ve been strengthening Boston’s ability to respond to a crisis like this for years. We’ve built deep connections between city government, neighborhood leaders, community groups, and the faith community. We’ve built up one of the strongest shelter and healthcare networks for homeless individuals in the country. We’ve made city services more accessible, in more languages, across a variety of platforms.

We’ve helped more people get connected with affordable internet. And we’ve worked to close equity gaps to make sure that more people have access to stable housing and financial safety nets. All of these things have allowed us to act swiftly, get people the information they need, and soften the blow that this public health crisis is having on our communities, our economy, and people’s lives. To me, this is the definition of resilience. It means planning ahead, and building connections before we need them, so that we can adapt to any challenge that we face.

We’ve got a long road ahead of us. Even after we overcome the immediate threat to people’s health, there will be a long economic recovery, to get our local businesses and their hard-working employees back on their feet. We will need to be flexible, and work

together to get daily life back to normal. And we will continue to grieve, together as a City, for the lives lost. Many families are experiencing incredible shock and sadness right now. We all need to give them the time and the space to mourn their loved ones, with the full support of their city behind them.

My hope is that when we get through this, we will have a new appreciation for all the things we hold dear. I hope that we will never again take simple joys and freedoms for granted.

Normally, this is one of the best times of the year in Boston. Any other year, we’d be getting ready to welcome athletes and fans from all over the world for the Boston Marathon. We’d be celebrating the home opener at Fenway Park.

We’d be holding the first of our annual coffee hours in neighborhood parks across the city. Kids and families would be enjoying the warm weather and all the festivities that come with the end of the school year.

When we get through this, and return to these traditions, it will be a cause for celebration. Each of us will have a renewed opportunity to embrace the things that make Boston the greatest city in the world. This is a defining moment in our history that will inspire new strength and resilience. I think it will inspire a new sense of what makes us Bostonians, and what makes us all family. That’s what gives me hope, and that’s what drives me, every day, to lead our City through this.

Mayor Martin Walsh

## Tips on mailing without leaving the safety of your home

You don’t have to go to the Post Office to use many postal products and services. In fact, most simple tasks can be done from the convenience and safety of your home with or without a computer.

Like purchasing stamps. Using your computer, you can go to the Postal Store on [usps.com](https://usps.com) and select different stamp denominations. USPS will deliver them right to your home.

No computer? No problem! Ask your local Post Office or carrier to bring you a Stamps by Mail order form, complete it and put it in your mailbox with a check. Again, USPS

will bring you your stamps.

What if you need to send a package? You can order free Priority Mail and Priority Mail Express boxes, or other package supplies at [usps.com](https://usps.com). Again, USPS will deliver items to your address. And at [usps.com](https://usps.com), using Click-N-Ship, you can print a mailing label with the appropriate postage right from your computer.

Need that package picked-up? Go to [usps.com](https://usps.com) and schedule a free carrier pick-up. In your request, let your local Post Office know where they can find the package or packages and the carrier will retrieve

them when he or she delivers your mail.

USPS postal employees are working around the clock to ensure you get your important letters and packages. Skip the trip to the Post Office by ordering stamps, package supplies, and printing package postage from your home. We’ll pick up your packages too.

It’s the most effective type of social distancing around!

The Postal Service receives no tax dollars for operating expenses, and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations.

# Baker keeps residents informed as state enters surge

By Lauren Bennett

As Massachusetts begins to enter a surge in coronavirus cases, Gov. Charlie Baker continues to provide updates and make new announcements to keep the people of the Commonwealth safe and informed.

“We are in the surge,” Baker said on April 15. As of April 14, Massachusetts had 28,163 confirmed cases of COVID-19—up from nearly 1300 the day before—and 957 people have died statewide, up 113 from the day before.

“We think testing is a big part of dealing with people who have COVID-19,” Baker said on April 14. “Testing and tracing are a big part of how we actually push back over time.” He said that Massachusetts is “either the third or fourth largest tester in the country,” and is now conducting testing at 28 sites statewide. The state also offers testing through mobile units at places like nursing homes.

Gov. Baker on April 9 spoke about executive orders that would make it easier for foreign educated doctors to become licensed in Massachusetts, as well as expedited licensure of nursing students and graduates.

Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito also dis-

cussed resources available for survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault, including the expansion of the state’s 24/7 toll-free confidential domestic violence hotline, SafeLink, which is now available through 211. The SafeLink number is (877) 785-2020, and the TTY number is (877) 421-2601.

Baker also talked about the first implementation of federal unemployment benefits as part of the CARES Act. Last week, Baker said that nearly 140,000 new individuals filed for unemployment in the state, and nearly 470,000 have filed over the past three weeks.

“These numbers are obviously staggering,” Baker said. “We know several people have had trouble getting through the website. The administration is working hard on this one.” He said the online system that the state utilizes “has been able to withstand the volume without crashing,” which he said has not been the cases for many states.

“The Department of Unemployment Assistance (DUA) has been working nonstop,” he said. More than 600 people are working remotely at the unemployment call center making over 6000 calls per day, “and that number will continue to trend up as we go forward,” he said.

New federal unemployment benefits include an additional \$600 a week for regular unemployment compensation, which is happening now. This applies to “all eligible claimants,” both those who currently receive unemployment and those who are applying now. It is retroactive to March 29 and will run until the end of July, the governor said.

Additionally, the DUA is currently working on a way to implement expanded support for people who are not typically eligible for unemployment benefits, such as gig workers or those who are self-employed. The governor said that those interested in applying for this program should check the DUA website.

The third program includes a “13 week extension of benefits for people who have exhausted their previous unemployment benefits,” Baker said. “We are still waiting on guidance from the federal government for how to do this.”

A Spanish-language unemployment application is also now available online. “The Department of Unemployment Assistance (DUA) will make language applications available in Portuguese, Haitian Creole, Chinese, Vietnamese and additional languages in the coming days,” according to a release from the state. “The new Spanish lan-

guage UI form is the latest effort from the Commonwealth to deliver crucial COVID-19 information to non-English speakers...” Additionally, the COVID-19 text message system is also now available in Spanish, all of mass.gov is available in 13 different language, 211 is available in over 150 languages, and several agencies have fact sheets in multiple languages to help keep the Commonwealth informed.

On April 10, the Baker-Polito Administration announced that the Department of Public Health will issue a Public Health Advisory that recommends people wear a face covering in public “when they cannot safely socially distance” in order to protect themselves and others from the virus.

He also announced that the state has around 15,900 usable beds available as it heads towards the surge. “Projections have indicated that we need more beds and more staff to beds,” he said last week. He said that right now, half of the state’s beds are available for “varying levels of care.”

The field hospital at the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center opened on April 10 with a total of 1000 beds, 500 for hospital capacity and 500 for homeless COVID-19 patients. Field hospitals are also open at the DCU Center in Worcester and the Newton Pavilion. Other

locations to come include Cape Cod, Springfield, and Lowell to provide beds for patients who do not need care at the ICU level.

On April 13, Baker also announced that mobile testing has been expanded, and in places like Chelsea where the per capita cases are extremely high, there are “several state agencies ready to provide resources,” including increasing testing capacity fourfold in the Chelsea area. Additionally, the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) is implementing a food plan to increase production of meal kits. He said by the end of this week, there will be 750 kits produced with about 35 meals in each kit, totally 26,000 meals.

Baker also announced that he was funding a program for local businesses to make personal protection equipment (PPE) even if it isn’t what they normally manufacture. Called the Manufacturing Emergency Response Team (MERT), the program launched on April 2 and will pivot operations of some businesses to PPE like gowns, face shields, swabs, and hand sanitizers.

The governor emphasized that the next few weeks will be difficult, but “we continue to make progress” in testing capacity and availability of beds.

## WALSH UPDATE (from pg. 1)

website, 64 percent of total cases in Boston have known race/ethnicity data. Of those known cases, four percent are Asian, 41 percent are Black/African-American, 17 percent are Latinx/Hispanic, 28 percent are white, and 11 percent are “other.”

Walsh also continued to remind people to cover their face when outside their homes, only leave for essential items like groceries, and to wash their hands. He also warned younger people to take this virus seriously.

“Over 70 percent of our cases are not senior citizens,” he said. “The number of affected young adults is almost certainly higher in reality.”

He also told people not to throw their gloves or masks in the street or in parking lots. “Let’s be good neighbors and let’s keep making sure our communities are clean and safe.”

### ONE BOSTON DAY

April 15 marks the 7th anniversary of the Boston Marathon bombing, and has since become known as One Boston Day. While the day has been used in the past for people to get together in remembrance, this year it will be much different.

“Join us in standing together while standing apart,” Walsh

said, and proclaimed April 15 as a “citywide day of reflection, prayer, and unity.”

