

THURSDAY, MAY 7, 2020

# THE BOSTON SUN

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SERVING BACK BAY - SOUTH END - FENWAY - KENMORE

## USES moves towards feeding, serving community online during pandemic

By Seth Daniel

United South End Settlements (USES) has reinvented, relocated and reallocated for more than 125 years, and the COVID-19 pandemic has been just another example of the nimbleness of the organization to serve the community.

Now, USES has restructured itself on the fly and launched the

neighbor2neighbor Fund to help support the community through online enrichment, coaching, grants and serving food.

“One thing I think is so remarkable is in our history over 125 years our ability to do great things through so much difficulty including the Great Depression, the

(USES, Pg. 5)

## Despite empty roads, state's traffic fatality rate doubles in April, MassDOT says

By Lauren Bennett

With COVID-19 causing less traffic on roads across the Commonwealth, speeding and traffic fatalities have increased over the past month, MassDOT said on Monday in an online press conference.

Both Gov. Charlie Baker and Boston Mayor Martin Walsh have addressed residents and warned them about the dangers of speeding through empty streets.

Massachusetts typically has one of the lowest traffic fatality rates in the United States and is known

for having some of the safest roads in the country, MassDOT State Highway Administrator Jonathan Gulliver said at a virtual media availability on May 4.

“This past month,” he said, saw a “pretty disturbing trend in the way people have been driving.” He said that preliminary numbers indicate that fatalities on Massachusetts roadways have doubled for the month of April. He said that while the raw number fatalities are similar, there are only half as many drivers on the road as

(TRAFFIC FATALITY RATES, Pg. 3)

## Walsh provides testing, Boston Public School updates

By Lauren Bennett

Mayor Walsh said on May 4 that while Boston “may be on the verge of a downward slope,” it’s “not time to ease up” on social distancing and other protective measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

He said that as the Commonwealth and the City plan for a phased reopening, “we all have

to stay the course right now so we can save lives. If we don’t, we risk dealing with a second and even worse wave of the virus.”

He said on Wednesday afternoon that the average new cases in the city have “leveled off a bit overall,” and the City is “moving in the right direction,” but the curve is bending slowly.

(WALSH UPDATES, Pg. 4)

## A BIG THANK YOU TO NURSES



PHOTO COURTESY JOHN COYNE

Boston Red Sox thank nurses with a lawn message. The outfield grass was mowed with the team logo, a heart and nurses to show their appreciation for all nurses do.

## D-4 Police see crime go down, but frustrations are up

By Seth Daniel

Though crime has dropped in an impressive way on paper over the last six weeks, D-4 Capt. Steve Sweeney said it doesn’t mean that there is any shortage of frustration on the beat – including good investigations that have been lost in courthouse policy.

Sweeney appeared on Tuesday night before the first online

Blackstone/Franklin Neighborhood Association meeting, which saw about 35 participants at its peak and was deemed a success in the same way last week’s online Worcester Square Area Neighborhood Association (WSANA) was as well.

“Crime is down, but at the same time we had three commercial breaks last night (May 4),” he said. “We arrested a guy, Josh Sil-

verman, for three breaks a couple of days ago. He was arrested yesterday, and then released yesterday. He’s a serial B&E guy. We think he did the one Monday night. You see Commissioner Gross on TV talking about this. We need help from the courts.”

Sweeney said that isn’t a common thing that happens, but it is

(FRUSTRATIONS, Pg. 7)

## Construction return in Boston to be incremental through May

By Seth Daniel

The Walsh Administration is sending out a set of timelines this week as preliminary guidance to construction companies as to how essential construction projects will return throughout the month of May.

Since April 27, all construction sites allowed to work have had to submit a COVID-19 work plan, which is the same method being

used for state construction projects as well. City officials in the letter said they are evaluating how that has gone and are looking to broaden who can work.

“This effectiveness of, and compliance with the policy will continue to be evaluated as the City looks to broaden its categories of allowed construction work to further align with the Commonwealth,” read the letter. “Now that the COVID-19 Safety Policy for Construction

has been implemented, and current construction is in compliance with the new mandates, the City will incrementally expand its categories of allowed construction to further align with the broader categories of construction defined as essential by the State.”

The timeline actually began on Tuesday, May 5. At that time, all essential projects with filed

(CONSTRUCTION, Pg. 3)

# EDITORIAL

## THIS SUNDAY IS MOTHER'S DAY

During this time of unprecedented upheaval because of the novel coronavirus pandemic, the rituals that most of us traditionally follow either have been eliminated or drastically changed because of the need to practice physical distancing.

So too, the manner in which we observe Mother's Day, which is this Sunday, May 10, will be different from all others before it. The traditional family get-togethers that we usually observe will be cancelled or modified to a great extent because of the situation in which we find ourselves.

However, it often is said that necessity is the mother of invention (no pun intended) and in that spirit we're sure that all of our readers will find a way to honor their mothers in some fashion, whether it be something as simple as a phone call or by a family gathering via Zoom.

Oftentimes, the smallest of gestures can mean the most.

We hope too, that Mother's Day this year will serve as a way for all of us to think about what is most important in our lives -- our family, friends, and loved ones -- as we struggle to make sense of these turbulent times amidst a pandemic.

We know we join with all of our readers in wishing all of our moms a happy Mother's Day.

## THIS IS NO TIME FOR HOOVERISM

Herbert Hoover had been President for about seven months when the stock market crashed in October, 1929. Although there have been many causes attributed to the onset of the Great Depression, the crash generally is viewed as the trigger point for what still rates as the greatest economic downturn in our nation's history.

However, even as the economy continued to sink in the aftermath of the crash, Hoover adopted a hands-off policy toward the economy. Although Herbert Hoover was a good man with lots of government experience prior to becoming president, he refused to take action of any kind, held back by a combination of a lack of imagination and his rigid, free-market view of the U.S. economy.

Hoover failed to recognize the severity of the situation or leverage the power of the federal government to address it. He was widely viewed as callous and insensitive toward the suffering of millions of desperate Americans.

By the time Hoover left office in early 1933, unemployment in the U.S. had reached 25% and millions of Americans literally were starving. The iconic photos from that era of Americans lined up for handouts from the soup kitchens that were operated by private charities still are seared into our collective memory even today.

What brought to mind the inaction of Herbert Hoover during the Great Depression were comments made this past Sunday by Lawrence Kudlow, the former TV personality who now is one of the chief economic advisers to President Trump.

Basically, Kudlow said the Trump administration is taking a wait-and-see approach before committing to more federal support for Americans as the United States continues to weather the coronavirus crisis and the accompanying economic damage.

"Well, I don't want to get too far ahead of the story, Jake," Kudlow said to CNN's Jake Tapper. "There may well be additional legislation. There's a kind of pause period right now."

But "getting ahead" of this crisis precisely is what policymakers need to do. While it certainly is true that the federal government has spent trillions of dollars in various ways to assist Americans, it also is true that the degree of economic assistance -- as well as a coordinated plan -- that will be necessary simply to keep Americans fed during the ongoing crisis will require additional trillions of dollars as the economy plunges into free-fall without a parachute in the months ahead.

The lesson of the Great Depression is that a national government cannot be a passive bystander during a time of economic collapse. Speedy, forceful, and creative action is required today to prevent an already-calamitous situation from becoming worse tomorrow.

## GUEST OP-ED

### Optimism in the face of uncertainty

By William Brownsberger

I am fundamentally optimistic about our future because I see that most of us do understand that we are in difficult and uncertain times. That realism is what will get us through.

I see realism in my correspondence from constituents and that realism was quantified in a recent survey I ran online to which 2,662 constituents responded. In that sample, 95% support Massachusetts' social distancing policies or feel we should go further and 96% expect we will take a long time to get back to normal or will have to adapt to a permanent new normal.

I am entirely convinced by the expert opinion that our policies have saved many lives. Without social distancing many more would have gotten the disease simultaneously, overwhelming our health care system. And given the sustained plateau of high infection rates in Massachusetts, now is not the time to let up.

As clear as it is in my mind that we have the right strategy at the

moment, I am completely uncertain beyond the next few weeks. We will just have to keep looking at the facts as best we can discern them, listening to the experts to the extent they agree, and working together to make decisions.

Most of the efforts of the Commonwealth's leaders in the public and private sectors have been devoted to solving immediate problems -- growing testing operations, growing supplies of personal protective equipment, growing capacity in the hospitals to handle the surge, and providing immediate relief for the newly unemployed. But as it now seems that we will get through the surge without a systemic breakdown, people are starting to ask questions about the future.

At this point, we have many more questions than answers. No one knows the future course of the epidemic. We do know that a majority of people have not yet been infected, so there is the potential for a sustained continuation of the epidemic. Even if we get it fully under control, as it surges in different parts of the country and around the world, it will have the

potential to return here.

We do not know whether people who have experienced the illness will sustain immunity. Coronavirus disease could turn out to be like the flu but more dangerous -- continuing to mutate, continuing to return seasonally with greater or lesser virulence, reinfecting people repeatedly, and defeating our scientists' best efforts to develop a completely effective treatment or vaccination.

