

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2020

# THE BOSTON SUN

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SERVING BACK BAY - SOUTH END - FENWAY - KENMORE

## Return engagement: Elliott Laffer assumes rein of NABB again as chair

By Dan Murphy

Elliott Laffer, who served as chairman of the Neighborhood Association of the Back Bay for two terms from 1990



Elliott Laffer, returning chair of the Neighborhood Association of the Back Bay.

to 1992, assumed the reins of the organization again during its 65th annual meeting, which was held virtually last night, Wednesday, Sept. 16 - thus making him the only individual to date to return to the seat after previously vacating it.

Laffer, who grew up in Bayonne, N.J., and earned a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, in Troy, N.Y., had a 30-year career in sales and sales management of engineered equipment that brought him to Boston in 1971. He settled in Back Bay in December of 1974 and first joined NABB the following year. Early on, he served on NABB's Architectur-

(LAFFER, Pg. 4)

## Councilor Wu officially announces run for mayor

By Lauren Bennett

City Councilor Michelle Wu announced on Tuesday that she plans to run for mayor in 2021, after Mayor Martin Walsh announced last week that she would be in the race.

Wu was elected City Councilor At-Large in 2013, and incumbent Mayor Walsh has not announced his campaign for re-election yet - though many have said he plans to do so after the first of the year.

"We're in an unprecedented time as Boston faces a pandemic, an economic crisis, and a national reckoning on systemic racism," Wu said in a statement. "To meet this moment, we need leadership that match-

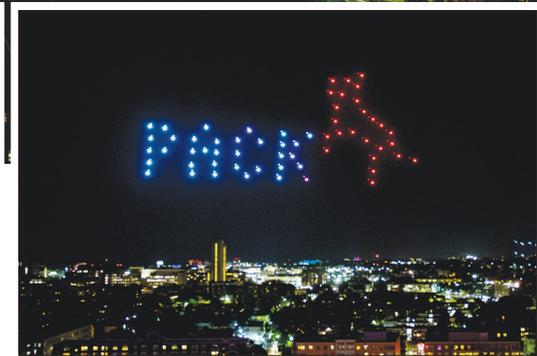
es the scale and urgency of our challenges."

Wu announced her candidacy in a video that is available in English, Spanish, and Mandarin, and outlines her vision as leader of Boston.

"Business as usual has been failing Bostonians since well before the pandemic, and COVID-19 has exposed and exacerbated deep inequities across our city," Wu said. "In this moment of crisis, it's not only possible but necessary to reimagine community-based leadership with the vision and conviction to act. We can build wealth in all our communities, value public education, plan

(WU FOR MAYOR, Pg. 5)

## NU LIGHTS UP THE NIGHT AT CONVOCATION CEREMONY



PHOTOS COURTESY OF NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

PROTECT THE PACK: Northeastern University lit up the night sky in the South End and Fenway late last week during a special drone-powered light show as part of the University's convocation ceremony this year. As part of that very unique show, the University promoted the 'Protect the Pack' initiative that is meant to promote mask wearing and other COVID-19 protocols to help protects students, staff and the community around them.

## Property owner seeks tax protest to force change for drug and homelessness on Mass/Cass

By Seth Daniel

Attorney Tom McAndrew said he has owned 9-17 Harcourt St. in the St. Botolph area for more than 10 years, and with the homelessness and drug use issues leaking over in greater numbers from Mass/Cass, he's suggesting residents and property owners join him in withholding payment of property taxes.

"I'd like to put a coalition of people together in and around the community and cooperate

in withholding our property tax dollars to the City until they fulfill their duties as public servants," he said. "It's millions of dollars we're talking about. It's a very significant area and a lovely area for people and families over many, many years until recently. I'd love to get 100 percent participation. I'm not talking about not paying taxes. I want to be responsible. We would put it into escrow or a bank fund until the mayor and city councilors fulfill their duties."

McAndrew said he doesn't live in the building, but his daughter does and he is very worried for her safety for the first time ever. He indicated there have been minor problems in the past, but now it is an everyday occurrence. There are needles all over the property, and people sleep in front of the doorway. Also, there are frequent episodes of public defecation on the property, and his tenants have often reported men staying in the area and tak-

(PROPERTY TAX PROTEST, Pg. 3)

# EDITORIAL

## APOCALYPSE -- NOW

The photos of the wildfires in our western states that have incinerated entire communities and that have turned daytime skies to night by their heavy smoke have illustrated the dramatic effects of climate change upon the daily lives of millions of Americans.