“Everyone has a chance to slow down, reflect, and share,” he said. Using the hashtag #onebostonday on social media, Bostonians can reflect and share with each other by coming together in a modified way. “The spirit of One Boston Day is more important than ever,” he said on Wednesday.

At 2:49pm on Wednesday, the Old South Church rang its bells to honor the lives lost in the 2013 bombings. Additionally, an online interfaith prayer service was held at 2:00pm led by local faith leaders and musicians.

The City has also shared a list of kind acts for people to do at home, which can be found at [onebostonday.org](http://onebostonday.org). Walsh said one of the most important acts of kindness is thanking first responders for all of their work on the front lines caring for people with COVID-19.

“We need One Boston Day spirit now more than ever,” Walsh said. “We will get through this difficult time together as One Boston.”

### COVID-19 HEALTH INEQUITIES TASK FORCE

Mayor Walsh on April 9 announced a COVID-19 Health Inequities Task Force “to provide

guidance to the City of Boston on addressing current inequities in data analysis, testing sites and health care services for Blacks, Latinos, Asians, and immigrants,” according to a release from the city. “The Task Force will review existing racial and ethnic data among Boston residents, as well as review data collection processes, data analysis and best practices related to the COVID-19 response for the Black, Latino, Asian, and immigrant populations. This guidance will support a strategy for equity and accessibility to services for populations that are historically underserved or underrepresented, including recommendations for additional resources and considerations, that can be implemented by the City of Boston and community and healthcare stakeholders that are serving as partners in this response.”

### MORTGAGE RELIEF PARTNERSHIP WITH BANKS

Mayor Walsh also announced that 12 of Boston’s largest housing lenders will offer “at least three months of deferred mortgage payments for homeowners who contact them and demonstrate that they have been financially impacted by the public health crisis,”

according to a release from the city.

Lenders have also agreed to not charge late fees, and failure to pay will not be reported to credit bureaus. Rather than paying the deferred payments back in a lump sum, lenders will work with homeowners on creating a payment plan.

Many lenders are also offering longer deferral periods, and the city recommends that homeowners contact their lenders directly. Additionally, the Boston Home Center can answer questions as well by calling 617-635-4663, ext. 3.

### DEDICATED HOUSING FOR FIRST RESPONDERS, SHELTER STAFF, AND VETERANS

Mayor Walsh announced that 334 beds throughout the city have been dedicated to first responders, shelter staff, and veterans to prevent further spread of COVID-10.

Hotel Boston in Brighton will house Boston Police officers, Boston Fire and Boston EMS members who have tested positive for the virus or who may have been exposed at work and are “unable to effectively isolate at home,” a release from the city states. The hotel can house 74 people in single occupancy rooms with private

bathrooms and a kitchenette.

Northeastern University will also provide 135 single-occupancy rooms in its West Village dormitory to first responders who live with someone who might be at higher risk of contracting COVID-19.

“Boston University will be providing 75 rooms to Pine Street Inn’s shelter staff who have been working on the frontlines of the COVID-19 public health emergency caring for people experiencing homelessness at their shelter facilities,” the release states. Additionally, “The City of Boston has been working on increasing its medical and care capacity for vulnerable populations and hospitals during the COVID-19 public health emergency. Mayor Walsh recently announced expanded capacity to help reduce congestion and increase social distancing in homeless shelters, adding 172 new beds at a Suffolk University dormitory, 75 new beds at 1515 Commonwealth Avenue in Brighton, and 55 new beds in the South End near City shelters.”

For veterans, the New England Center and Home for Veterans (NECHV) will use a former nursing home facility in Brighton to temporarily relocate between 40 and 50 COVID-negative veterans.



# City Council holds hearing to discuss ways to help residents facing displacement; in need of rental assistance

By Lauren Bennett

The City Council Committee on Housing and Community Development held a virtual Zoom meeting on April 9 on two different hearing orders that have been filed regarding assistance for those facing eviction, displacement, and who are in need of rental assistance.

Councilor Ed Flynn filed an “order for a hearing to discuss ways to support tenants facing eviction and displacement,” and Councilor Lydia Edwards filed an “order for a hearing regarding the creation of temporary rental assistance to support residents impacted by COVID-19.”

Councilor Edwards pointed out that “this is not a new conversation for many...” as “many people are already dealing with a 6, 7, 8 alarm fire and this pan-

demic poured gasoline on it,” she said. This hearing was the first of many conversations that will help the City “hopefully come up with additional resources to not only deal with this pandemic, but the housing crisis moving forward,” she said. “We cannot continue the way we did before this pandemic.”

Councilor Ed Flynn said that over 16 million Americans have filed for unemployment over the past few weeks. “This hearing would be a good vehicle to discuss how we can continue to protect tenants,” he said. “I still believe that this is an important conversation to have and I suspect it will be one we will continue to discuss in our city.”

The \$3 million in City funds to help residents pay rent “is just the tip of the iceberg,” said City Councilor Kenzie Bok. “This comes on top of a situation where

people were not able to keep stable housing,” she said. She added that recently released data show “an enormous, off the charts application for SNAP benefits.”

“Big pieces of this are going to have to be done at the federal and state level,” she continued, but she said the Council will do “what we can to push some of our larger agendas around tenants rights.”

Dominique Williams, Director of the Office of Housing Stability, said that 4,467 households had applied to the rental relief fund as of April 8, and the city is targeting those relief funds to those who are either not eligible for unemployment benefits or whose titles would mean that they would not receive enough money to pay their rent.

Due to the number of applicants, Williams said they decided to hold a lottery, and “[the Department of Neighborhood Development (DND)] is working very hard to find additional funds,” she said.

Taylor Cain, the Director of the Innovation Housing Lab, said that the housing lottery form is available in six different languages, and they are also thinking about households who don’t have “reliable access to the Internet.”

DND Housing Policy Manager Tim Davis said that the federal CARES Act “provides significant

resources which will keep many renters stabilized.” He also said that Black and Latino Bostonians are most likely to be in jobs where they will be laid off.

Additionally, “we are concerned that unemployment benefits will not do enough” to help the city’s 18,000 undocumented workers. “We are already working to add additional funds to the \$3 million,” he said.

He said they figured that the \$3 million would go to between 700 and 800 applicants. “We’re still waiting to figure out exactly how this is going to play out,” he said, “considering we don’t even know how long this crisis is going to last.”

DND has also screened out tenants who are not from Boston to “ensure that the resources are going to the right folks. We really just want to stress that this money is not directed towards the landlord,” he added, “so as to not “penalize the tenant for the landlord’s inaction.”

The lottery ended at noon on April 10, and the goal after the lottery is to get the payments issued before May 1, said Katie Forde, Operations Manager for the Office of Housing Stability.

City Councilor Julia Mejia asked what would be done for the

residents who enter the lottery but do not win. Forde said that the city is “tracking people to make sure they don’t fall through the cracks,” and staff across DND who speak multiple languages have been engaged and will be in touch with those residents.

Some public comment included concerns about undocumented immigrants and language barriers when it came to the application, as well as the short window of time for people to apply for this round of funding.

“Our focus has been on the work of this fund and we know that there’s that need out there and some people might fall through the cracks and that is on us,” Forde said. “We want to make sure that this is a fair and equitable process.”

Councilor Edwards said that the City Council will have a “follow up conversation on this exact fund. The questions don’t end today and the concerns don’t end today because the crisis doesn’t end today,” she said. “There’s lessons we can learn as we go along.” She said she believes the people working in the city departments are “doing the best they can,” and that she will make sure that the working session related to these hearing orders is interpreted to reach the most residents.

“This is the beginning of a conversation,” she said.

## FONTANEZ (from pg. 1)

a family,” Walsh said. “We hold them in our prayers. This is also a very devastating blow to our city, the Boston Police Department, and the entire public safety family. We honor him and remember him as a hero.”

Walsh told residents to stay at home in memory of Officer Fontanez and “in gratitude to health care workers who are working for us the way he was.”

“He fought a valiant and courageous fight against COVID-19,” Gross said of Fontanez. He called Fontanez “a great man,” and one who “loved” Boston, his family, and the police department.

Commissioner Gross thanked the nurses and doctors at Boston Medical Center for “taking care of our brother.” He also told residents to adhere to CDC guidelines to further prevent the spread of the virus, as no one is immune.

“Again, this man was a very courageous man, but it lets you know our first responder families, we’re not robotic, we’re not immune,” Gross said. “This virus is devastating almost everyone that it touches.”

Gross said that the community has “stepped up and helped us to fight crime,” and only “one or two percent” of people are not listening to the guidelines. He warned that “they will be locked up” for not complying.

“You won’t get a COVID-19 break because while people are out here doing the right thing, helping each other out during this pan-

demic, there are those who try to prey upon this hardship,” he said. “It won’t be tolerated. I’m here to tell you now—thank you to the community because people are stepping up. They’re not desensitized and they are helping us put away the people that need to be put away.”