We have recently enjoyed a period of enormous prosperity where almost everyone was working and much of the employment was in crowded service sector venues -- coffee shops, restaurants, hotels, air travel, resorts, conventions, exercise clubs.

Even if social distancing policies are lifted, many people will continue to reduce their exposure to coronavirus. Even when previously healthy businesses reopen, the reduced volume may make them unprofitable. In time, new business models will emerge, but no one can see those models clearly yet. How the continued business

(Op-Ed, Pg. 3)

## GUEST OP-ED

### Boston pets and COVID-19

By Martha Smith-Blackmore, DVM,

The National Veterinary Services Laboratory of the USDA announced on April 22, 2020 that two pet cats from different households in the United States were confirmed cases of COVID-19 infection. These are the first pets in the U.S. with positive tests for the virus that causes COVID-19 in people. Subsequently, a family dog from Chapel Hill, North Carolina tested positive. It appears that cats and dogs can become infected, but currently we have no information that suggests the virus can go from pets to people.

If you are sick with symptoms of COVID-19 (fever, dry cough, difficulty breathing, tiredness, nasal congestion or runny nose, sore throat, diarrhea, aches and pains) you should limit contact with pets and other animals, just as you would restrict your contact with other people. When possi-

ble, have another family or household member care for the animals while you are sick. If you have a service animal or you must care for pets, wear a face mask or covering; don't share food, kiss, or hug animals; and wash your hands before and after any contact with your pet, service animal, or other animals. If you are sick, you should not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, or bedding with other people or pets in your home.

Good general safety practice includes not allowing pets to interact with people or other animals outside the household; keeping cats indoors to prevent them from interacting with other animals or people; walking dogs on a leash, maintaining at least 6 feet from other people and animals; avoiding public places where large numbers of people and dogs gather.

Keeping pets indoors or under close supervised conditions

not only protects them against COVID-19 infection, it prevents them from suffering other harms commonly encountered outside.

Now is a great time to practice teaching your pets skills and tricks with positive reinforcement, and to spend extra time at home grooming your pets. Walking your dog is important for both animal and human health and well-being. Love your animals, keep them close to you (unless you are sick!), away from other people and together all of us, whether we have two legs or four, will get through this together!

For more information about COVID-19 and pets, visit the CDC and the AVMA.

For additional information on resources and COVID-19, visit [boston.gov/coronavirus](http://boston.gov/coronavirus).

Martha Smith-Blackmore, DVM, Boston Animal Care and Control

## TRAFFIC FATALITY RATES (from pg. 1)

there normally would be.

“Congestion is not an issue for most people driving during their regular trips,” he said. “As a result, we’re seeing that the driving conditions across the board have changed. There are not a lot of people out there, but there are people out there and they’ve changed the way they’re traveling.”

Gulliver said that there were 28 deaths on highways and local roads in April. Of those deaths, 18 were vehicle operators, four were passengers, two were motorcyclists, three were pedestrians, and one was a bicyclist. He added that about a third of the fatalities were on interstate highways and about two thirds of them were on local roads, and the problem areas are not concentrated in one particular area of the state.

“Be cautious and mindful that there are people,” Gulliver said to motorists, adding that speed and distraction are a main cause of these fatalities because roads are much more empty than usual. “We want you to be safe.”

He said that especially with kids learning at home rather than at school, they are much more likely to be out in yards playing, walking, and riding bikes, and people need to be aware that they are around. “Slow down, pay attention to your surroundings...You don’t have the road completely to yourself,” he said.

He said as a general rule, states that have more congestion tend to have less fatalities, and there are “not as many high speed crashes on our roadways due to that congestion,” but more people are speeding on local roads because cars are not backed up, and “that tends to be a dangerous situation.”

Gulliver said that MassDOT continues to work with both state and local police to identify hot spots and where more targeted enforcements are needed.

“Reduced traffic volume is no excuse for excessive speed,” Jeff

Larason, Director of Highway Safety for the Executive Office of Safety and Security, said in a statement. “We’re reminding everyone to drive responsibly, wear a seat belt, and watch the road for cyclists and pedestrians.”

In April, two of the 28 deaths were in Boston, one in the South End at Mass Avenue and Harrison Avenue on April 22, where a bicyclist was killed, and one at 415 D Street in South Boston on April 8 where a vehicle operator was killed.

Mayor Marty Walsh reminded residents on Monday that the City speed limit is 25mph, and stressed that there are “lots of kids around.” He also said that if speed traps are necessary in the City, they will be used.

“The trend that we’re seeing here in Massachusetts does not appear to be unique as far as fatalities go,” Gulliver said. “States not as congested as Massachusetts are not seeing the uptick.”

The COVID-19 crisis hit the Commonwealth very abruptly, which did not give drivers much time to adapt to less cars on the road, Gulliver said. He said that during the recession a little over 10 years ago, changes happened much more gradually and people were able to slowly get used to them.

Gulliver said that “nearly overnight,” Massachusetts saw a 50 percent decrease in volume on the state’s roads.

“This is a serious topic,” he said, and stressed that people should not “take advantage of the current level of traffic.”

He said that “the last thing we want” is for everyone to have followed all social distancing and other health safety guidelines and then have deaths on the highway.

“Highway safety, road safety is something we take really seriously at MassDOT,” Gulliver said. “We want to do everything we can to dial this back and get us back to being number one in the nation for roadway safety.”

## OP-ED (from pg. 2)

difficulties will ripple through the economy is another fundamental uncertainty.

On top of the scientific and economic uncertainties, we have political uncertainty. While the federal government has stepped up significantly so far, providing enormous and necessary relief to the millions of newly unemployed people, we cannot predict how long that consensus for action will last or how far it will extend. And those political uncertainties are replicated across the world.

In Massachusetts, we have a Governor and an administration around him that are trying to

understand reality and pro-actively respond to the facts as they emerge. I see the same realism among my colleagues in the legislature and also in the judicial branch. I hear the same realism in most of my correspondence with constituents. And I see a bias towards action – at all levels, most people are responding to reality and doing what they can do to solve the problems before them.

Our active realism is what gives me a lot of faith in our future.

*William Brownsberger is a State Senator for the State of Massachusetts.*

## CONSTRUCTION (from pg. 1)

COVID plans were able to begin preparing their sites for the proper safety measures.

However, on May 18, they are considering allowing construction on essential sites to begin again if they are permitted, have a COVID plan and are prepared to implement that plan safely. The return to work on May 18 will be for construction on hospitals, public schools, residential buildings [1-3 units], road and utility work, or other outdoor/open air-work such as steel erection, roofing and constructing foundations.

Then on May 26, the City will allow the construction activities to commence using safety plans.

“This incremental approach will provide the time necessary to allow complex, large-scale devel-

opment an opportunity to educate their workforce, safely remobilize and implement their site-specific Safety Plan,” read the letter.

The enforcement of the return to construction will be done by the Department of Public Works and the Inspectional Services Department. They will monitor safety plan. Any contractor that doesn’t comply could have a suspension of work, or could get a permit revoked.

The letter stressed that worker safety will be first, and that Mayor Martin Walsh has partnered with a Boston hospital to do testing of construction workers.

“As essential construction activities commence, the City will continue to focus on the health and well-being of Boston residents,

worker protections and the safety of Boston construction sites,” read the letter. “To further ensure safety of essential work, Mayor Martin J. Walsh has partnered with the Tufts Medical Center to provide testing services for the industry at the Tufts COVID-19 Screening Clinic at the Josiah Quincy Elementary School located...in Chinatown.”

At a press conference on Wednesday, Mayor Walsh reiterated that as of May 6, “all active work is still currently limited to essential projects only,” and all projects are required to submit safety plans to the city. He did not go into any detail about the plan, saying only that “we will have more to share on this in the coming weeks.”



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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.

Trust that we are in this for the long-haul, right by your side. Our branch office doors will remain open as long as we can assure the safety of you and our employees. Online Banking, Mobile Banking, ATMs and our Automated 24-Hour Telephone Banking System (866-774-7705) are always an alternative banking option for you - visit [ebsb.com](http://ebsb.com) for more information. As always, your deposits are 100% guaranteed by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation and the Depositors Insurance Fund.

I understand there are a bunch of unknowns with this pandemic but know this; East Boston Savings Bank has endured many devastating events in the past and has come through each of these stronger and more committed to our customers than ever.

Thank you for trusting in East Boston Savings Bank. Stay safe and we look forward to continuing working hard for you.

Sincerely,

Richard J. Gavegnano  
President, CEO and Chairman  
East Boston Savings Bank

# Downtown, Fenway remain low in COVID-19 cases even with expanded testing

By Seth Daniel

Aside from the anomaly of homeless residents being tested in the South End at the shelters, the downtown neighborhoods continue to report some of the lowest numbers of COVID-19 cases in the area.

The Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC) put out its weekly neighborhood COVID-19 data on Friday, with statistics valid as of April 30 at 2:30 p.m. In those statistics, the downtown neighborhoods continued to show low rates of infection. Fenway had the lowest rate of infection in the city at 32.2 per 10,000 (176 cases) and

Downtown/Back Bay/Beacon Hill had the second lowest with 53.7 per 10,000 (299 cases). That put those neighborhoods as some of the least affected areas in the city.