Record heat has accelerated the effects of dry conditions, leading to the record-setting wildfires out west.

Yes, climate change undeniably is happening here and around the globe.

Last January, it was the bushfires in Australia that similarly wrought havoc and destruction in that part of the world.

An article in the New York Times on Monday began this way, "The effects of global warming in the Arctic are so severe that the region is shifting to a different climate, one characterized less by ice and snow and more by open water and rain, scientists said Monday."

More ominously, that same article discussed the perils of climate change facing the world from another source, the melting of the Antarctic glaciers at the bottom of the world.

"Another study released Monday suggested that two Antarctic glaciers that have long been of concern to scientists over their potential to contribute to sea level rise may be in worse shape than previously thought."

From east to west and north to south, climate change is posing an existential threat to life as we know it.

There is still time for us to reverse, or at least halt, the impending doom that awaits us if we take immediate action to limit greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere.

But we need to act soon, because it will not be too long before it will be too late.

## DONALD TRUMP IS NO WINSTON CHURCHILL

Rage, the new book by veteran journalist Bob Woodward about the presidency of Donald Trump, has revealed unequivocally that Trump deliberately has downplayed the lethality of the Covid-19 pandemic from the very beginning of the virus's detection in the United States.

Whether one wants to characterize Trump's mendacity as outright lying for political purposes, or merely as a benevolent effort by Trump to prevent social chaos, the bottom line is the same: Trump has not been straight with the American people.

But even if one accepts Trump's explanation for his deceit, the book makes clear that Trump treated the American people with disdain, as if we were children who needed to be shielded from the truth.

"I don't want to jump up and down and start screaming, 'Death! Death!' because that's not what it's about," Trump said at a press conference last week, when asked about his months and months of deceptions.

A few days later, at a campaign rally in Michigan, Trump asserted that his handling of the pandemic has been similar to how Winston Churchill addressed the people of England during the height of the Nazi bombing in WWII.

"As the British government advised the British people in the face of World War II, keep calm and carry on. That's what I did," said Trump, who then invoked the comparison of himself directly to Churchill.

Trump, by his own admission, reads nothing, so it is not surprising that Trump has no knowledge of what Churchill said and did during the epic Battle of Britain, when England's survival was at stake.

For if Trump knew even the slightest bit about Churchill's tenure as Prime Minister, he would have known that from the outset, Churchill never sugarcoated the reality of the threat that was facing every British citizen.

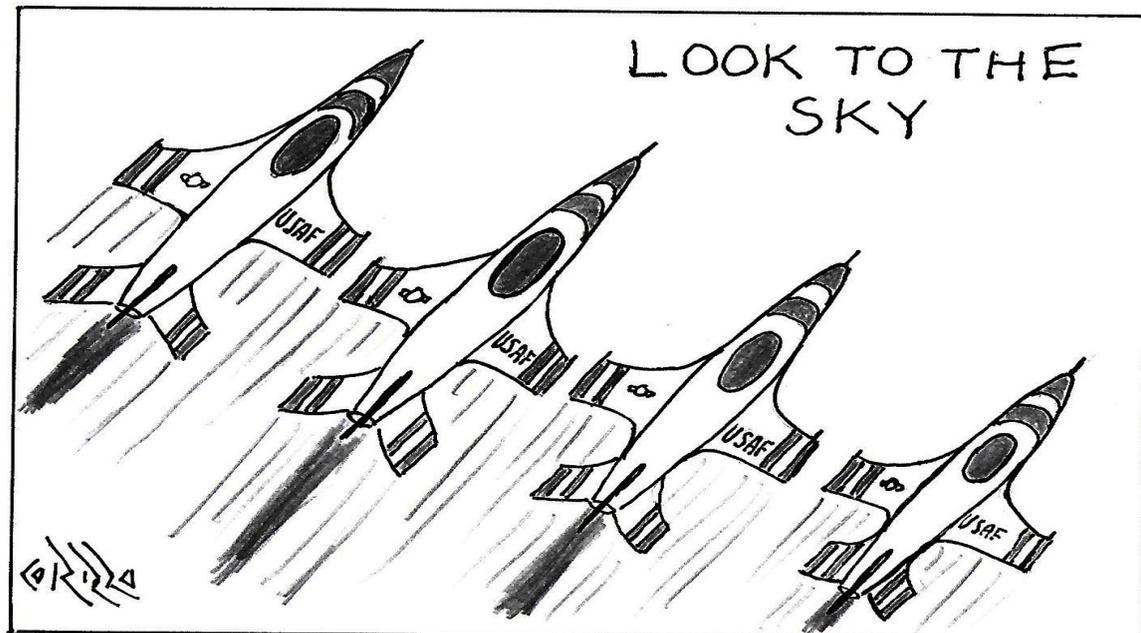
In his very first speech, three days after he had become Great Britain's leader, Churchill laid out clearly and explicitly the difficult task that lay ahead:

"I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat," said Churchill. "We have before us an ordeal of the most grievous kind. We have before us many, many long months of struggle and of suffering."

The test of a true leader is to recognize the reality of a situation and face it head-on, not merely to play the role of a cheerleader.

As things stand now under Trump's presidency, American deaths from the pandemic now stand at just about 200,000, with another 200,000 Americans expected to die by the end of this year.

It is clear that Donald Trump is no Winston Churchill. He's merely Donald Trump.



THE U.S. AIR FORCE - 73 YEARS OLD - SEPT. 18, 2020

GUEST OP-ED

## How we're recognizing Recovery Month in Boston

By Mayor Martin J. Walsh

September is Recovery Month. It's a time to raise awareness about substance use disorder and those who need treatment and support, celebrate Bostonians who are in recovery, remember the people we've lost to the disease, and show our gratitude to the treatment workers who do life-saving work.

In Boston, we've spent years building one of the strongest recovery systems in the country. Forming strong partnerships with the community and a network of providers, we've made it easier for people to access quality, affordable treatment and support.

We're training first responders as recovery coaches, and diverting more people who are struggling with substance use into treatment, instead of the criminal justice system. We're also giving people the tools they need to sustain their recovery, with historic investments in affordable housing, job training, and re-entry programs.

We prioritize prevention and education, and we're working to close disparities in access to care by responding to the unique risk factors that people face across different neighborhoods and different racial and ethnic identities.

COVID-19 has underscored

the urgency of this work. The pandemic has been especially hard for people with substance use disorder. We know how many people throughout our region rely on our recovery programs on a daily basis. That's why all of the City's recovery services have remained open throughout the entire coronavirus emergency, including our 24-hour Recovery Services hotline, walk-in programs, drug user health programming, street outreach teams, and our Engagement Center. We quickly adapted all of our programming to meet public health protocols, and moved several services outdoors to allow for proper social distancing.

The work of our recovery services staff has been nothing short of heroic. They continued to serve people 24 hours per day, seven days per week, often risking their own health to provide this life-saving care. On top of that, many of them volunteered at our Boston Hope field hospital. Our recovery services staff have continued to serve the people of Bos-

ton with professionalism and compassion, in the Mass Ave./Melnea Cass Boulevard area in the South End where many of our programs are located, and throughout the city. They deserve our deepest gratitude and support.

Our commitment to building a comprehensive recovery campus on Long Island in Boston Harbor has also not wavered. The Long Island Recovery Campus will meet the most pressing needs of our city and our region, including more treatment beds, more employment training and transitional housing, and a more seamless continuum of care to help close the gaps between stages of the recovery. Increasing our investment in this care is key to getting people on a path to recovery, and to addressing quality of life concerns, including crime and homelessness. The pandemic has shown the importance of bold, long term investments in community health, and the Long Island campus will be a cornerstone of this work in the years to come.

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## GUEST OP-ED

## Education as a Pathway to the beloved Commonwealth

By Marie-Frances Rivera, Jeraul Mackey  
and Imari K. Paris

In the early days of the Civil Rights Movement, Dr. King described a “Beloved Community” as an anti-racist society committed to social and economic justice. Boston is one of the most educated cities in America, located in one of the most educated states in the nation. Our city and Commonwealth prides itself as being the first at many things. The best in the nation in sports, innovation, and education. America’s first public school, Boston Latin was founded here in 1635. A year later, teachers and preachers went on to create Harvard University, arguably the most prestigious institution of higher education in the United States. Today, Boston has one of the highest concentrations of postsecondary education opportunities, ranging from important technical certificate programs to in-demand baccalaureates. Yet, we are far from a world where all students receive a just and equal education.

Our standing as the cradle of our nation’s modern

### OP-ED (from pg. 2)

In the meantime, we will continue to adapt to the pandemic, and make it easier for people to safely access recovery services in person and online.