Gross also said that so far, 67 officers have tested positive for the virus, and 53 of them are still out of work. He said that anywhere where there has been a concentration of the virus, stations are not shut down but rather thoroughly cleaned to prevent further spread to officers.

“It’s tough being on the front lines as a Boston police officer, but we’re not alone,” Gross said, adding that Boston EMS, Boston Fire, and other first responders and those who provide city services are all on the front lines together.

Gross said that the Boston Police department is “adequately supplied with PPE,” but did not share specifics about the equipment on hand.

He thanked those that reached out and offered condolences to Fontanez’s family, and both he and Walsh reminded residents to follow guidelines of social distancing.

Gross reminded Bostonians that those protecting the city are vulnerable to the virus, and by working together the city can prevent further spread: “we’re not expendable; we’re human too and that virus can definitely affect us.”

## BPD investigators confiscate firearms, arrest suspects for Boston Common shootings

Staff Report

Three days after a non-fatal shooting in the area of 37 Beacon St. near the Boston Common, BPD investigators on April 10 arrested three individuals for their roles in connection to the incident.

At about 4:23pm, on Tuesday, April 7, officers from District A-1 (Downtown) responded to a call for a person shot in the area of 37 Beacon St. On arrival, officers located a male victim suffering from a gunshot wound. The victim, suffering from non-life threatening injuries, was transported to an area hospital for further treatment of his injuries. In the days after the incident, thanks to a thorough and comprehensive investigation, District A-1 detectives were able to assemble and amass sufficient evidence allowing them to identify and name the individuals wanted in connection to the shooting. At about 3 p.m., on Friday, April 10, officers arrest-

ed Karmau Cotton-Landers, 25, of Chelsea, Karari Jenkins, 30, of Boston and Vinico Acosta, 25, of Boston and charged all three with Assault with Intent to Murder. Officers were able to discover and recover a firearm found in a backpack belonging to Cotton-Landers. As such, Cotton-Landers is facing additional charges including Unlawful Possession of a Firearm, Unlawful Possession of Ammunition and Carrying a Loaded Firearm on a Public Way.

The suspects were scheduled to be arraigned in Boston Municipal Court on Monday, April 13.

●ONE LESS GUN:

At about noon on Friday, April 10, officers assigned to District A-1 (Downtown) made an onsite arrest and recovered a loaded firearm in the area of 39 Boylston St. near the Boston Common. While on patrol in the area of the aforementioned location, officers were flagged down by a witness who stated an unknown white male had robbed another individual at

gunpoint in front of 39 Boylston St. before chasing the victim while brandishing a firearm. The witness provided a description of the suspect and stated to officers that he fled towards the CVS in the area.

Officers searched the area for the victim and the suspect. Officers observed an individual matching the description of the suspect walking with another male on Tremont Street towards Boylston Street. Officers approached the two males and eventually located a brown firearm inside of the suspect’s sock. The male suspect was subsequently taken into custody. The second male was identified and released from the scene. Officers were unable to locate the victim.

Officers arrested Richard Kilbane, 30, of Roxbury. Kilbane was expected to be arraigned in Boston Municipal Court on charges of Unlawful Possession of a Loaded Firearm, Assault by means of a Dangerous Weapon, and Unlawful Possession of Ammunition.



# Access to screening and new testing site at Whittier Street Health Center

•The City of Boston is working with the Whittier Street Health Center in Roxbury to help make testing more accessible to resi-

dents.

\*Starting April 13, Whittier will be offering scheduled rapid result testing to all.

\*Testing is by appointment only and patients must be at least 18 years of age. Please visit [wshc.org](http://wshc.org) for more info.

•Buoy Health has a free online screening resource, accessible at [buoy.com/mass](http://buoy.com/mass). This tool can help determine if you need to see

a healthcare provider, and they can connect you to telehealth resources that are fully covered by health insurance.

## BOSTON BALLET (from pg. 1)

financial blow to the company.

"At this point, we are looking at a major loss of revenue," he said. "We believe that if we cannot perform both ballets, we could lose somewhere north of \$10 million in revenues at least. The worst case would be much further north than \$10 million and best case is to keep the situation under \$10 million. That's a potential death blow if not managed properly."

Last week, Nissinen and the management had to lay off staff in five different waves of furloughs. They have kept anything that maintains revenue collections to keep things going.

Already they have had to also cancel a trip to New York City's new performance venue on Hudson Yards, where they were to perform works by Forsythe – something that had been in the plans for months.

Meanwhile, the dance school in Newton and the South End have been suspended for the time being, and the huge summer training program that is known nationally and internationally is in question at the moment. Just how they would get international students to Boston in June is an unknown.

For the professional dancers, many have already been able to apply for unemployment and other benefits, and Nissinen said he was happy to see the federal government step up to try to curtail the situation – which could have become much worse for everyone.

Dancers have been sent special linoleum to dance at home and try to keep in shape in the meantime. They are being creative, he said, and are posting their workouts online and videos of them dancing in their backyards and trying to keep up.

"I'm inspired," he said of their work at home, noting that most dancers spend nearly two hours a morning physically training and then six hours of specific dance work.

He does worry about the mental health of those in the company, some of them who have just arrived in Boston to join the Ballet and don't know many people or speak good English.

"The other side of this is how do people stay psychologically fit," he said. "My concerns go to some dancers coming from different countries...Now they've been one month staring at four walls."

Nissinen said he has been encouraged by the actions of the Board, and by the fundraising that has been done. Still, he worries about whether the country will be ready to go out to a performance in August so that 'Carmen' can be performed. If it's not safe, or people aren't ready, it could be a situation where they don't return until the fall, and then roll into Nutcracker.

It's a wake-up call for Boston Ballet, and all arts organizations as they try to navigate such a path.

"I do think non-profit arts organizations are very resilient and innovative and used to functioning under certain financial pressures," he said. "I don't know how we will make it through, but we will. That is the goal. I feel bad for smaller and mid-size organizations which will have a really, really tough time surviving...There is no guarantee for anybody and it's a real time of concern for Boston Ballet."

But when they and others do make it through, Nissinen said he believes it will be these arts organizations – now fighting for their existence – that will bring healing to the community, the country and the world.

"If we do a good job, we are there so the people in the audience can do self-reflection," he said. "The reflection is not on the performance, but the performance is the stimulus for the people to go on this journey. The second part is you have to be relevant...I don't think that means I have to do a COVID-19 ballet though."

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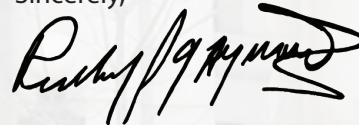
We have seen and been through past events that have affected the country and the world. As we navigate through this pandemic together, please know that we are here for you. I assure you that East Boston Savings Bank remains your strong neighborhood bank, supporting you, your family, your business and your community. It's because of your trust in us - and our faith in you - we will make it through these events together.

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PREACHING TO THE PEWS ON EASTER SUNDAY



PHOTOS COURTESY ARCHDIOCESE OF BOSTON

Cardinal Sean O'Malley celebrated many Holy Week services and Easter Masses last week in front of an empty Cathedral of the Holy Cross. While many in the neighborhoods watched online or on television as he carried out services during the holiest time of the year for Christians, an empty sea of pews was commonplace. It was unprecedented, but necessary during the COVID-19 response efforts. Here, Cardinal O'Malley delivers his homily in an empty Cathedral on Holy Thursday.

HOT SPOT (from pg. 1)

residents, which was leaps and bounds higher than the next closest neighborhood of Hyde Park, which had an infection rate of 66.6 per 10,000. For the South End, it amounted to 282 confirmed cases, which was a major jump from one week ago when the neighborhood had a rate of 19.6 per 10,000 and 70 confirmed cases.

The BPHC confirmed this week that the South End increase in cases was connected to homeless individuals being tested either through Pine Street Inn or BMC. The addresses of those locations are being used as their home addresses and both of those locations are in the South End and were counted towards the South End's case numbers.

More than 200 homeless individuals had tested positive as of this week.

For residents, that was a relief in that it didn't indicate an unexplained and major increase in the spread of the virus throughout the neighborhood.

The South End numbers were far greater than abutting neighborhoods like the Back Bay/Beacon Hill/Downtown areas, which had an infection rate of 23.2 per 10,000 and 129 cases. In the Fenway, the rate of infection was 12.4 per 10,000 and 68 confirmed cases.

The South End rates were similar to some of the highest rates in the state, with it being just above the numbers for Lawrence – which had the second highest estimated rate in the state at 75 per 10,000. Chelsea was the hardest hit community with an estimated 106

cases per 10,000 people, according to hospital officials from Mass General and Beth Israel.

East Boston had been one of the early leaders as COVID-19 infections grew, but since then it has lessened with a rate of 50.7 per 10,000 and 238 cases.