The South End logged a rate of 186 per 10,000 and 665 cases. That, of course, is buoyed by the priority testing of many homeless residents in the City shelters and at Pine Street Inn and Boston Medical Center. Those tests are assigned a South End zip code and are reported in the South End numbers.

Those low numbers have come even with a good amount of testing being done in the neighborhoods.

The Downtown/Back Bay/Beacon Hill area had 1,810 tests performed, and a low positive rate

of 16.2 percent. Fenway had 889 tests done and a positive rate of 17.2 percent. Both of those were very low and far below the city-wide average positive rate of 32.1 percent.

The South End showed 2,124 tests performed and a positive rate of 29.5 percent, still well below the city average despite containing results of such a vulnerable population.

East Boston had the highest positive rate in the city.

There had been 2,065 tests performed in Eastie, and 45.5 percent were positive. Parts of Dorchester (west side) and Mattapan also tested above 40 percent positive.

•In other news from the data

released on Friday, there still is a skyrocketing infection rate for older adults citywide in Boston. For those over 80, the rate is now 495.7 per 10,000. That's much higher than even those 70-79, who logged a rate of 270.8 per 10,000.

The infections rates were all more than 200 per 10,000 for those in Boston age 50 and older.

More than one in three COVID-19 cases were in persons age 60 and above.

Meanwhile, the rates for younger people are very low still, at 20.1 per 10,000 for age 0-19, and 80.1 per 10,000 for those 20-29. The most cases by number come from those age 50-59, who account for 17.4 percent of all cases.

Gender-wise, there are actually more women than men with the virus, some 49.6 percent being women and 47.2 percent being men. However, the infection rate for men is slightly higher than for women.

The racial statistics still show many more Black/African American residents who have the virus than any other racial group, accounting for 29.3 percent of infections. Whites accounted for 20 percent, and Latino residents accounted for 14.1 percent, with Asians logging 2.3 percent of cases.

Racial data is incomplete though, with 26.6 percent of cases having no racial information available.

## WALSH UPDATES (from pg. 1)

"We are only beginning towards where we need to be," he added.

He said that "there's still too many people not wearing masks," and urged people to provide more distance between each other when outdoors. "Be cautious and mindful," he said.

Walsh said that the City continues to rely on the Boston Hope field hospital at the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center, and as of Wednesday there were 166 patients being served there, 81 on the shelter side and 85 on the hospital side.

Coming out of a weekend of nice weather, Walsh thanked "everyone who did their part this weekend; keeping up with social distancing and covering their faces."

He also thanked his neighborhood liaisons, who distributed more than 70,000 booklets to convenience stores, banks and food distribution sites across the city over the weekend. The booklets include information on how to stay safe, make face coverings, and practice social distancing.

After Governor Baker announced last week an order for everyone over the age of two to wear face coverings in public when six feet of distance between people cannot be maintained, Walsh emphasized the importance of wearing a face covering while walking on the street, while riding the MBTA, while in the grocery store or pharmacy, and "anytime you are outside your home when you cannot ensure enough distance between yourself and others."

He also stressed once again the importance of disposing of gloves and masks properly, as leaving them on the ground is not sanitary or "fair" to those who have to pick them up.

Wednesday marked National Nurses Day, and the start to National Nurses Week. Mayor Walsh said that "no one is working harder than our nurses right now," and "no one is more indispensable" to Boston's communities. "We have some of the best nurses in the world," he said. "Thank you for your great service."

### TESTING UPDATE

As of May 5, Boston had 10,241 confirmed cases of COVID-19, and 449 people had died.

Walsh said on May 4 that 28,000 people have been tested in Boston, which is four percent of the City's population. Last week, the City was able to increase testing by 44 percent, and Walsh said that the positive rate is at 32 percent and "trending down." He said that numbers of positive tests were lower in Mattapan, Hyde Park, and West Roxbury, but they were higher in the Fenway after testing late last week. The percentage of positive tests was lower last week in East Boston as well, but the neighborhood still has the highest number of positive tests in all of Boston, Walsh said.

By the end of this week there will be 19 total testing sites across the City, Walsh said, including more sites in Jamaica Plain and Charlestown. He told residents that if they think they need a test, they should contact their local health center ahead of time as "you cannot show up and just get a test."

On Wednesday, Walsh announced the expansion of mobile testing in the City, and a goal to test 150 residents a day, six days a week.

Additionally, "As part of the ongoing work to make testing available for groups at risk of faster

spread and more severe illness from COVID-19, the City will work to complete universal testing for individuals experiencing homelessness and then begin universal testing for other high-impact populations and sites, including first responders," the City said in a statement.

More than 1800 homeless individuals have also been tested so far, and two have passed away.

"The antibody testing initiative is also wrapping up," Walsh said on Monday, which will give the City "a bit of a snapshot of where we stand with people." He said a summary of these results of the testing of 1000 asymptomatic residents will be made publicly available. The City announced on Wednesday that they also hope to expand antibody testing to "targeted populations such as first responders" once this initial study is wrapped up.

### DISTRIBUTION OF GRANTS TO OVER 500 SMALL BUSINESSES

Mayor Walsh announced on May 5 that the City's Small Business Relief Fund will be "distributing \$2 million in grants to 561 small businesses most directly impacted by closures, policies, or general loss of revenues due to the COVID-19 pandemic," according to a release from the City.

The businesses are located in every neighborhood of the city, and the most affected industries include hospitality, personal care, arts and recreation, retail, and healthcare and social assistance, according to the City, and more than 75 percent of businesses who were awarded funding have fewer than five employees, many of which had trouble accessing federal assistance.

"The Small Business Relief

Fund grants are critical to help struggling small businesses across the city address challenges brought on by COVID-19," said Mayor Walsh. "These businesses are the backbone of our economy, and the lifeblood of our communities. I'm proud we are able to assist them during this time, and am grateful to our partners who have stepped up in a big way to support Boston's neighborhood business community."

Additionally, the Boston Resiliency Fund has raised \$29.4 million dollar so far, and over \$16 million has been distributed. Walsh said that more than half of the \$16 million has gone to food and basic needs for residents who need it most.

### BPS UPDATE

Walsh announced that an updated learning plan around attendance, grading, assignments, and scheduling went into effect on May 4.

"We did this because when we shut schools down, we hoped we'd be closed through the end of April, but then we had to change the way we do learning," he said.

Walsh also said that no student will be held back this year and all will move onto the next grade, but if parents or guardians feel that their child would benefit from repeating a grade, that can be discussed.

A plan to honor graduating seniors is also in development, Walsh said. "We're working on some special ways to celebrate them and their achievements."

He also thanked all teachers "for stepping up in this crisis," as this week is National Teachers Week. He also thanked students and parents for their "continued cooperation" as remote learning

continues for the rest of the school year.

Walsh also talked about a special benefit authorized by the federal CARES Act, the Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer Card, or P-EBT, which is available for all BPS and charter school students, he said. If a family is currently receiving SNAP benefits, it will automatically be added to their cards in the amount of \$5.70 per child per school day for as long as schools are closed, which comes out to \$28.50 per child per week.

No applications are required to receive this extra benefit, and P-EBT cards can be used anywhere where SNAP cards are currently used, he added. Cards will be mailed to families who are not currently enrolled in the SNAP program, and the use of these cards does not impact immigration status.

Additionally, over 58,000 meals were delivered to seniors through Meals on Wheels last week, Walsh said.

### TRAFFIC AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Walsh has advised Bostonians and others driving in the city that empty roads are not a reason to speed, and the City speed limit is 25 mph. Two people were killed in motor vehicle related accidents in the month of April, and he also said there has been an uptick in shootings throughout the city.

With the weather warming up, more kids are outside playing, and Walsh said that motorists need to slow down and be aware of their surroundings. He said that if speed traps are necessary, they will be set out in the City.

"Be very careful," Walsh said. "We don't want any of our little ones hurt."

# Charlestown company offers online ordering of produce and specialty foods for next-day pickup, donates food to healthcare workers

Staff report

Consumers can now order a self-described “chef’s selection” of fresh fruit, vegetables and specialty food online for next-day pickup from a Charlestown-based company.

Located at 18 Bunker Hill Industrial Park, Costa Fruit & Produce is offering its selection of the highest quality produce, artisan cheese, meats and ingredients for online ordering at <https://costafarmersmarket.com/> Monday

through Thursday from noon to 4 p.m.

Selections include the 8.5-pound Savor’s Market Meat Box for \$50, with one pound of Savor’s ground sirloin, two Choice 8-ounce New York strip steaks, a 3.5-pound whole Giannone chicken, one pound of bacon, one pound of boneless skinless chicken breast and one pound of boneless skinless chicken thighs; the Fresh Fruit Box for \$25, with one pineapple or melon, six pieces of stone fruit, six apples, six oranges, one container of berries, two pieces of

topical fruit and one bag of grapes; the Fresh Veggie Box for \$25, with lettuce or greens, tomatoes, cucumbers, broccoli, two onions, one pound of carrots, two avocados, four squash or zucchini, two peppers and five pounds of potatoes; and the Fresh Produce Box for \$40, with one order of lettuce or baby greens, two onions, tomatoes, broccoli, two peppers, two cucumbers, one pineapple or melon, six pieces of stone fruit, six apples, six oranges, one container of berries and one bag of grapes, among other options.