We’ve also adapted our programming in observance of Recovery Month. The City and our partners will host virtual and socially-distanced versions of our favorite annual Recovery Month traditions, and new events as well. They include: a virtual opioid screening and awareness day on September 22; a virtual Recovery Day celebration on September 23; and a virtual panel about our new Project Opportunity program, which supports people with CORI reports in getting employment on September 29. For more details about these and other events, visit [Boston.gov/recovery](http://Boston.gov/recovery).

One of the most important ways we can all recognize Recovery Month is by committing to ending the stigma

day education system eludes another recognition: unequal education access for Black and other people of color. For example, Harvard graduated its first Black student 235 years after its founding and it would take another 150 years before Black students were equally represented. As early as 1787, Black Bostonians fought against discrimination and inequality in public education. Both Kings, Martin and Coretta, returned to Boston in 1965 and along with leaders like Ruth Batson and Melnea Cass, marched in the historic Freedom Rally to demonstrate against education inequities in this city. This history of de facto racism and unequal treatment culminated in the 1974 court decision *Morgan v. Hennigan* which required BPS to desegregate underfunded majority-Black schools through redistricting and busing. Prior to this reform, Black students at Boston Latin School made up only two percent of the student body. Forty years later, less than one in ten students at this exam school are Black despite a 30% Black enrollment in Boston’s public

around substance use disorder once and for all. When you see someone struggling with substance use in the Mass/Cass area or elsewhere, remember that many of them are battling a serious disease. They need more compassion, not more stigma. Changing our culture and the way we think about these issues will help more people feel comfortable accepting help, which makes our entire community healthier.

I fight the stigma by being open about my own recovery from alcohol addiction. When people look at the Mayor of Boston, I want them to know that they are seeing the face of recovery. I got the help I needed, and it allowed me to follow my dream of serving the city I love. I believe that everyone deserves the opportunity to reclaim their life and follow their dreams. That’s what I fight for every day, and I’ll be devoted to this work for the rest of my life.

schools. We are losing ground on hard-won gains made by parents, students, civil rights organizations, and community members seeking a quality education. Our city’s history is a dual legacy of Black Bostonians’ resistance to inequality and of unequal educational opportunities in Boston and across our state.

In the middle of this seismic disruption, Bostonians have an opportunity to create a new legacy. Reimagining Dr. King’s “Beloved Community,” we propose creating a Beloved Commonwealth, an anti-racist community that meets the needs of our most vulnerable members. While this vision is broader than our education system, we firmly believe all of our public education institutions are a critical ingredient to economic mobility, especially for low-income families. Yet, despite our best intentions, our educational system often exacerbates inequality. Despite robust college matriculation for Black and Latinx students, especially for Black girls, relatively few obtain a baccalaureate degree. Even students who graduate top of their class struggle to obtain advanced degrees and economic stability. And as we know research studies find degree attainment may not guarantee a living wage or break generational cycles of poverty, as many Black students are saddled with heavy student loan debt.

Creating a Beloved Commonwealth requires structural change. Book clubs and individual commitments are not

### PROPERTY TAX PROTEST (from pg. 1)

ing their pants off.

“This is the first time we’re really had this bad of an issue,” he said. “This has become a course of conduct. It was occasional in the past, but now we’re talking about a course of conduct. This issue is being neglected by public officials and they should be ashamed of themselves.”

He said he has written countless letters to Mayor Martin Walsh, and he’s also written to City Councilors. He said

enough if the systems we have – for high school admission, college admission, and college/post-graduate success – are unjust and stacked against less advantaged students. We have to make systemic changes across our K-16 educational system.

We must embrace King’s clear vision by centering historically disadvantaged young people in our policymaking. As parents and families grapple with school reopening in the midst of a continued global health pandemic, our educational institutions must ensure all students achieve their dreams, gain knowledge and skills while helping to create a more educated, democratic valued, and anti-racist minded workforce in the region. This is the Beloved Community.

For our K-16 education system to meet this promise, we must see education as a public good that attenuates inequality and promotes effective citizenship. Today’s challenges and opportunities require a shared sense of community, commitment to justice, and transformative policy ideas. For education to be a pathway to the Beloved Community, we must:

Build an intentional pipeline of Black, Latinx, Asian, and Indigenous teachers and educational leaders.