In terms of the most cases, South Dorchester – one of the City's largest neighborhoods by population – still had the most confirmed cases with 444.

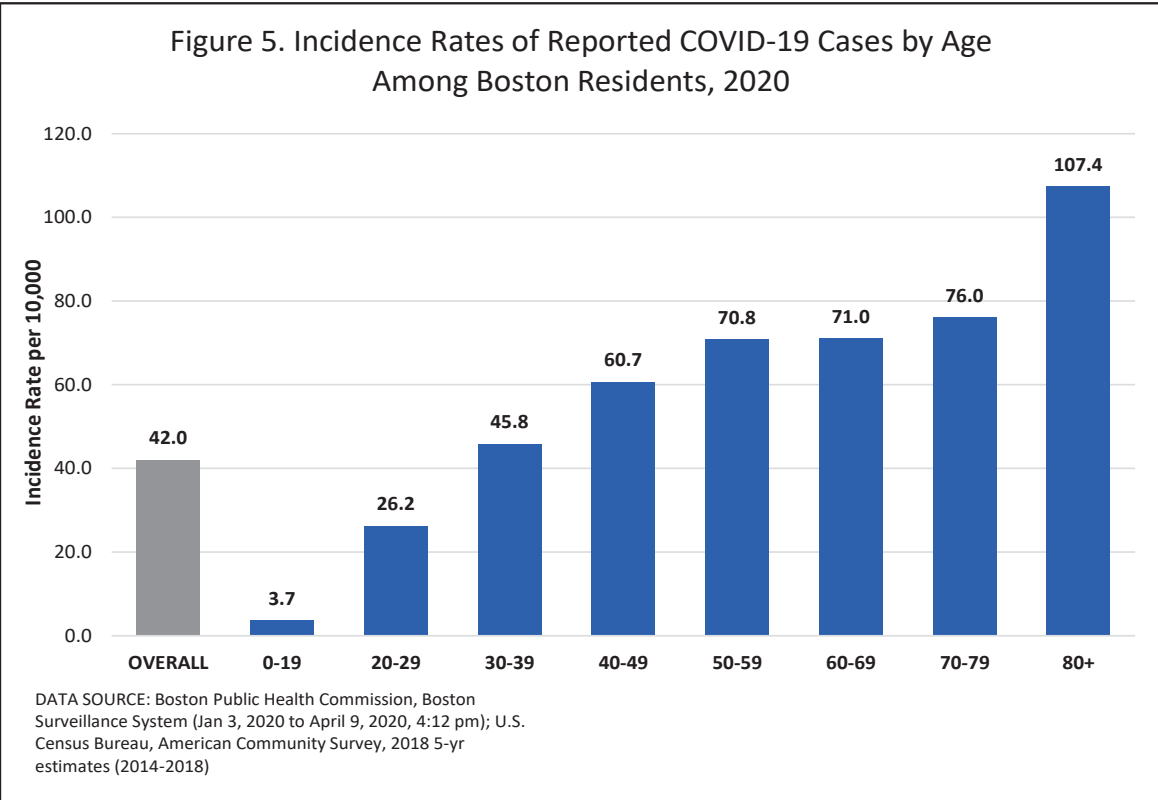
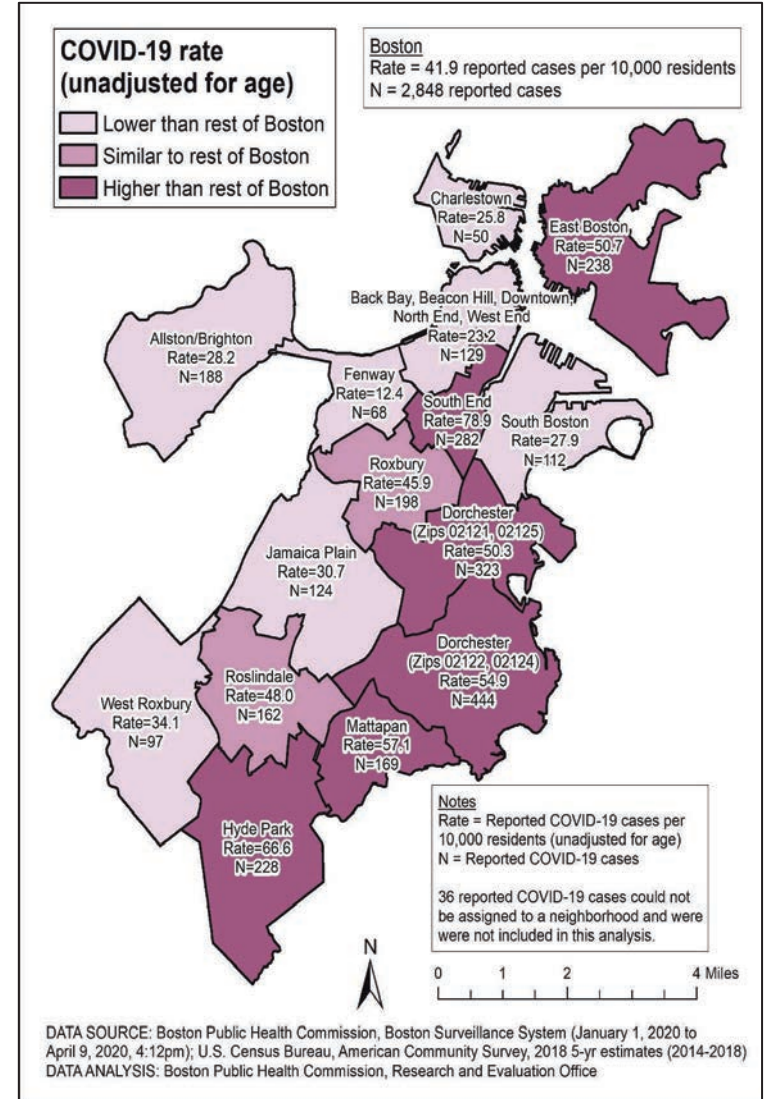
Overall, the citywide infection rate was 41.9 per 10,000 with a total of 2,848 confirmed cases of COVID-19. There had been 35 deaths from COVID-19 in Boston and 339 people had recovered.

In another reversal of the trends, older adults above age 80 really began to show a much

greater infection rate, climbing to 107.4 per 10,000 resident. It was a startling jump from one week ago when those 80 and over had a rate of 22.9 per 10,000.

There is a low percentage of Boston residents under 20 who have tested positive, and a low (26.2 per 10,000) infection rate among those 20-29. However, the numbers begin to climb for those reaching age 30, and then seem to level off for those ages 40-79 – all having rates between 60-76 per 10,000 people.

Nearly 30 percent of all COVID-19 cases were in persons age 60 and above, and rates are seen as increasing substantially with age – according to the BPHC.





# Baker provides update on hospital surge capacity

On April 9, the state provided an update on the Commonwealth's hospital capacity and efforts to add more beds to the system to meet the expected surge in COVID-19 cases, identifying the need for 14,500 treatment beds and expanding to that number through the use of field hospitals.

**Hospital Surge Capacity:** The Administration's COVID-19 Response Command Center released its initial projections on the surge two weeks ago. Since then, the Command Center has remained in regular contact with the Commonwealth's hospitals on a daily basis as they work to increase acute and ICU bed capacity. As of today, the Commonwealth has worked to make a total of approximately 14,500 treatment beds available ahead of the surge:

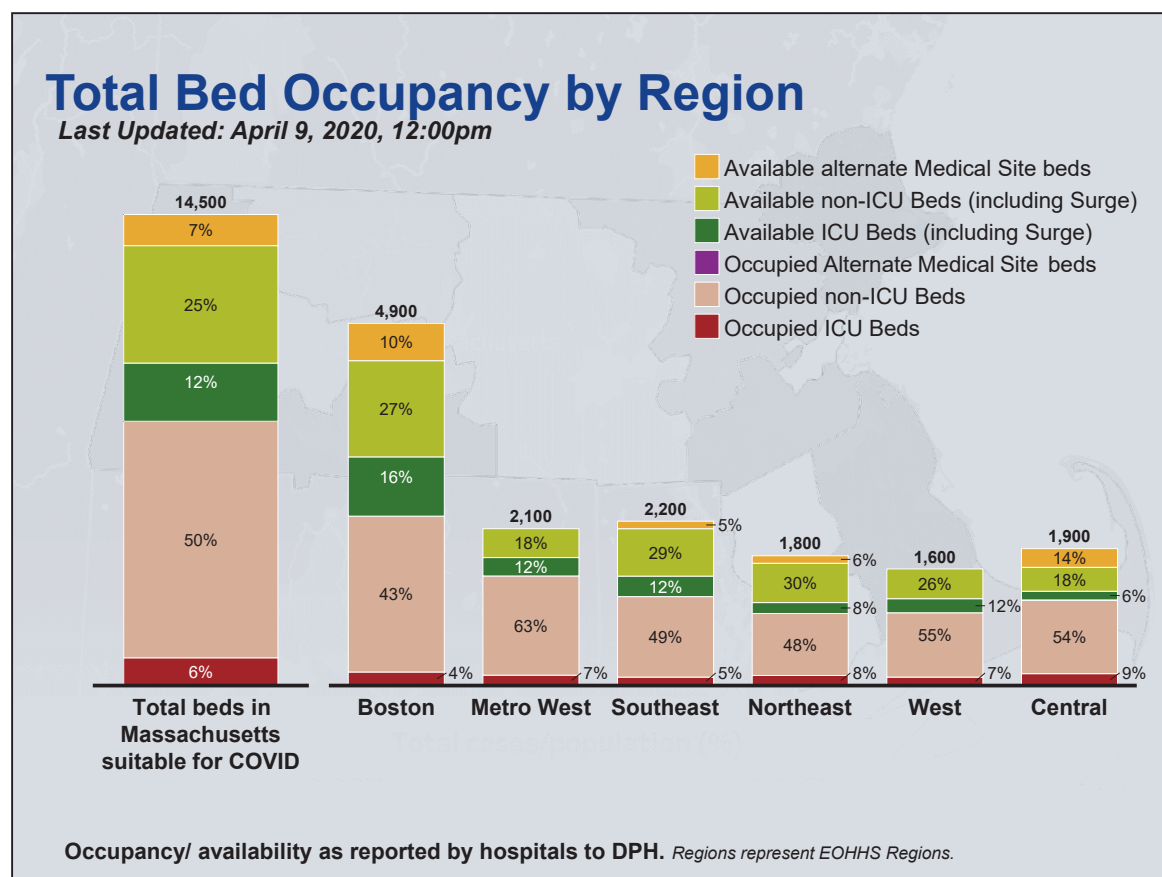
- 11,000 beds could be available for ICU and acute care in the existing hospital system. This represents a breakdown of roughly 9,400 acute care beds and 1,500 ICU beds.

- Through hospital surge planning and field hospitals, the Commonwealth is bringing approximately 3,500 new beds online for

ICU and acute care. This breaks down to approximately 2,500 new hospital beds coming online from hospital surge planning, and 1,000 beds coming online through field hospitals.

The Command Center continues to monitor the impact of COVID-19 on different regions and tracking how many hospital beds are available across the Commonwealth. As of April 9, hospitals had reported that 8,100 beds are occupied statewide, or approximately 55 percent (this figure includes hospitalizations for non COVID-19 patients). This meant that 6,400 beds were currently available for both ICU and acute care, or roughly 45%.

**Field Hospitals:** In the coming days, hundreds of new beds will come online that will help the Commonwealth significantly ramp up care capacity ahead of the surge to support existing hospitals. The Command Center is targeting five alternate care sites. These field hospitals will serve as an alternative site for hospitals to treat patients, particularly individuals who need acute care. They are being built all around the state to



ensure all residents have access to this emergency care. The field hospital at the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center opened late last week. Field hospitals at the DCU

Center in Worcester and Newton Pavilion in Boston started accepting patients April 8. Over the coming week, additional facilities will open up in Cape Cod, Springfield,

and Lowell. All in all, these facilities will provide approximately 1,000 additional beds for patients who do not require ICU-level care.

## Gov. Baker expands priority COVID-19 testing to grocery store workers

On Friday, April 10, Gov. Charlie Baker issued further public health guidance, expanded resources for critical workers and increased Massachusetts National Guard activation to support its ongoing response to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

A new Department of Public Health advisory, consistent with CDC guidance, recommends that all residents wear a mask or face covering in public when social distancing is not possible. In addition, the Executive Branch issued similar guidance to state employees recommending when masks or face coverings should be utilized while working.

The administration has also expanded access to the free priority COVID-19 testing sites for first responders located at Gillette Stadium to include grocery store workers.

Additionally, Gov. Baker authorized the activation of an additional 3,000 more military personnel of the Massachusetts National Guard.

- **Face Coverings and Cloth Masks Advisory:** The Administration today issued guidance to residents and Executive Branch employees recommending the use of a face covering or cloth mask

when in situations where maintaining proper social distancing measures are not possible to prevent the spread of COVID-19, such as in a grocery store.

A face covering may include anything that covers your nose and mouth, including a mask, scarf or bandana. Health care masks, such as N95 masks, should not be used and should be preserved for health care workers and first responders. Cloth masks should not be worn by young children under the age of two, persons with difficulty breathing, or those who are

unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.

- **Grocery Store Worker Priority Testing:** The Administration and the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security expanded access to the free, priority COVID-19 testing sites for first responders to now include grocery store and supermarket workers. Beginning Saturday, April 11, the men and women who provide critical access to food and other necessities could schedule an appointment

to receive COVID-19 testing at the sites located at Gillette Stadium in Foxboro. All appointments must be made in advance by the worker's supervisor or manager, and personnel do not need to be symptomatic to be eligible.

- **Massachusetts National Guard Activation:** Gov. Baker authorized the activation of an additional 3,000 military personnel of the Massachusetts National Guard to support the Commonwealth's COVID-19 response. This order raises the total authorization

to up to 5,000 members statewide, who may be tasked with supporting requests from state agencies for equipment, logistics, warehousing and related duties. Local cities, towns and state agencies should submit requests for support through the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency.

The activation reflects Governor Baker's statutory authority to activate the Massachusetts National Guard under state active duty to provide necessary assistance to state and municipal civilian authorities.

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# HARRISON AVENUE FLOOD (from pg. 1)

as well as in the SoWa lot. Several of the streets in and around Harrison also flooded heavily.

Officials said the water main had been installed in 1950 and had been rehabilitated in the 1970s.

Ken Smith, president of the East Berkeley Neighborhood Association (EBNA) and a displaced resident from Laconia Lofts, said it was the worst possible situation for many in the midst of a lock-down pandemic.

“We found out about 10 p.m. and started to find out the water main boke and Harrison was full of water,” he said. “It completely filled the 500 Harrison parking lot where SoWa is and ruined the cars there. Laconia had to be evacuated. The water go so high in our garage it was up to hip level and two-thirds upon the cars. All



District Fire Chief Neil Mullane addresses the media.

the cars in our parking garage are destroyed.”

Smith said he didn’t know for sure, but they felt it was a pretty



Workers in front of Laconia Lofts trying to relieve the flooding.



SoWa’s parking lot at 500 Harrison Ave. – as well as the businesses in the building – were flooded out in a lake of water.

good guess that the torrential rains on Monday put pressure on the water main and caused the break.

“There’s a good chance that storm caused the water main to break,” he said. “That’s what I’m thinking. We don’t know that for sure, but there’s a good chance that’s the cause.”

Smith said about 65 to 70 of the 90 units at Laconia had to be evacuated, along with renters from the GTI/SoWa properties. Most, he said, went to the AC Hotel where Elizabeth Beutel helped to give a neighbor rate to everyone and brought in emergency staff to help situation the evacuees.

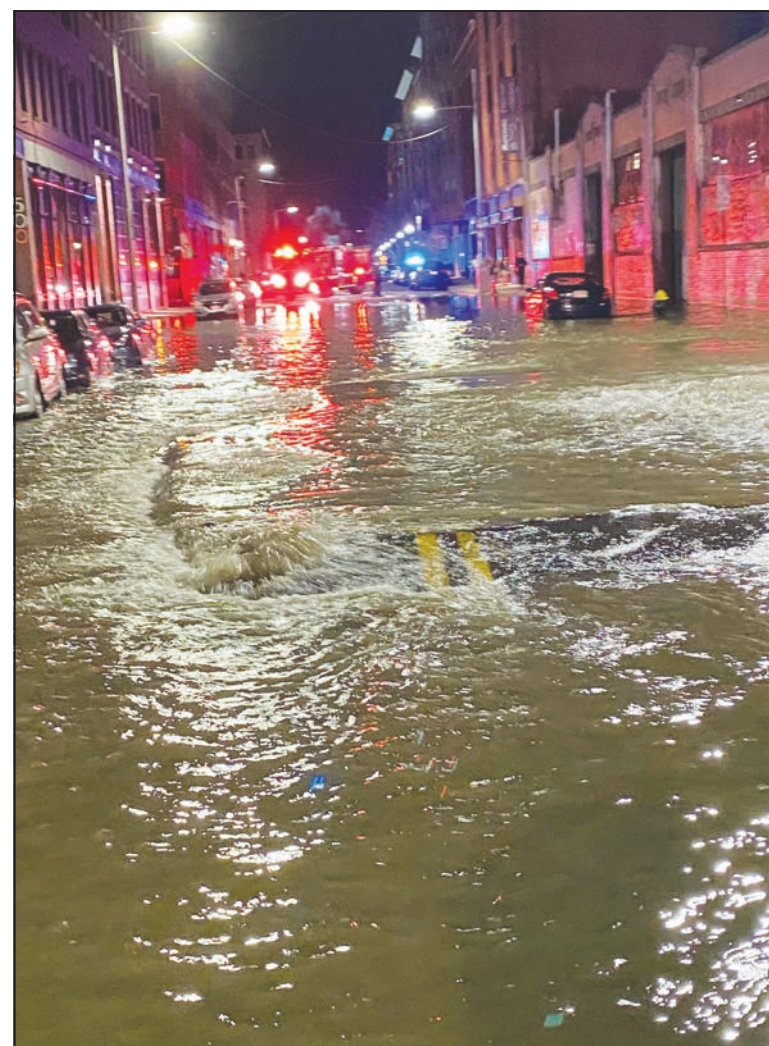
By morning, they still had no power at Laconia, and Smith said they were waiting for the Fire Department to give them the okay to return home.