“We hope that by providing an alternative to shopping at a traditional market, we will make it easier for communities to maintain social distancing and still obtain delicious fresh foods,” Manny Costa, the company’s CEO and president said in a press release.

And Costa is also showing its appreciation for the healthcare profession by donating Fresh Nutra-Snack kits to local hospital workers in the Boston area. The kits are produced at Costa’s onsite, SQF certified processing facility and contain fresh fruit, juice and

yogurt – all washed, sealed and ready to eat for workers on the go.

“Healthcare workers are putting themselves at risk every day fighting the COVID-19 virus. In appreciation of their heroic selfless effort we are happy to help where we can,” Costa said in a press release.

Costa is also providing their drivers with the snack kits as they service essential workers throughout New England.

## USES (from pg. 1)

Recession and other things,” said Director Maicharia Weir Lytle. “We’ve always made it to the other end of the challenges.”

It seems this time is no different for USES, as they have started a

new Fund in partnership with the United Way that will help to serve the families throughout the community.

Weir Lytle said USES had to shut down its operations in

March, with the last day of programs being on March 16. A week later came Gov. Charlie Baker’s shutdown of most non-essential businesses, which included USES. That didn’t mean they were going to sit on the sidelines of the current crisis.

Using online meeting technology, they began to meet to figure out how they would respond to support the families they serve. Immediately, they began re-training employees and now 13 members of the staff have trained as Family Support Advocates to provide coaching to parents.

Those workers were formerly in early childhood care, at reception and in the after-school programs. However, Weir Lytle said the greatest need clearly had been helping families in crisis.

“We found 35 percent of our families we’ve been working with have lost their jobs or had their hours reduced,” she said. “The new navigators we have now have been able to help families get in touch with services and benefits like Unemployment Insurance.”

That led to the neighbor2neighbor Fund, which USES is raising money for right now.

Already, they have been able to give out \$500 grants to 25 families through the generosity of a private funding partner. They have also given out seven mini-grants from the actual Fund – which has an average of \$250 to be given out.

That Fund is meant to also assist those families who are facing financial difficulties due to the COVID-19 response. That could be rent, bills, utilities and other expenses that are now coming up.

“The biggest item of help that people need for support is helping to pay rent or bills,” said Weir Lytle. “There is the forgiveness now on many of those things, but



USES Director Maicharia Weir Lytle helping with deliveries last week.

folks don’t want to fall behind. They will have to repay it at some point. It’s important to make sure families aren’t burdened later, especially with so much job loss.”

A great deal of activity has also been happening at the USES building, where groups of staff and volunteers are helping to distribute bags of food to families in a partnership with the YMCA and City Fresh. They are preparing 50

boxes of food for families in need, and 150 pre-packaged meals for children. This happens one time a week and has proven critical.

“They are preparing the food and our staff and volunteers are working together to literally drop the food door-to-door. It’s no-contact delivery and it’s been incredible and we’re trying to continue it.”

Virtual learning has also been front and center for the families that are served by USES. Through online networks, they have been doing circle time with the kids. There is an online curriculum that runs every day and has many learning opportunities and craft programs.

“This is one way for young children to stay connected with the teachers and their peers during this time.”

USES is actively looking for donations from the community to continue their work. To donate, go to USES.org and click on the ‘donate’ button. Anyone with any questions can e-mail Weir Lytle at [mweirlytle@uses.org](mailto:mweirlytle@uses.org).



USES Director of Operations Clara Garcia helping with the Friday food distribution program. More than 50 boxes of food and 150 meals are delivered door-to-door.



The USES building has become a major food distribution center for families in the South End and Lower Roxbury. Deliveries go out once a week.

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# RE-INVENTING EDUCATION:

## BPS Remote Learning Plan starts this week, many elements will remain in the future

By Seth Daniel

With more than 40,000 ChromeBooks now delivered and in the hands of students all over Boston, Supt. Brenda Cassellius told the media Boston Public Schools (BPS) are ready to roll out Phase 2 of remote learning that will play out until the end of the school term in June.

That plan will also be bolstered by robust summer learning opportunities provided by BPS and many community partners throughout the city.

“We know the last month has been really, really hard on our families our teachers and our staff,” she said. “We want to bring back

some predictability in the next plan. Phase 2 of remotely learning is what we hope it will be until the end of the year.”

One thing they are hoping the new Phase 2 home learning program will bring is a standard across the city in every school with more uniform expectations. One complaint over the last month has been that some schools came up with a very robust, fun and challenging curriculum very fast with daily assignments. Meanwhile, other schools struggled to simply contact families and provide simple instructions.

“This will bring more predictability because we created structured learning,” she said. “We also



BPS Supt. Brenda Cassellius on a call with the media last Friday explaining how the district's Remote Learning Plan will roll out this week, a Phase 2 of learning from home. It is expected to provide more predictability, more challenge to students and also – she said – it is here to stay.

have master schedules so there are no duplicate times scheduled... Some were reporting they had two classes at the same exact time. This schedule should clear that up.”

The general flow for the online day will be from 9 to noon in the mornings, with a one-hour lunch break, and then back to work from 1-4 p.m. However, different schools have structured their time with some variation – particularly by grade level. The idea, she said, mostly with that timeframe is to provide a little more structure than has been provided so far.

The Boston Teacher's Union (BTU) has an agreement with BPS in a memorandum to their contract to provide at least three hours of synchronous (Google Classroom/non-live) learning per day, and one hour of a-synchronous (live classes, face-to-face) learning per day.

Teachers across the district are being asked to differentiate their students by using information they already have gleaned from September through March – prior to COVID-19 closures. That will

result in three tiers of instruction. Tier 1 will be general instruction, with live classes and Google Classroom postings and recorded videos. Some students will need no more than that. However, Tier 2 will involve students who need interventions in subject matter, supports or are struggling with material. They can be helped in one-on-one meetings or in small group meetings with the teacher or a specialist. Meanwhile, Tier 3 will be students who have not signed into online school or the teacher cannot contact.

Attendance will be different, and will be done in K-5 by classroom teachers, and done in grades 6-12 by subject matter. Attendance will be counted if a student attends a face-to-face class and checks in appropriately, or if they successfully turned in homework and assignments – even if they didn't participate in the live classes.

For the senior class – the Class of 2020 – Cassellius said they have something very special in the works, but are not able to release

the full plan yet.

“We've been spending a lot of time talking with our students, our teachers and our headmasters about this,” she said. “They would like to have in-person graduations because it's a major part of the year and a huge milestone. Right now, it's not fully ready. We have said we're committed to doing something very special district-wide for the Class of 2020.”

She said it will be something that is in conjunction with outside partners in the city. It will include a commencement with entertainment, signing and other special touches. It will be announced soon, she said.

Moreover, she said what they have learned overall is that education – maybe more than the other parts of life – will be radically changed. The trial by fire transition to technology will change how parent-teacher conferences are held, how classroom space is allocated, and how parent engagement is handled.

“I think right now we are reinventing education,” she said. “We are learning so much from this process. It presents such an incredible opportunity to learn and innovate. We're going to be 1-to-1 with technology. The way we now engage with our community and parents is going to probably expand...What is here is to stay.”

Meanwhile, BPS officials said they would be offering a robust learning experience during the summer, doubling their normal offerings with community partners like the Private Industry Council and others. That will help students who want to continue on to catch up or to not fall backward – which is going to be inevitable.

“We are prepared to offer a lot of summer learning experiences,” said Lindsa McIntyre of the BPS leadership team. “We plan on doubling what we normally do.”

## USES Reimagined.

### The neighbor2neighbor Fund for Families helps USES:

- Engage youth in remote learning and enrichment
- Provide one-on-one financial and family support coaching sessions to parents
- Award mini-grants to families who've been impacted by COVID-19
- Enhance program quality through professional development opportunities for our staff; recently trained 13 members of our staff as Family Support Advocates to provide coaching to parents
- Provide children and their families with nutritious and healthy food



To donate to the n2n Fund for Families or to learn more on how we can support you, please visit [www.uses.org/neighbor2neighbor-fund-for-families](http://www.uses.org/neighbor2neighbor-fund-for-families) or email Maicharia Weir Lytle, [mwl@uses.org](mailto:mwl@uses.org).



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# \$1-million Community Preservation grant earmarked for project that would bring library to Chinatown

By Dan Murphy

A mixed-use development that promises to bring a long-awaited public library and much-needed affordable housing to Chinatown is set to receive \$1 million as one of the projects earmarked for grant money from the Community Preservation Funds for fiscal '20.