Decolonize the K-16 curriculum by centering the histories, experiences, and perspectives of the students pushed to the margins of society.

Remove police officers from schools and implement restorative justice practices.

Give higher education institutions the technical assistance and funding to produce anti-racist graduates.

Provide a basic income to all college-going students.

Ensure that housing exists for all families in the Commonwealth and that college students have subsidized and affordable housing while they are enrolled.

Make sure that K-16 schools and all of the necessary supports for students and families to thrive are adequately supported through our public dollars.

The opportunities before us are countless. Boston and the Commonwealth need to foster connections between Black and Brown students and families, educators, civic, labor and business leaders. Together, we can create a new legacy that reflects the richness and diversity of its civic, educational and social fabric. This is one of the roads to expand the “Beloved Community” into the Beloved Commonwealth.

*Marie-Frances Rivera is President at the Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center.*

*Jeraul Mackey is co-founder of the Black Doctoral Student Collective and a fifth-year Ph.D. student at Harvard University’s Graduate School of Education.*

*Imari K. Paris Jeffries is Executive Director of King Boston, a Trustee of the UMass System, and a fourth-year Ph.D. student at UMass Boston’s Department of Higher Education.*

Councilor Ed Flynn has been the only one to respond, but he hasn’t seen much progress, and actually the situation has gotten worse in the last month.

“I believe in a safety net and we need a safety net and I think they should help these folks out there,” he said. “But they need to help those who need help and they need to focus on the people who create havoc.”

He said the only answer he can come up with to get attention is a property tax protest.

“The only thing they respond to is money, losing money,” he said. “Let’s all put our taxes in escrow. We’ll be responsible, but they have to be responsible too. It’s has to be two ways. I would encourage anyone to go into Superior Court and file a mandamus that compels these City officials to perform their jobs.”

He said anyone who would like to join him in the property tax protest can contact him by e-mail at: [tmcandrew@tjmcandrewlaw.com](mailto:tmcandrew@tjmcandrewlaw.com).

**Laffer** (from pg. 1)

al Committee, as well as on a Block Organization that, as he recalls, “didn’t pan out.”

In 1977, Laffer was named treasurer of NABB for a one-year term, which he said, was “such a long time ago, [the organization] couldn’t afford to hire any staff and the records were kept in a shoebox.”

NABB was structured differently back then and included the president, who was appointed to a four-year term, and three vice presidents, as well as a secretary and a treasurer, and Laffer would serve as one of its vice presidents from 1978 to 82.

This timeframe also marked the beginning of the process for Copley Place, a state air-rights project built over the Mass Turnpike that opened in 1983.

Under then-Gov. Michael Dukakis’s administration, the state established a civic review process for what should be built on the site, and the developer, Urban Investment and Development Co., a Chicago-based subsidiary of Aetna Life & Casualty, proposed a luxury mall with hotel and office components, which, Laffer said, was a novel idea for Boston at the time.

The state then launched what Laffer described as a “loosely structured process” led by Tunney Lee, former department head of urban studies and planning at MIT. Anyone who turned out for the public meeting was appointed to the committee, which eventually swelled in size to around 400 members, and, Laffer said, “didn’t function too well” as a result.

About a year later, Lee convened a steering committee for the project comprising himself, representatives from the Mass Turnpike Authority and the Boston Redevelopment Authority, and one yet-to-be-determined public representative. “There was lot of concern among the participants that the plans was to cut the public out of the decision-making process,” Laffer recalled.

Like today, NABB was also then the only organization representing the residents of Back Bay while the South End was home to several such groups.

During the meeting to determine who would be the steer-

ing committee’s representative from the public, two South End residents with opposing views on gentrification couldn’t agree on a nominee from their own neighborhood, so they instead both volunteered an unwitting Laffer, who was only 29 at the time, for the job.

“The process led to significant improvements to the way the project came out,” said Laffer, who also served as NABB’s representative on the advisory committees to the Boston Redevelopment Authority for the project.

A BRA staffer later told Laffer that the agency’s deputy director had once confided that he believed “the process wouldn’t have come to a satisfactory solution without” Laffer’s involvement, which, Laffer said, “was nice to hear.”

In illustrating this point, Laffer contrasts the success of Copley Place, which he believes benefitted greatly from the public process, with Lafayette Place Mall - a mixed-use project that also contained retail, hotel and office elements and got underway in Downtown Boston around the same as time as Copley Place did. But without public input, Laffer said, Lafayette Place proved “an utter failure.”