Meanwhile, there was considerable damage reported to the Aquitaine Group’s Cinquecento Restaurant on Harrison Avenue was completely flooded.

Owner Jeff Gates had talked with members of the communi-

ty and reported there was water standing in the restaurant.

Both EBNA and the Union Park Neighborhood Association (UPNA) called on neighbors to patronize the groups’ other restaurants in the neighborhood.



Water poured down Harrison Avenue on Tuesday night, inundating the SoWa area and causing the evacuation of Laconia Lofts.

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# NABB takes to technology to keep neighbors informed

By Lauren Bennett

The Neighborhood Association of the Back Bay (NABB) has compiled an online list of resources for the Back Bay to help keep everyone informed throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

“We all get bombarded with information and advice from the city and Commonwealth and other sources about what we are advised to do, required to do, and also some of the resources we should be making use of to get through this circumstance of ‘stay at home,’” said NABB Chair Martyn Roetter. “One of the things that we do is we use our traditional means of communication—weekly email bulletin, monthly bulletin, and our website to make this information available and let our members know that it is available so they can go to it.”

He said that NABB is also keeping in regular contact with Back Bay elected officials, including City Councilor Kenzie Bok, State Senators Will Brownsberger and Jon

Santiago, and State Rep. Jay Livingstone.

“I really cannot say enough in praise for Jon Santiago,” Roetter said. With his dual backgrounds in legislature and medicine, “he’s especially helpful.”

“One of the other things we’re trying to do is improve our reach and try to think about all the different circumstances that Back Bay residents are in,” Roetter said, such as older people living alone with health conditions, and others who are not comfortable using technology as a way to receive information.

He said that NABB is encouraging neighbors to be aware of these folks, and if they know of someone who fits into this category to let NABB know so they can be contacted by telephone or be given printed material with the same resources that are available online.

“We’ve been doing things like relaying info about having groceries and other household goods delivered,” he said. NABB is also providing information for things like food banks and rent and mort-

gage resources.

Additionally, “we’ve become increasingly concerned about the impact on small businesses,” Roetter said. NABB has been in contact with businesses on Newbury Street and “it’s depressing to think about what’s going to happen to them and how many will go out of business,” he said.

He said that “significant numbers” of these Back Bay businesses are concerned about immediate needs for survival as their revenues continue to slow down or even vanish.

“Suppose a significant number of Newbury businesses are going to be empty—what are we going to do with those buildings?” he said. Though he doesn’t want that to be the case, “it wouldn’t be a bad idea to start thinking about it,” he said. He said that NABB should have a role in working with elected officials on issues like these.

Roetter also said that though it is “very much on the back burner right now,” NABB continues to converse with businesses and city and state officials about the sale

of the Hynes Convention Center. “We keep that at the back of our minds to make sure that we’re able to campaign when and if that may be necessary,” Roetter said.

Roetter said that it would be “extremely depressing” if the City returns to exactly the way it was prior to the pandemic. “This crisis has revealed profound fissures in our society and economy,” he said. “If we don’t tackle them in a meaningful way, we will fall short once again.”

He said that while many of these larger systemic issues are not solvable by NABB alone, what the organization can do is help out the community by making sure they have the most up-to-date information and resources at hand. “Our immediate focus is how we can make sure residents who are in a wide range of situations—families with children, people who can work at home, people who can’t work at home—at least have information and know the resources that they can call upon,” Roetter said.

He also encourages people to

stay in touch with their loved ones via technology, if they are able to do so. He said he is doing so himself by using a website called cairbou.com, which allows him to read stories to his grandchildren as they follow along on their own screens.

He said that while technology cannot replace actually being with loved ones, “I think it helps,” he said.

NABB is on the road to making use of more online tools than it has in the past, as the organization tends to skew older but wants to reach as wide of an audience as possible, Roetter said. Between holding online Zoom meetings, publishing information on the website, and utilizing social media more heavily, NABB hopes to accomplish this.

“I expect that we will be making more use of that approach even when it becomes possible and reasonable to have face to face meetings,” Roetter said.

NABB’s resource guide can be found at [www.nabbonline.org/coronavirus](http://www.nabbonline.org/coronavirus).

# More than 200 people in shelters test positive for COVID-19

By Seth Daniel

In an effort led by Boston Healthcare for the Homeless, the City reported on Thursday afternoon of a growing number of positive COVID-19 tests in the homeless population using the Boston shelter system.

The City released figures as of Tuesday within a series of announcements about new space secured for quarantine and isolation of the homeless population, of first responders and of veterans.

To date, the City reported that 246 people tested positive out of 940 total individuals tested since March 12, which is a positive rate of 26.1 percent – which was slightly higher than the latest published state average, which was 22.6 percent on April 14.

While the numbers were higher than anyone would want – one is too many, City officials said – they do believe the quick response has helped keep positive cases a bay.

“We know there are higher rates amongst people living in close proximity to one another,” said Sheila Dillon, director of the Department of Neighborhood Development and chief of housing. “One is too many for us, but I am pleased we have been able to work with non-profit partners the way we have. Even though the number is higher than anyone wants, I

do think the response is good and thoughtful and we’re taking care of people in need.”

Boston Health Care for the Homeless, the City’s shelter system, Boston Medical Center, Pine Street Inn, the Office of Recovery Services and other partners have been carefully monitoring the population in shelters and on the streets. Mostly, they have done extensive screening for symptoms, and even rounding up those on the Mass/Cass corridor who appear to have symptoms and need testing.

“Street outreach teams are equipped with supplies such as hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes and gloves, and are escorting individuals in need of care to medical sites,” read a news release from the mayor.

Jenn Tracy, of the office of Recovery Services, said they have been working on trying to keep people from congregating.

“We are working on social distancing,” she said. “There are some spots of congregation we’re targeting to make sure that people do spread out. Like we did at the shelters, we’re trying to do that on the streets. We’re working diligently on that and adding signage.”

Initially, the numbers were very low in the shelters and on the streets, with no cases reported initially, and then a few two weeks ago. Since that time, more testing

has occurred and more positives have been identified.

The City has identified extra space and beds all over the city to relieve crowded conditions of the healthy in existing shelters, and to provide areas for isolation and quarantine for people testing positive or awaiting results.

To that end, Mayor Martin Walsh recently announced the addition of 172 new beds at a Suffolk University dormitory, 75 new beds at 1515 Commonwealth Ave. in Brighton, and 55 new beds in the South End near City shelters. Dillon said when they began their work on the COVID-19 response, and realized they needed to marshal resources for the homeless population, Mayor Walsh simply picked up the phone and started calling all of the universities and institutions all over the city. In the end, many did step up and it has resulted in the use of many facilities.

There is also the Newton Pavilion in the South End, which is currently up and running, and the South Boston Convention Center, which is in the process of being built out.

The Newton Pavilion has a capacity of 250 beds for medical care and the South Boston Convention Center Medical Center will have 1,000 total beds for patients who have tested positive for COVID-19 (500 beds dedicated to patients struggling with

homelessness and the remaining 500 for other patients); six acute care suites; a physical therapy suite; 52 nurses stations and 48 bathroom facilities.

“We’re entering the most crucial point in the outbreak and the beginning of a surge in cases that will be very difficult for our city,” said Mayor Martin Walsh on Thursday. “That’s why we are doing everything we can to be prepared, and increasing our medical and care capacity for vulnerable populations and hospitals. Today, we’re ramping up resources for our first responders and frontline workers to make sure they have the support they need as they care for our city.”

## •HOUSING SITES FOR COVID-19 POSITIVE FIRST RESPONDERS

The City on Thursday afternoon, April 9, also announced recovery accommodations for Boston Police, Boston Fire and Boston EMS workers that have had a positive COVID-19 test or may have been exposed to a co-worker who is positive. The accommodations are meant for first responders who may not have the space at their homes to self-isolate.