The city's Community Preservation Committee (CPC) has recommended awarding an Affordable Housing Grant in that sum to

help underwrite the construction of a 350-foot-tall building proposed for 288-298 Tremont St. (a/k/a Parcel 12C), Sheila Dillon, Chief of Housing and Director of Neighborhood Development, said Tuesday during a virtual meeting sponsored by the City Council Committee on Community Preservation Act.

The project would consist of up to 168 affordable rental and condo units; as many as 340 off-street public parking spaces; and

up to 8,000 square feet of community space, which is anticipated to accommodate Chinatown's neighborhood branch of the Boston Public Library, as well as retail space and a hotel with up to 200 rooms.

Construction is set to begin in mid-2021, Dillon said.

"It's been so long that Chinatown hasn't had a public library, and now we're finally getting one," said City Councilor Ed Flynn, who credited this longtime dream

becoming a reality to the hard work of Mayor Martin Walsh, the CPC and the Chinatown residential community.

"I particularly want to thank Sheila for her close attention to affordable housing around Chinatown," Flynn added.

The Asian Community Development Corporation is also slated to receive a \$500,000 Recreational Use and Open Space grant for the Chinatown Backyard to transform a vacant lot on Hudson Street into a community garden, playspace and public art space.

City Councilor Kenzie Bok said she was pleased with the CPC's recommendations to award a \$4 million Affordable Housing grant to the ONE+ Program, which provides access to affordable loans to first-time home buyers in the city, as well to award a \$95,000 Historic Preservation grant for repairs to the floor-board structure of the Gibson House Museum in the Back Bay.

"The Gibson House Museum is such a great little treasure," Councilor Bok said. "I'm happy we were able to find a way to support it in the budget."

Councilor Bok also voiced her support for a proposed \$10,000 Recreational Use and Open Space grant for the Esplanade Association to plant 27 mature trees in the park, as well as for a recommended \$35,000 grant to the Fenway Civic Association for irrigation installation at the Harry Ellis Dickson Park in the Fenway.

The Francis Dane House at 532 Massachusetts Ave. in the South End, which is home to the South End Historical Society, is also earmarked to receive a \$100,000 Historic Preservation grant.

In all, the CPC's recommended Community Preservation Funds for fiscal '20 amount to \$24,309,000, and include nine Affordable Housing applications totaling \$15,750,000; 16 Historic Preservation applications totaling \$3,440,000; and 15 Recreational Space and Open Space applications totaling \$5,119,000.

Community Preservation Director Christine Poff said a \$1-million limit was set for Recreational Use and Open Space grants for fiscal '20 to provide more funding for Affordable Housing.

"Maybe we could think about a smaller fund for community gardens, or think about a special grant program with smaller dollar amounts that will make a great difference in the neighborhoods," Poff said.

Mayor Martin Walsh still must sign off on the recommended allocation of funding.

Boston voters approved the Community Preservation Act by voting "yes" on Ballot Question 5 in November of 2016, and the city subsequently created the Community Preservation Fund, which is funded in part by a 1-percent property tax-based surcharge on residential and business property tax bills and took effect in July of 2017.

## FRUSTRATIONS (from pg. 1)

frustrating when police put together a good investigation, and then it's thwarted by a suspect being released due to the current court protocols.

"I'm certainly getting e-mails from my department higher-ups upsets by this," he said. "You spend a lot of hours on an investigation and with good police work catch the person. We put out fliers and were asking for help IDing that person. They want corroboration so you don't get the wrong person. It's expensive. Detectives come in on the midnight shift to process the scene...To do that several times is a lot of work...It's aggravating."

The overall picture looks really good though, he said, even if on a day-to-day operations level it seems rather crazy.

He said overall crime is down 26 percent compared to last year.

"That is huge and is kind of unheard of," he said. "A lot of that goes down to Newbury Street and Boylston Street being closed... Even with that taken out, we're down 10 percent which is really good."

Car breaks are one area in D-4 that Sweeney said he thought would be on the up given the closure of stores and desperation by the criminal element. It hasn't been the case in D-4 though. Last year at this time, there were 143 breaks, but now there are 116. The five-year average at this time of year is 186.

Yet at the same time they are finding crimes that outsize the perception.

In one of the three breaks on Monday, someone wearing a construction vest broke into a Suffolk Construction site on Shawmut and Herald Streets. The person took laptops, and then left the scene with them hidden in an empty baby carriage. He was caught though by police.

Meanwhile, at 4 a.m. on Monday, they also experienced a scary shots fired call on Hammond Street. Officers recovered 13 shell casings, meaning someone fired a lot of shots in the area. It was only the second shots fired call in D-4 this year, with the other happening on Kilmarnock Street in Fenway last month.

A final frustration was a situation where a woman on Dwight Street left her home for a walk, going out the back door and leaving it open. Her husband was inside asleep at the time and someone came in the back door and took his phone. That suspect fled the scene and began calling numbers on the phone. Eventually, he was able to reach the wife and demanded cash to get the phone back. Sweeney said police were able to track the phone to Franklin Square, where they arrested the man in the act.

Unfortunately, the phone wasn't very valuable, and police weren't able to charge him with anything other than a minor charge – not being able to prove he broke into the home.

"It's a safe neighborhood, but issues arise in a city," he said. "I'm going to let you know crime is down, but I'm also going to let you know the challenges we face too."

Beyond that, several from Blackstone were wondering what the police would be doing on this week's mandate to wear face coverings when outside and not able to socially distance.

Sweeney said they are going to educate, and won't be fining people or dragging them off to jail. He said they might get on the loudspeaker to disperse people or let them know they need a face covering.

"We're not dragging 20 people off a soccer field or getting in fist-fights with people," he said.

Mayoral Liaison Faisa Shar-

if said face coverings would start to become more important as the City begins to think about how to re-open some businesses. She said anyone having a business where people walk around would be required to wear a mask or face covering when things re-open.

"I do think we need to come to the understanding this will be part of our life for the reasonable future," she said.

"Our big thing is businesses will be required to have face coverings on," she continued. "If you have people coming into your business you need to be wearing a face covering and that means covering your nose and mouth when you interact with people."

Sharif said they are looking for ideas about how to open responsibly in Boston, and she said many good ideas right now are coming to the City from the public.

•Blackstone has been very active in giving to neighborhood concerns, and already have dispersed about \$7,000, said Treasurer Matt Mues. They have donated \$2,500 to the South End Feeds charity to help local restaurants by providing funding for them to send meals to front-line medical workers. They have also given \$1,000 to Haley House for their meals effort and gift cards to Foodie's for needy families in the St. Stephens Youth Programs.

"I see no reason for us to be hoarding money at a time when the world is hurting," said Mues.

•President David Stone mentioned that the meeting on Tuesday was a warm-up for the General Meeting to be held on May 19. That meeting will feature a vote of the officers for the Association, among other action items – including dogs in the Squares.

Stone said he felt the meeting went well on Tuesday, and they looked forward to having another online gathering on May 19.

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# SELDC votes to approve Tremont St. redesign, discuss on 566 Columbus Ave.

By Lauren Bennett

The South End Landmark District Commission (SELDC) met virtually via Zoom on May 5, where two major design projects were heard and residents were frustrated that the meeting went until midnight, after beginning at 5:30.

The Tremont St. design project was first on the docket and was subject to a lengthy discussion. The proposed new building at 566 Columbus Ave., the current site of the Harriet Tubman House, was last on the docket and the presentation did not begin until nearly 10:00pm and had several community members questioning the South End Landmarks process and general community process surrounding this project, while others praised the Commission and expressed their support.

## TREMONT ST. DESIGN PROJECT

John Monacelli of the Boston Transportation Department (BTD) presented the proposal for the design project on Tremont St., which includes modifying the layout of the street and intersection, construct raised crossings, built islands, and raised bus stop platforms, and to relocate some of the utilities.

Monacelli began by saying that this project would not entail making changes to the intersections at either end of the street, and this project is happening because it was identified as a corridor in the GoBoston2030 plan as one to be redesigned as a Complete Street.

Additionally, the street as it is currently designed has many multiple threat crash intersections, where there are two lanes of traffic and a lack of traffic control, so if a pedestrian is trying to cross at a crosswalk through two lanes of traffic, the person often cannot be seen by the car in the second lane, which is a public safety threat.

Monacelli explained that the BTD held several public meetings beginning in the fall of 2017 to engage the public in this process, and also met with businesses on the street to get their feedback.

BTD has also been working with the City's Commission for Persons with Disabilities, the Department of Public Works, the MBTA, the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services, and the Boston Water and Sewer Commission on this project.

He said that the proposed changes include lane and dimension allocation, signal timing and phasing, relocating bus stops, crosswalk improvements, and curbside uses and regulations. Adequate turning lanes and time at signalized intersections to manage traffic, best practice tools for pedestrian safety, and dimensional requirements for Boston Fire Department vehicles are also "essential design elements," he said.

Monacelli went through each block of the street in the South End, explaining which changes will be made where, but the general built elements that will be added throughout the street include pedestrian crossing islands, raised crosswalks on side streets at unsignalized intersections, bus boarding islands, paths to sidewalks for accessible parking spaces, and a protected parking bike lane so bikes are not traveling right next to moving cars.