In 1982, when NABB adopted its current structure, which includes a chairperson, the president, one vice president, a treasurer and a secretary, Laffer was named the organization’s president.

After wrapping up his tenure as president around 1984, Laffer was serving on the board and NABB’s executive committee when representatives of the Newark, N.J.-based Prudential Company came to Boston with a plan to expand the Prudential Center.

Soon afterwards, Laffer and Russ Gaudreau, chair of NABB at this time, met company representatives for breakfast and voiced their concern over the size of the proposed project, which, as Laffer said, went largely ignored.

Prudential officials, meanwhile, met with representatives from about seven other neighborhood organizations, Laffer said, and agreed to attend a “highly publicized” meeting in Rabb Hall at the Copley

Branch of the BPL to address the community’s concerns. But two days beforehand, the company said its representatives wouldn’t be attending it after all.

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*By a conservative estimate, Laffer figures he has participated in or at least attended approximately 2,500 community meetings in Back Bay over the past 45 years, including around 1,000 meetings of various NABB committees he has served on, as well as 800 meetings related to various development projects and between 400 and 500 NABB Executive Committee meetings.*

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Undaunted, Laffer was confident that he knew enough about the project to conduct the meeting himself and enlisted the help of Dick Braley, director of NABB at the time, who built a model to scale using slides of the proposed development for Laffer to use during his presentation.

The meeting went on as scheduled in Rabb Hall, with around 400 in attendance to hear from Laffer, who said he drew from his experience as an “old sales guy” for the occasion.

David Scondras, District 8’s first City Councilor, subsequently subpoenaed the Prudential Company to come to a City Council meeting at Rabb Hall, which paved the way for another meeting at the Parkman House with then-Mayor Ray Flynn and company representatives, who showed up this time with “a proposal with pictures,” Laffer said.

In response, the Mayor’s Deputy Director of Neighborhood Services drafted a set of guidelines for the project that paved the way for the Prudential Project Advisory Committee (PruPAC), and, Laffer would go on to serve as vice chair of PruPAC for more than 30 years until the completion of the process.

“It was the hardest political

thing I’ve ever done...and it was a two-year process just to develop the guidelines,” Laffer said. “We got 21 of 22 groups to sign on, and in most ways, [the guidelines] defined what got built.”

The project also resulted in what was then the largest private investment in Boston’s history.

When the BRA honored Laffer with an award in 1989, it was the only one presented that year by Stephen Coyle, who was then the agency’s director. Coyle said he estimated that Laffer had been on hand for around 300 meetings pertaining to the Pru’s expansion, to which Laffer wryly replied those were only the ones that Coyle knew about. “I spent a lot of my life doing that,” Laffer said.

Besides ensuring the positive outcome of the Prudential Center expansion, Laffer also has confidence in knowing that nearly every community process he has been involved in, including his most recent stint serving on the CAC for the Back Bay/South End Gateway project, has eventually reached consensus.

“I take pride in that every time I go into one of these things I get unanimity or near-unanimity,” Laffer said. “And one reason why this happens is that NABB believes we shouldn’t achieve our goals at the expense of other neighborhoods so we’ve tried really hard to respect what other neighborhoods are trying to accomplish, and to find a way to reach as many of everyone’s goals as we can.”

Although Laffer added, “The Storrow Tunnel is the only one we couldn’t figure out, but hopefully we’ll have another chance at that.”

Reaching a consensus doesn’t always come easily, however, as illustrated by the process surrounding 500 Boylston, which commenced around 1984 and Laffer described as a “controversial project in the neighborhood.”

It was originally proposed as two identical buildings designed by Philip Johnson, who was also the architect on 222 Berkeley St., and like that project, Hines of Houston, Texas, was also initially on board as the

developer.

Laffer, who served as NABB’s representative on the advisory committees to the BRA for 500 Boylston St., helped convene a Citizens Action Committee for the project, with only around seven stakeholders. “It got super private, which was a mistake,” Laffer said in hindsight.

Still, though, the CAC got most of what it asked for in regard to requested changes in height and setback, as well as the developer providing retail space on three sides of the building’s ground floor.

One stakeholder with a seat at the table on the CAC was Spencer Rice, who besides chairing the committee, was the also rector at Trinity Church, which was located right across street from 500 Boylston and had suffered significant structural issues during the construction of the John Hancock Tower.