The hotel in Brighton, Hotel Boston, has a capacity of 74 single-occupancy rooms with a private bathroom and kitchenette. The setup of the hotel is ideal for

self-isolation because all rooms have ground-level access and no common areas, the City said.

Additionally, Northeastern University is providing one of its dormitories with single-occupancy rooms to Boston’s first responders who live with someone who might be at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19, such as older adults and people who have serious underlying medical conditions. Northeastern will provide 135 rooms with beds, private bathrooms and kitchenettes at their West Village dormitory, which is located in Mission Hill on Parker and Ruggles Streets.

“In times of crisis, we must join together as one community and offer each other support and assistance,” said Northeastern University President Joseph E. Aoun. “We are honored to provide safe space for first responders, and we stand ready to offer additional help to the state and the city as needed. I applaud Mayor Walsh for his leadership through this difficult time.”

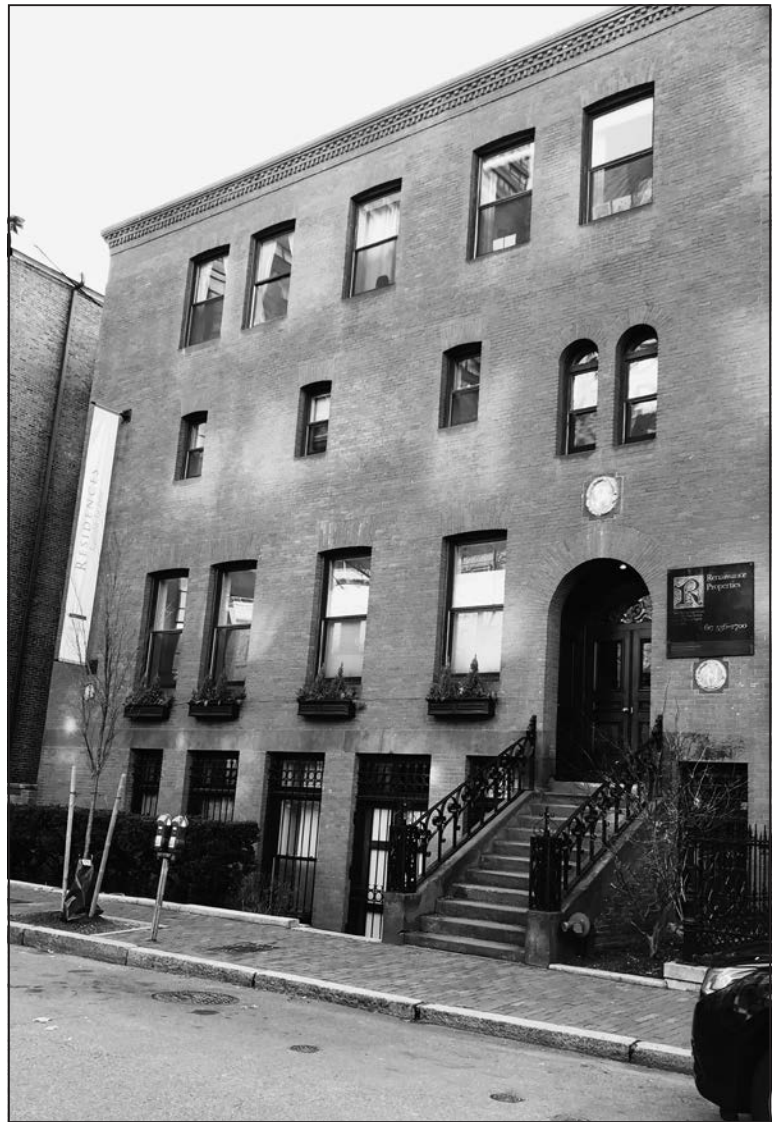
Mayor Walsh recently announced the City of Boston started testing Boston’s first responders for COVID-19 at Suffolk Downs in East Boston. The operation of this testing facility is led by the Boston Public Health Commission and the East Boston Neighborhood Health Center. First responders are screened to see if they meet the state criteria for testing.



# ATTENTION TO DETAIL

BY PENNY CHERUBINO

## THIS WEEK'S ANSWER



The arched windows and medallion in the last clue are on 42-44 St Botolph Street which was built in 1886 to a design by architects Cabot and Chandler. Perhaps that decorative medallion and two similar pieces with building numbers came from the time when this building was the Vesper George School of Art. The next clue will be found in the Back Bay. Do you have a favorite building or detail you would like featured? Send an email to [Penny@BostonZest.com](mailto:Penny@BostonZest.com) with your suggestion.

## THIS WEEK'S CLUE



# South End author's novel chosen for Mass. Book Award's 'Must Read' list

By Lauren Bennett

Christopher Castellani's life is packed with reading and writing, as it has been since he was a middle schooler. The South End resident is the author of five books, including his 2019 novel *Leading Men*, which has just been selected for the Massachusetts Book Awards "Must Read" list.

"I was totally thrilled and definitely surprised," he said of learning he made the list, adding that he is "honored to be in the company of so many other super talented people" who are also on the list. "I wasn't sure how well this book would connect with people," he said.

This honor is not Castellani's first. He won the Massachusetts

Book Award in 2004 for his critically-acclaimed novel *A Kiss from Maddalena*, his 2005 novel *The Saint of Lost Things* was chosen as a BookSense (IndieBound) Notable Book, and his 2013 novel *All This Talk of Love* is a New York Times Editors' Choice and finalist for the Ferro-Grumley Literary Award. He has also written a collection of essays about point of view in fiction called *The Art of Perspective: Who Tells the Story*.

*Leading Men* is set in Italy in the 1950s and is a love story told by two different narrators—the real life Tennessee Williams and his partner Frank Merlo. "Frank is a working class Italian-American guy," Castellani said, "who found himself in a relationship with an



PHOTO BY MICHAEL JOSEPH

Christopher Castellani

incredible artist."

Merlo died of lung cancer, sending Williams into a "deep depression," Castellani explained. "I wanted to write about their rela-

(CASTELLANI Pg. 11)

## Real Estate Transfers

### BUYER 1 BACK BAY

Cramer, Steven M  
White, Mary C  
Kuznetsova, Zhanna  
Brown, Patrick M

### SELLER 1

Choi, Byung W  
Shine, Timothy M  
ElHariry, Iman  
Sowell, Margaret O

### ADDRESS

149 Beacon St #4  
183 Commonwealth Ave #1  
110 Stuart St #17A  
12 Gloucester St #4

### PRICE

\$1,075,000  
\$2,235,000  
\$1,610,000  
\$1,800,000

### BEACON HILL

Lui, Qinyan  
Maloney, Thomas M  
Patel, Jayeshbhai D  
Lee, Yu-Chi

Cui, Rena R  
Druss, Benjamin J  
Crowley, Charles B  
Gomez, Dagmar B

22 Irving St #1  
61 Mount Vernon St #G  
68 Phillips St #2  
32 Temple St #2

\$427,000  
\$830,000  
\$225,000  
\$640,000

### BAY VILLAGE/SOUTH END/KENMORE

Simson, Jacob  
Steiner, David  
Marsh, Regan H  
Curtis, Cynthia J  
Wang, Yanzhi  
Jacobson, Benjamin M  
Pomper, Steven D  
Kevan, Kelley A  
Kendall, Michael  
Kendall, Michael  
Diem-Nguyen, Tammy  
Jorgensen, Elisa M  
Kehoe, Jonathan  
Markowski, Michelle S  
Au, Ernie  
Dorfman, Michelle L  
Serone Westland LLC

Clymer, Jeff D  
Duncan, Daniel R  
Curtis, Cynthia J  
Bernstein, Daniel C  
Wu, Jiannan  
390 Windsor Pl 601  
Ryan, Ellen A  
Dhemecourt, Kirsten  
Salvatore, Gregory J  
Salvatore, Gregory J  
Perahya, Alp  
26 Rutland Square 3 RT  
Urbanista RT  
Baker, David G  
JP Property 1 LLC  
JP Property 1 LLC  
Chandler T 2

429 Columbus Ave #2  
148 Warren Ave #2  
12 Bradford St #2  
17 Bradford St #1  
75 Burbank St #401  
690 Commonwealth Ave #601  
11 Durham St #1  
46 E Springfield St #2  
103 Gainsborough St #402  
87 Gainsborough St #201  
485-495 Harrison Ave #208  
26 Rutland Sq #3  
1 Saint George St #3A  
35 Symphony Rd #B  
3531 Washington St #207  
3531 Washington St #222  
16-20 Westland Ave

\$1,974,000  
\$759,000  
\$1,313,000  
\$1,375,000  
\$495,000  
\$700,000  
\$1,225,000  
\$515,000  
\$590,000  
\$590,000  
\$1,225,000  
\$1,900,000  
\$1,049,000  
\$550,000  
\$627,000  
\$722,000  
\$24,000,000

### WATERFRONT/DOWNTOWN

Goodwin, Joseph K  
Jeong, Hu Y  
Rosenfeld, Luke  
Kasuli, Oli  
Caswell, Mark J  
Nina C Investment LLC  
Martin, Theresa

Unit 27D RT  
Nashed, Michael M  
Colacchio, Kimberly P  
Sarkis, George  
Wang, Tim  
Nancy I Brenner Wluka  
Sanderson Mary C Est

1 Avery St #27D  
2 Avery St #24A  
9-15 Battery St #8  
65 E India Row #7A  
85 E India Row #36D  
1 Franklin St #1004  
134-136 Fulton St #4

\$2,200,000  
\$1,000,000  
\$760,000  
\$649,000  
\$665,000  
\$1,775,000  
\$1,310,000



# BPL expanding online services during COVID-19 pandemic

By Lauren Bennett

As people and families remain inside to prevent the spread of COVID-19, many are looking for things to do. Lots of local organizations are offering at-home activities to keep people occupied, and the Boston Public Library (BPL) is no exception.