"Raised crosswalks keep you out of the slush and puddles, and will be lined up with how people want to cross the street," Monacelli said. The crosswalks would be raised six inches to meet the sidewalk.

At corners, pedestrian crossing islands will be placed between the bike lane and the travel lane to improve pedestrian visibility and manage the speed of turning vehicles.

BTD proposed pre-cast concrete curbs along the parking lane that are pinned in place and "more permanent than flex posts," but the Commission said they would much rather see granite used than pre-cast concrete.

"Aside from the aesthetics of the pre-cast concrete being added into the district, I think it's a real problem when snowplows start to knock pre-cast over," Amodeo said. "I'm worried about having a degraded version of pre-cast concrete in the district."

Someone made a public comment agreeing with this, saying granite is better for both "aesthetics and durability."

The bus stop at Berkeley St. would be relocated "to the far side so it's in front of the bicycle shop," Monacelli said, and the BlueBikes station would be moved farther away from the curb line. Concrete would be poured where needed for accessibility, but some brick would be left.

Commissioner John Amodeo did not agree with the removal of so much brick, and he suggested that they could find a way to "improve the presentation of the brick without sacrificing the goals of the project or accessibility. I think we could achieve all objectives there."

Commissioner John Freeman also said that he is "concerned with leftover slices of brick," but "I think it all looks great."

Commissioner Catherine Hunt said that "brick does not preclude accessibility," and that she "appreciates" the safety improvements proposed in this project.

Amodeo also said he would like the pedestrian islands to be brick. "There's no reason for those... islands to be concrete when we have a historic district that we're talking about," he said.

"It's important that the nuances get addressed," he continued. He said a compromise that the Commission has made in the past is to allow wire cut brick on concrete or asphalt setting beds to better allow for universal access, even though that method is not traditional for the South End.

"I would like to see that we not expand the concrete beyond the areas absolutely necessary for safe pedestrian areas," Amodeo said.

Ken Kruckemeyer, who said he worked on the design of the street in the 1970s, thanked the Commission for solving some of the problems they were not able to back then. He said this new design is "better for bikers, pedestrians, and ultimately for automobiles as well."

Charless Denison also agreed that this project is an improvement to Tremont St.

The Commission voted to approve this project in concept, but required brick to be used in the unoccupied islands, and remanded the discussion of materials and the use of granite curbs to a subcommittee to be discussed further with John Amodeo and Catherine Hunt.

The full presentation with areas for each proposed change can be found on the May 5 South End Landmark District Commission public notice page on the City's website.

## 566 COLUMBUS AVE.

The project at 566 Columbus Ave. started several hours into the hearing, and nearing 11:00, almost 60 participants were still tuned into the Zoom call.

David Goldman of New Boston Ventures said that they have met with the Commission twice already regarding this project, once on advisory review, and one other time with this current proposal.

"I think we have a much better project now because of your input and our work with the staff," he said.

Though use of buildings is not in the purview of the SLEDC, Goldman explained that "without this project moving forward, [United South End Settlements (USES)] stands to face financial disaster." USES currently owns the building at 566 Columbus Ave. and is under an agreement with New Boston Ventures, and has said that it needs to sell the building in order to continue operating.

"The whole reason we're here today, is like other non-profits they're in a situation where this is their lifeline," Goldman said of USES. "It's important that this move forward so they can continue" serving families in the South End and Lower Roxbury.

"We are looking at this purely as a building in the South End and how it affects and responds to the South end as an architectural historical district," Commissioner John Freeman said.

January 7 was the last time the SELDC discussed this project, architect Jonathan Garland said. The proposed building is six stories, and features a non-profit commercial space as well as an "express cafe" on the ground level, with residential units on the other floors. He said that they are planning on using the existing curb cut for garage access, as well as looking to place the residential lobby mid-block along Columbus Ave.

The existing surface parking lot will be repurposed with building space. A large portion of Garland's presentation was going through precedents in the district that he has pulled design elements from for the design of this new building.

Garland also went through a long list of comments made by the SELDC at its January 7 hearing, including that the Commission felt the design was "monolithic," they wanted to see more historic photographs of the area prior to the Tubman House, the design team should take a look at transitions with abutting buildings, and the need for further refining of building details, among other things.

The previous design included a lot of fiber cement, but now has more red brick, "which is more

compatible with the South End," Garland said. The brick stops at four stories and transfers to a double height mansard roof with bronze-toned metal that will come pre-sculpted to create shadow and interest on the building.

The garage doors "are intended to look like carriage doors," Garland said.

The Commission allowed the public to comment on the project before it made its own comments. Commissioner John Amodeo is the landscape architect for the project, so he had to recuse himself from the hearing, leaving Commissioners John Freeman, Diana Parcon, Peter Sanborn, and Catherine Hunt to comment on the proposal.

Several members of the community said they were disappointed in the Landmarks hearing process, one saying that the evening meetings are "preventing many people from participating."

Commissioner Hunt replied that "these hearings are scheduled after work hours because Commissioners have full time jobs."

Joseph Cornish, Director of Design Review for the Boston Landmarks Commission, added, "we do have an annual calendar of public hearings, and we're doing our best using Zoom to keep the applications on schedule..."

A community member asked why the largest building is "always the last thing on your agenda," and "this is not the first meeting on this building that has gone past 11pm." He added that he "appreciates the changes that have been made" and that he feels the design team has addressed previous issues with the design.

Cornish said that they typically try to put smaller projects that will take less time at the beginning, and leave larger projects for last.

"We have done it several ways over the years," Commissioner John Freeman said. "None of it is perfect; there's always somebody who can't make a hearing or can't stay up late. We do the best we can to get the public to comment. We took comments from the public first as a courtesy to you to not have to wait any longer."

While the project has a lot of support in the neighborhood, several people expressed concern both with the design and with the public comment process. Some said this was the first opportunity they had been able to make comments, while others said there had been "quite a bit" of input allowed from the community throughout the process.

"No one spoke with me and I live across the street from the project," Tori Reilly said via the Zoom chat function. "I'm not predisposed to like this because you

(SELDC, Pg. 9)

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# Michlewitz facing unforeseen challenges in state budget

By Dan Murphy

This year has brought a set of unique and unforeseen challenges for Rep. Aaron Michlewitz, who is charged with managing the state's annual fiscal budget in his role as House Chair of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means.

"Because of the shelter-in-place advisory and the number of businesses now closed, the revenue shortfalls could be unprecedented," said Rep. Michlewitz, adding that traditionally the House would be finished with the budget by this time of year. "A consensus was reached between the House, the Senate and the governor in January at the start of the budget process, but a lot changed once the pandemic hit."

Now, the state must consider when and how businesses will be able to open back up, and what restrictions will then be in place due to social distancing and other measure taken to contain the spread of COVID-19 in reevaluating its fiscal '21 budget, he said.

"Unlike other recessions and the Great Depression, which were the results of the real estate market going bust or the country going to war, because of this public health situation, we're in a 'self-induced coma,' as some have said, and how we wake up from that coma is anybody's guess," Rep. Michlewitz said. "It could be a really fast comeback, but it's more likely to be a slow recovery. We don't want to project too high or

too low, so the process will be flexible because of the uncertainty."

But despite this uncertainty, the FY '21 budget must be finalized by July 1, and unlike the federal government, the state doesn't have the luxury of going into a deficit. "They can print their own money whereas we at the state have different circumstances," Rep. Michlewitz said.

The state is now looking at a number of different financial forecasts that predict budget shortfalls of between \$2 billion and \$6 billion.

"Six Billion is more severe, so obviously we're hoping it turns out to be closer to two billion," he said. "Either way, it's going to be tough to manage the budget."

Moreover, between \$14 billion and \$16 billion has already been earmarked, such as for funding Mass Health, leaving the state around \$29 billion for discretionary spending.

"Hypothetically, we're looking at about one-fifth of the budget being cut, and that will have a drastic impact on social services and state agencies like [the Department of Conservation and Recreation] that are going to have severe shortfalls and severe cuts being made," Rep. Michlewitz said. "It could also trickle down into the schools and a number of other places as well."

Still, Rep. Michlewitz said how this all plays out is now largely dependent on the course that the novel coronavirus takes.

"The virus dictates a lot of that, since the sooner we flatten the curve, the sooner we can open the economy up, but right now, I'd say that's a ways off," he said. "And will the pandemic have a second wave later in the year? That obviously is a huge factor in how we operate the state budget."