Trinity Church, as Laffer soon learned, sits on around 5,000 wood pilings, and Rice was determined that this latest project wouldn’t further compromise the building.

“This is where I learned about groundwater,” said Laffer, who, in 2004, was named the first executive director of the Boston Groundwater Trust, which he described as “a quasigovernmental body that monitors groundwater levels in the made land sections of the city, where most buildings constructed before 1920 are supported on wood pilings that can rot if groundwater levels drop below their tops causing very expensive to repair damage, and to make recommendations for solving the problem.”

The city established the Groundwater Trust in 1986, but Laffer said it “went dormant” from about 1989 until 1997 when then-Mayor Thomas Menino was persuaded to appoint new trustees and “provide it with modest funding.”

In his more than decade-long tenure as the first executive director of the Groundwater Trust, Laffer helped draft zoning changes that encouraged construction methods to help maintain groundwater levels and worked with the city and state to implement these new

**WU FOR MAYOR** (from pg. 1)

for our neighborhoods, invest in housing we can afford and transportation that serves everyone, truly fund public health for safety and healing, and deliver on a city Green New Deal for clean air and water, healthy homes, and the brightest future for our children.”

As part of her campaign, Wu explained that her mother struggled with mental illness, and she became a caretaker for her sisters.

“In those days as we were trying to figure out how to go on in the depths of family crisis, it felt like we were alone, invisible, and powerless,” she said in a campaign statement. “Through my family’s struggles, I’ve seen just how much government matters, and how big of a disconnect there often is when you most need help.”

Wu has a law degree, and has worked for Mayor Tom Menino and U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren on her first campaign.

“I saw how government and politics can help solve problems, remove barriers, and empower people,” she said in a campaign statement. That’s why I ran for City Council in 2013, and why I work every day to build community and



*Councilor Michelle Wu announced her bid for mayor in a video released on Tuesday morning. She will seek to unseat incumbent Mayor Martin Walsh in the 2021 City Election.*

push for the future that our kids deserve.”

Mayor Walsh commended Wu for her decision to run at his press conference on September 15, saying that “I have great respect for her or anyone who runs for office. I look forward to more conversations about how we can move our city forward, but right now we are battling the COVID-19 pandemic.”

He said his focus right now

remains on economic recovery, aiding small businesses, safely reopening schools, getting homeless individuals and families into housing, reforming the police, and electing Joe Biden and Kamala Harris “so my administration can have a partner in Washington over the next four years.”

So far, there hasn’t been any major endorsements coming for Wu from Charlestown. City Councilor Lydia Edwards

– who many thought would back Wu – said this week she commends her for running and pointed out she is one of only a handful of women who have run for mayor. However, Edwards said she’s focused on getting Democratic Presidential candidate Joe Biden elected right now.

State Rep. Dan Ryan hasn’t yet commented on the potential mayoral race.

As a City Councilor, Wu has advocated for free transit for all and has spearheaded environmental initiatives like a Green New Deal for Boston and the Local Wetlands Protection Ordinance. She has also worked on equality issues for women and people of color.

According to the Massachu-

setts Office of Campaign and Political Finance, Wu’s campaign currently has \$346,592 total cash on hand.

Recent expenditures include campaign emails, digital ads, and the campaign video.

“I know Boston can be a welcoming city where we can all thrive—and there’s so much more we need to do together,” Wu said in a campaign statement.

Wu will be holding several community events in the coming days, including a Charlestown Meet and Greet on September 20, a Jamaica Plain Standout on September 18, and a Grassroots Virtual Fundraiser on September 17, among others. Visit michelleforboston.com for more details.

**LAFFER** (from pg. 4)

policies.

Upon his retirement in 2015, Laffer received citations commending his work from the Boston City Council and the Massachusetts House of Representatives. He has since gone on to volunteer with SCORE, which he described as “an SBA-affiliated organization that provides mentoring to help those who are contemplating founding new for-profit or nonprofit organizations or looking for help as they work through problems in their small businesses.”

Martyn Roetter, NABB’s outgoing chair, said it’s “somewhat of a paradox” that Laffer’s contributions “have helped transform Back Bay into a place that someone with his background and resources could no longer afford to live.” But Roetter added: “Elliot recognizes this issue as one of his and NABB’s major concerns.”