“While our buildings are closed for public service, the library is very much open,” said BPL president David Leonard. He said that the library team has been thinking about how to expand the library’s services in several different areas.

First, the BPL has increased the amount of content that is available for borrowing from its website, including e-books, movies, and audio books, as well as other resources like historical content for people to browse.

The second area relates to online services, Leonard said, which includes library programs that are typically only offered in person. “It’s been amazing for us to watch our staff, many for whom the focus was working with our patrons in person, now offering online story times, virtual book discussion groups, and running literacy classes,” he said.

The third area of expansion is related to outreach to some organizations who are “working with those most affected” by the pandemic, Leonard said, and might not have access to the internet.

“We’ve been able to arrange book care packages under our new Books for Boston program,” he said, which gets packages of books to places like Boston Health Care for the Homeless and the new Boston Hope field hospital set

up in the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center.

“We’re putting reading material in the hands of people that are going to be cared for, he said, and “not forgetting about the importance of reaching those or are most vulnerable.”

Leonard said that one of the biggest challenges of having to work around this pandemic and still be able to offer services to residents has been getting some of the staff up to speed with using technology. “Taking a 170-year-old institution; one that was partially doing online to almost exclusively online has been a big pivot for us,” he said. “We are incredibly proud of the work the staff is doing.”

Some library services, such as some of the online programs, do not require a library card to participate. Others, like borrowing ebooks or movies, do require a

card. Anyone who doesn’t

already have a Boston Library card can apply for one online, as well as renew an existing one.

You don’t even have to be a Boston resident to get one. “We offer cards to anyone who goes to school, lives, or works in Massachusetts,” Leonard explained.

“It’s been very cool to see people getting that creative and really offering something that gives parents a break,” Leonard said of the online programs for kids. He said that the BPL is looking at continuing to offer a mix of online programs and in-person programs once people are allowed to gather again, as it does offer a way for people who are unable to make an in person event to still participate.

“People these days have a mix of digital and personal, so it’s about finding the right balance and what will be the best for the months ahead,” he said.

The BPL also wants to help close the digital equality gap. “This is an opportunity to close that gap and ensure that we don’t leave people behind,” he said.

Statistics prove that people are interested in using these online services being offered. Leonard said there has been a growth in services since mid-March. “We had almost 200,000 digital checkouts since March 17,” he said, and more than 10,000 patrons have registered for new library cards.

“I think this just proves that the relevances of libraries is really unquestionable, particularly in this time,” he said. “Our librarians are still there, still working really hard, and are available to help patrons.”

Anyone with questions about library services or even tech help should email ask@bpl.org. Visit bpl.org to learn more about online programs, getting a virtual library card, and borrowing materials.

## CASTELLANI (from pg. 10)

tionship and what it was like for Frank to be in that world.”

Set mostly in Italy during the summer of 1953, the story also has an interwoven section about a fictional actress whom the duo meets in Italy and “takes under their wing,” he said. “Her sections are set in Boston in present-day, but Boston is never named,” he said. “She’s sort of a recluse living in

Boston; somebody from their past who was connected to Frank finds her and kinds of brings her back into the world a little bit.”

When he’s not writing novels, Castellani is the Artistic Director of creative writing nonprofit Grub-Street, where he as worked for nearly 20 years. “It’s the center of writing and reading in Boston,” he said. “It’s an incredibly supportive

community. So many Grubbies are on the must read list.”

He is also on the faculty and academic board of the Warren Wilson MFA Program, as well as the Bread Loaf Writers Conference.

Castellani said he always knew he wanted to be an author, after penning poems and stories and sharing them with people in middle school. He said that for him,

reading and writing coincided. “I became a bookworm the same moment I became a ‘writer,’” he said.

He also said that living in the South End certainly has its perks when it comes to having a creative mind, and that he and his partner feel “lucky” to have a condo in the neighborhood.

“The South End has a lively

concentration of writers and artists—you do feel that vibe as you walk through the city,” he said. “The South End Library has a wonderful author series that I’ve been a part of.” The South End Authors’ Book Festival also celebrates local writers, he added.

“It really does feel like a part of the city that values the contributions that artists have made.”

## For the Record

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

### •CONSTRUCTION

Due to the public health emergency caused by the spread of COVID-19, Mayor Walsh announced that he is extending the City of Boston’s order to pause non-essential construction for City of Boston permitted sites. The initial order announced on March 16th was set for 14 days and will now continue until further notice.

•From the April 15 St. Botolph Architectural Conservation District meeting, , 5:15 p.m. (via Zoom: [HTTPS://ZOOM.US/J/537349796](https://zoom.us/j/537349796)):

### DESIGN REVIEW

•20 Cumberland St. Proposed Work: At rear façade, construct a carport and roof deck.

### ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW

•3 Durham St.: At roof level, remove rotted freeze board and replace in kind

•9-17 Harcourt St.: At penthouse level, replace all windows on a non-contributing building for like windows.

From the April 16, 11 a.m., City Council Ways and Means Budget Working Session, virtual via Zoom meeting:

•Orders for the FY21 Operating Budget, including annual appropriations for departmental operations, for the School Department, and for other post-employment benefits (OPEB).

•Orders for the Capital Budget, including loan orders and lease-purchase agreements.

•Orders authorizing limits for revolving funds, including the Law Department, the Mayor’s Office of Tourism, and the Mayor’s Office of Arts & Culture.

From an April 17, 1 p.m., Council Housing and Community Development hearing, virtual via Zoom meeting:

Order for a hearing to discuss rent relief for commercial and residential tenants in City and BPDA owned properties. This matter is sponsored by Councilor Michelle Wu and was referred to the Committee on Housing and Community Development on April 8.

From the April 22, 10 a.m., Council Committee on Government Operations meeting, virtual meeting via Zoom:

The Committee on Government Operations will hold a working session on Docket #0232, order regarding a text amendment for the Boston Zoning Code Relative to Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing. The Chair of the Committee and Sponsor of the docket is Councilor Lydia Edwards.

From the April 23 Council Ways and Means Committee Budget Working Session:

•10 a.m. Public Facilities Department.

•1 p.m. Law Department, the Mayor’s Office of Tourism, Sports & Entertainment, and the Mayor’s Office of Arts & Culture.

### HELP COVID19 EFFORTS

•Stay home. If you must go outside, practice physical distancing from others (6 feet apart); avoid crowded places.

•Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds; use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol; avoid shaking hands

•Cover your coughs and sneezes; clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces; and avoid close contact with people who are sick.

•If you think you might be sick, please call your doctor or 311 to be connected to the Mayor’s Health Line 617-534-5050. Buoy Health has created a free online diagnostic tool which screens for COVID19 at [buoy.com/mass](https://buoy.com/mass).

•Donate supplies to first responders.

•Donate to the City of Boston Resiliency Fund.

•Volunteer with the City of Boston.

•Fill out the 2020 Census. The Census informs how billions of dollars in federal funds will be allocated by state, local and federal lawmakers annually for the next 10 years. It’s more critical than ever to ensure that all Bostonians are counted.

### •HOW TO REPORT A PROBLEM PROPERTY

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





# COMING SOON!

**73 MOUNT VERNON STREET #1**  
**3 BEDS | 3.5 BATHS | 3,082 SQFT**  
**\$4,295,000**



**20 CHESTNUT STREET #1**  
**4 BEDS | 3.5 BATHS | 3,640 SQFT**  
**\$7,995,000**



**17 LOUISBURG SQUARE**  
**5 BEDS | 3F 2H BATHS | 7,610 SQFT**  
**\$18,500,000**



**400 STUART STREET #PH2**  
**3 BEDS | 3.5 BATHS | 3,545 SQFT**  
**\$8,900,000**



**90 COMMONWEALTH AVE #2/3**  
**5 BEDS | 4.5 BATHS | 3,062 SQFT**  
**\$4,799,000**