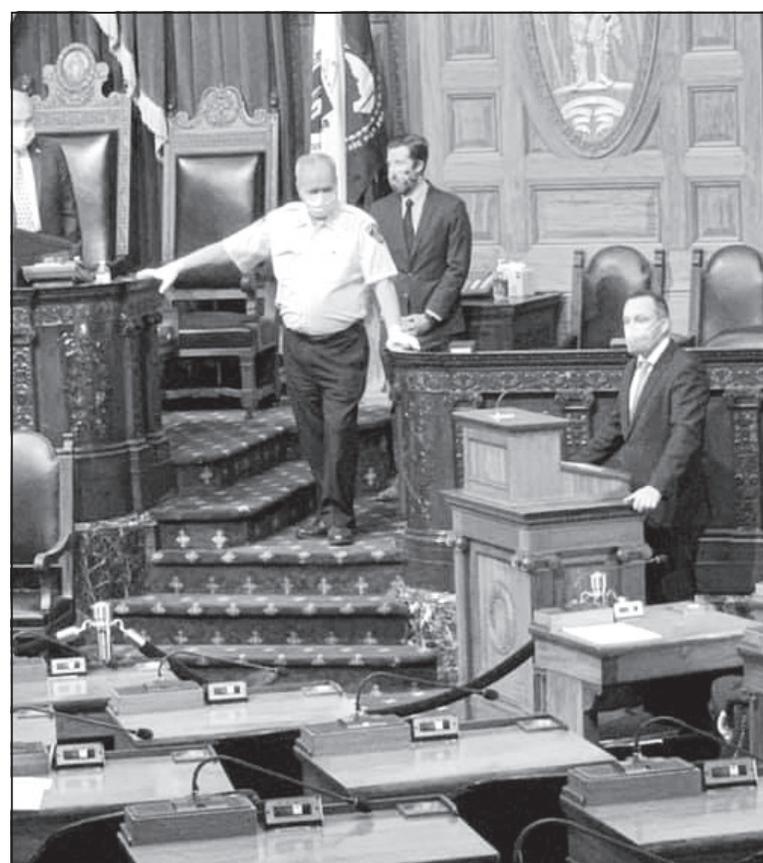
On top of trying to manage the budget, Rep. Michlewitz has been instrumental in several new measures taken by the state to provide some relief to its residents and businesses during the ongoing pandemic.

Besides devising a "new scenario" where restaurants can also offer beer and wine for takeout and delivery, the legislature was also successful in cancelling MCAS testing requirements for the school year because of students' inability to take the test or study properly, he said.

Also, Rep. Michlewitz said the state now allows electronic notarization for real estate closings and other services while a "mechanism" was also put into place that provides immediate funding to homeless shelters for their COVID-19 response.

"A number of bills have been passed to extend unemployment benefits," he added. "We worked with the federal government to extend those benefits to as much of population as possible."

Rep. Michlewitz and his colleagues at the State House also passed a moratorium on evictions and foreclosure for residents and



Rep. Aaron Michlewitz delivers an address regarding the budget to an empty senate chamber during the first ever remote voting formal session.

commercial businesses.

And yet another bill he helped champion delays the due date of state income-tax payments until July 15.

"There's a huge amount of revenue we usually depend on not

coming in while we allow people to delay paying their income tax," Rep. Michlewitz said. "Because of that, we created a bill to allow the state treasurer to borrow money to pay for Fiscal Year '20 responsibilities."

## SELDC (from pg. 8)

are taking my entire view from my windows and roof. All I see will [be] the utilities on the roof."

Garland said that there will not be "any kind of mechanical cooling tower or large roof structure that you can see from any vantage point."

"This is a big improvement over the prior design, but I think it needs much improvement," Charles Denison wrote. "Strangely, the corners of the building feel weak because there is less brick and more dark metal, especially at Mass Ave and Columbus Ave. Additionally, the cornice of the building feels weak and unfinished compared to other buildings." He added that the two-story mansard "doesn't feel right" on the West Springfield Street side of the building.

Silvia Buonamici said, "As a South End resident, I am in support of the architectural design of the proposed 566 Columbus development. The proposed development fits greatly within the South End and will have a great influence of the cross between Mass Ave and

Columbus and a positive impact on the community. I strongly urge the Board to approve on its merits."

Ken Kruckemeyer, who is on the board of USES, expressed his support for the project, saying that he'd much rather have a building in place of the existing surface parking lot.

"We have a lot of comments here and it was excellent to hear everyone's input who have waited so long," Commissioner Catherine Hunt said. It was nearing 11:45pm after the public comment period was over, and the Commissioners felt it was best to continue this discussion to another hearing so as to give it the proper attention it deserves.

Freeman said he was concerned about the West Springfield St. facade, but added that "this is a much better building than the last one we saw."

"The architect and developer listened to our comments from the first hearing and we appreciate that they have paid attention, but there's a long way to go here,"

Hunt said. "It doesn't seem fair to have to do this at midnight, so I would hope we could continue and folks who have waited would go along with that."

The SLEDIC already has a backlog of applications and has two more hearings scheduled for May to try and catch up. Commissioner Diana Parcon suggested that the SELDC have a separate hearing just for this project in order to address all comments and concerns and "make sure we're doing this in a fair and equitable manner," she said.

David Goldman stressed the need for this project to move forward quickly, but Commissioner Peter Sanborn said that Landmarks operates independently of any outside issues with use of the building. "I think it's pretty clear that we feel this is not ready to go to subcommittee yet," he said.

"There are a few more details we have to work through," Parcon said. "We can't just rush and make a decision tonight. We have to meet again."

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## ATTENTION TO DETAIL

BY PENNY CHERUBINO

## THIS WEEK'S ANSWER



The window in the last clue is found on Horticultural Hall located at 300 Massachusetts Avenue. This structure was built in 1901 and was designed by architects Wheelwright and Haven. The property was recently purchased by Northeastern University. 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 [Pen-ny@BostonZest.com](mailto:Pen-ny@BostonZest.com) with your suggestion.

## THIS WEEK'S CLUE



## Baker signs order requiring face coverings in public

By Lauren Bennett

Governor Charlie Baker on May 1 signed an order requiring face masks or coverings for everyone when six feet of distance cannot be maintained, both indoors and out. The order went into effect on May 6, and children under the age of two and those unable to wear a mask due to a medical condition are exempt.

Face coverings must be worn inside pharmacies, grocery stores, and other retail stores, and “also when providing or using the services of any taxi, car, livery, ride-sharing, or similar service or any means of mass public transit, or while within an enclosed or semi-enclosed transit stop or waiting area,” the order states.

The order also states that people are “strongly discouraged” from wearing medical-grade masks, as those are in limited supply and should be saved for first responders and healthcare workers.

“This is going to be basically a way of life, okay, there’s no ifs, no

ands, no buts, no doubts,” Baker said at a recent press conference, “and I certainly think for the most part if you can’t distance inside or outside, you’re going to be expected to wear a face covering or a mask.”

Businesses are allowed to deny entry of any person who refuses to wear a mask and does not have a valid medical reason not to, the order says.

“The Department of Public Health, local boards of health and authorized agents...are authorized to enforce this Order and if necessary may do so with the assistance of State or municipal police,” according to the order, and while there is no standard fee implemented across the board, Baker is enabling municipalities to charge up to \$300 per violation of the order or guidance from the Department of Public Health.

“One of the major issues associated with this particular virus,” Baker said, is that a “very significant portion of the people who contract this virus will never show

symptoms at all. I can’t stress that one enough.”

He said this is why masks are especially important, as their “main purpose is to protect [others] from you as much as it is to protect you from [others].”

## REOPENING ADVISORY BOARD

Last week, the Baker-Polito administration announced the creation of a 17 person reopening advisory board that has been working over the past week and over the weekend on a phased plan to reopen the state

Reopening is “certainly something that I think is at the forefront of everyone’s mind,” Baker said at a press conference on April 20. “The advisory board has hit the ground running,” he added, and has met with business organizations and leaders from municipalities across the Commonwealth. He said the goal for the board is to “hear from employers from across the Commonwealth,” and

(BAKER UPDATE, Pg. 11)

## Real Estate Transfers

BUYER 1 BACK BAY	SELLER 1	ADDRESS	PRICE
Rafiee, Dana	Patricelli, Patricia M	180 Commonwealth Ave #23	\$970,000
Pusic, Martin V	Pandolfi, Pier-Paolo	239 Commonwealth Ave #42	\$2,775,000
Pusic, Martin V	Pandolfi, Pier-Paolo	239 Commonwealth Ave #43	\$2,775,000
Evan M Kushner LT	Gurnack, Gwenn E	24 Dartmouth St #1	\$1,165,125
Wang, Vanessa	Johnson, Alexander C	65 Marlborough St #4	\$1,755,000
Lefebvre, Xavier	Zhang Shengheng Est	183-185A Mass. Ave #403	\$1,347,500
Rigobon, Roberto I	Gelineau, Amanda M	362 Commonwealth Ave #5A	\$927,000
<b>BEACON HILL</b>			
Solomon, Michael J	Ventola, John	65 Anderson St #3A	\$1,575,000
Reynolds, Benjamin	Johnson, James	38 Hancock St #1	\$786,000
Mosakowski, Rachel A	Kendra C Nikodem	140 Mount Vernon St #5	\$1,915,000
<b>BAY VILLAGE/SOUTH END/KENMORE</b>			
Chan, Lauren	Ansin, G Ryan	33 Appleton St #1	\$1,070,000
Reilly, Shannon	Maes, Gregoire C	76 Chandler St #1&2	\$2,100,000
Boyd, William M	27 Isabella LLC	27 Isabella St #1	\$2,335,000
Yudkin, Ross	Cordes, Eric G	26 Melrose St #1	\$875,000
Paul, Steven	Latimer, Nathan	40 Traveler St #708	\$1,710,000
Caron, Thomas J	Amos Realty LLC	603 Tremont St #4	\$1,535,000
Shea, Christel A	Araujo, Paul	159 W Brookline St #2	\$595,000
Katz, Jerrold	Walker, Andrew C	1280-1284 Washington St #403	\$1,610,000
Katz, Jerrold	Walker, Andrew C	1313 Washington St #102	\$1,610,000
Wang, Brendan	JP Property I LLC	3531 Washington St #415	\$760,000
<b>WATERFRONT/DOWNTOWN</b>			
Youngsaye, Willmen W	Willi, Mathilda	70 Lincoln St #L615	\$635,000
Masri, Omar	Shohans LLC	580 Washington St #1001	\$1,600,000

BAKER UPDATES (from pg. 10)

to "gather as much data as they possibly can to make sure that we can offer up specific guidance."

So far, the board has met virtually with stakeholders from "23 different industry associations and community coalitions," Baker said, which represent more than 100,000 businesses and over 1.4 million employees in retail, life sciences, restaurants, tourism, construction, recreation, and more.

He said that the "best way to handle the reopening" is to "do it in a way consistent with data and recommendations" that come from other countries and different levels of government.

"This work is obviously going to be critical to make sure a smart, phased reopening will take place in Massachusetts," Baker said on April 30.

He said in the coming weeks, more "concrete" plans will be available about what each phase will look like, and "where certain activities and industries fit into which phase." Baker also said information for businesses, such as guidance for social distancing and cleaning, will also be made

available.

Baker said he was "very grateful to the many people across industries that have had to close their doors and adjust their work styles" during this crisis. "I think everybody's anxious to find a way to safely move forward."

Lt. Governor Karyn Polito reminded residents on May 4 that when May 18 comes, it "doesn't mean the economy across the Commonwealth will just open," she said. Governor Baker has reiterated several times throughout the past couple weeks that they must rely on testing and hospital data to make the safest decision for what can open when.

Baker said that while the goal for the process is to start reopening some businesses "in a limited fashion" on May 18, the phasing process cannot begin "until we see sustained downward trends" in positive test rates, hospitalization rates, and fatality rates.

"When the public health date indicates that COVID-19 is on that sustained downward trend that's been discussed by so many previously, we'll be able to resume

more and more activities going forward," Baker said.

CONTACT TRACING UPDATE

On April 30, Baker said that about 1000 people are working on the contact tracing collaborative, and so far, the average number of contacts for infected people is two.

He said that this "means that the work that all of you and we have done here in Massachusetts to stay at home, separate, and socially distance has made a big difference."

He said the conversations that contact tracing callers have had with people has heavily leaned towards providing people with guidance and support and answering their questions and concerns around the virus and isolation practices.

Baker said that calls from an 833 or 857 area code or a Caller ID of MA COVID TEAM should be answered, as they are important for providing vital information to stop the spread of the virus.

TESTING, HOSPITALIZATION RATE UPDATE

As of May 5, there were 70,271 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Massachusetts, and 4,212 people had died.

Baker said on May 4 that May 3 was the "single highest" number of tests conducted in a single day in the Commonwealth, and it's "good to see the total test numbers continue to increase."

He said that as of May 3, 3,617 patients were hospitalized due to COVID-19, which is five percent of the total cases in the state.

"COVID hospitalizations have actually been decreasing in the past several days, with very few spikes in new admissions," he said.

He added the number of patients in the ICU has dropped as well.

On May 6, Baker said that "over the past week or so, the percentage of positive cases has consistently been lower" than the past month. "We are encouraged by this data, but it's important to remember that test results alone" do not show the complete impact

of the virus on communities.

He said that while there are "obviously still thousands of people" who are sick, "the numbers have started to trend in the right direction" and different parts of the state are in different stages.

He added that the state has had "tremendous success" with the Telehealth program, and people should continue using it to communicate with health care providers, but if people are experiencing a medical emergency, they should call 911 or go to the emergency room, as hospitals have plenty of room and are prepared to care for non-COVID related conditions.

Baker said that he will "continue to ramp up testing for months to come," and will continue to invest in the contact tracing program. He also said that it's "important to remember that as long as there is no vaccine," the state will have to continue discussions about how to operate the state in the most safe way.

"The threat of future transmission and illness will be with us for a very long time and we can't forget that," Baker said.

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 May 5 Licensed Premise Hearing, 10 a.m., online:

12 Hemenway Manager, LLC; 12 Hemenway St., Fenway. Manager: Karen Suri; License: Lodging House. Date: 4/4/2020: responding to a call for a fight; 4/8/2020: responding to a call to investigate a person; 4/12/2020: responding to a call to assist with a removal; failure to follow non-essential business order; 4/12/2020: responding to a call to investigate a person; 4/15/2020: responding to a call for a noise disturbance; 4/23/2020: responding to a call for an assault and battery with a deadly weapon; 4/29/2020: patron on patron assault by means of a dangerous weapon and failure to notify police; 4/29/2020: patron drinking alcohol on public sidewalk in front of Licensed Premise.

From the May 11 Council Ways and Means Committee Budget Working Session (via Zoom online meeting):

11 a.m. The focus of this working session is the Police Department (BPD), the Fire Department (BFD), Emergency Medical Services (BEMS), the Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC), and BPD revolving funds.

From the May 11 South End Landmarks meeting, 5 p.m., Zoom meeting (HTTPS://US02WEB.ZOOM.US/J/83227512223):

DESIGN REVIEW
31 Worcester St. Proposed Work: At the garden level, modify entryway under the stoop, remove an iron gate, and install a door.
81 Warren Ave. Proposed Work: Construct a roof deck with hatch access
36 Greenwich Pl. Proposed Work: At the rear facade mansard level, install sliding glass doors and install a deck.
227 West Canton St. Proposed Work: Construct a roof deck.
18 Dartmouth St. Proposed Work: Construct a roof deck with hatch access.
190 West Brookline St. Proposed Work: Construct a roof deck and head house.
160 West Canton St. Proposed Work: At the roof, construct a deck with hatch access; at the entry, modify double leaf entry doors and install glazing.

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW/ APPROVAL

505 Massachusetts Ave.: At the Massachusetts Avenue and Tremont Street facades repoint brick joints with new mortar to match historic mortar in terms of color, texture, joint width, profile, and tooling; restore precast lintels and sills to match original profiles; repaint first floor facade to match existing.

From the May 12 Bay Village Historic District meeting, 4 p.m., Via Zoom (HTTPS://US02WEB.ZOOM.US/J/84652875098):

ADVISORY REVIEW

132 Arlington Street: Construction of nine rowhouses on existing parking lot.

From the May 12, 5:30 p.m., Council COMMITTEE ON PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT, AND TRANSPORTATION hearing, via Zoom: Implementing changes for safe streets during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

The May 12 Boston Landmarks Commission hearing has been cancelled due to no agenda items.

From the May 12 Council Ways and Means Committee Budget Working Session (Via Zoom online meeting):

10 a.m. The focus of this hearing is the FY21 Budget for the Department of Neighborhood Development (DND).
2 p.m. The focus of this hearing is the FY21 Budget for the Office of Economic Development (OED). This hearing will also cover the Boston Equity Fund.

From the May 13 Zoning Commission hearing, 9 a.m., via online or phone (BIT.LY/2VM-JXXO OR CALL 631.992.3221 AND ENTER ACCESS CODE 110-901-982.):

9 a.m. First Amendment to the Development Plan for Planned Development Area No. 74, Fenway Center. Said First Amendment affects Phase 2 of Planned Development Area No. 74 which would allow for the proposed Building 3 to be a 22-story, approximately 535,000 Gross Square Feet of mixed-use commercial/research and development ("R&D")/lab and life science space. Building 4 is a 12-story approximately 185,000 Gross Square Feet of mixed-use commercial/retail space as well as multi-tenant office/R&D/lab and life science uses. The First Amendment also includes a shared-use 5-story parking garage over the Massachusetts Turnpike for up to 600 public and private parking spaces.

From the May 13 Back Bay Architectural Commission meeting, 5 p.m., via Zoom (HTTPS://US02WEB.ZOOM.US/J/89922668064):

DESIGN REVIEW
545 Boylston Street: Extend approval of wall mural from April 11, 2020 to December 31, 2020.
15 Arlington Street: At Newbury Street elevation install awning and blade sign.
177 Newbury Street: At front facade redesign front entry garden to lower level retail space.
150 & 152 Commonwealth Avenue: At front garden remove existing Katsura tree and plant a Kousa Dogwood tree.
199 Commonwealth Avenue: At front garden remove existing cherry tree and replace with a crabapple tree.
29 Commonwealth Avenue: At roof install new headhouse, roof deck, mechanical screening, cabinetry and appliances, spa tub and fire bowl.
126 Marlborough Street: At roof remove existing headhouse and deck and construct penthouse and deck.

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.



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**\$6,990,000**



**380 BEACON STREET #2**  
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**\$5,950,000**



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