Serving most recently as co-chair of NABB’s Licensing

and Building Use Committee, Laffer was tasked with, among other responsibilities, reviewing applications for what Roetter described as “the contentious subject of marijuana dispensaries in the neighborhood” – an issue that is sure to continue to be a hot-button issue with NABB and in Back Bay.

Another invaluable asset that Laffer brings to the role as chair, Roetter said, is that “besides Sue Prindle, he has one of the longest institutional memories within NABB,” so “it’s helpful to have him put things into perspective.”

Yet Laffer “has kept up with the times,” Roetter said, and remains “eager and ready to tackle the job as the challenges now exist.”

By a conservative estimate, Laffer figures he has participated in or at least attended approximately 2,500 community meetings in Back Bay over the past 45 years, including around 1,000 meetings of var-

ious NABB committees he has served on, as well as 800 meetings related to various development projects and between 400 and 500 NABB Executive Committee meetings.

And while Laffer has devoted incalculable hours to serving Back Bay over the years, he knows all too well that his wife, Gail, and their daughter, Stephanie, have also had to sacrifice precious family time with him so he could commit himself to the neighborhood.

In fact, the long-running family joke around the Laffer household has always been that the first words Stephanie, who turns 40 next year, uttered were: “Daddy go to meeting.”

Ultimately, however, Laffer said, “What I’ve really tried to do at all these meetings is make sure that we accomplished something. There’s a purpose behind all of these meetings, and there’s an endpoint where trying to get to.”



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# Boston Latin students launch free tutoring program for grade schoolers

By Dan Murphy

Back in the spring, a group of Boston Latin School students recognized that many elementary school children were then stuck at home due to the pandemic and needed help with their schoolwork, so they formed Docemus – a fledgling nonprofit that offers virtual one-on-one tutoring to any grade schooler at no cost.

“In the middle of the pandemic, we saw that organizations were being created that catered specifically to the elderly and obviously, that’s justifiable since they’re the ones pandemic is impacting the most,” said Ludovico Rollo, a 17-year-old high school senior, Exeter Street resident and the co-founding director of Docemus. “We also realized that the pandemic furthers the education gap, especially in our own public school system, and we realized the need for professional and helpful tutoring at a low cost – although ours is free – is higher now than ever before.”

Besides Rollo, the organization includes his classmates Luc

Azar-Tanguay, a senior and the co-founder, and seniors Xiang He, Brando Palmarini and Levi Mattison, as well as junior William Hu, and offers individualized academic tutoring to students in the third through eighth grades in all subjects, including ESL, on a flexible schedule set by the students and their respective tutors.

So far, 20 students have been paired with tutors, Rollo said, based on matching the children’s individual academic needs with each tutor’s personal strengths. The tutors are all selected from the top high schools and colleges nationwide and thoroughly vetted, including undergoing a background check, an interview, a scenario test and, if necessary, tests on the subjects they plan to tutor, before they are accepted to the program.

Docemus also offers high school students the opportunity to serve as tutors, Rollo said, which can count as the public service hours required for graduation by many admission-based high schools, like Boston Latin.

Over the summer, the pro-

gram shifted its focus to creating a library of audio books for titles that appear on elementary-school summer reading-lists, which can be found on Docemus’s YouTube channel.

“As summer was coming to end, we began bringing back our focus on tutoring pairs,” Roll said, “and we hope to establish ourselves all over Boston, and in Massachusetts and

[beyond], in the near future.”

To learn more about Docemus, including how to sign up for a tutor, sign up as one or donate to the program, visit [www.docemus.org](http://www.docemus.org).



Pictured, left to right, are: Xiang He, a Boston Latin senior; Ludovico Rollo, a senior; William Hu, a junior; Brando Palmarini, a senior; and Levi Mattison, a senior. Not pictured: Luc Azar-Tanguay, Docemus co-founder and a BLS senior.

## Walsh gives COVID-19 update, announces new Healthy Streets initiatives, extends outdoor dining

By Lauren Bennett

Mayor Marty Walsh held a press conference on September 15, where he provided COVID-19 updates, as well as announced some upgrades as part of the Healthy Streets Program.

Walsh said that as of Monday, there were 235 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Massachusetts, with nine deaths. In Boston, there were 51 new cases and two deaths over the weekend. The seven day positive test rate for the week of September 7 was 1.6 percent, which he said was down from the previous week. Last week, 2700 residents were tested each day on average, including college students, Walsh said.

He then announced new initiatives as part of the Healthy Streets Program.

“The pandemic brought a new urgency for safe and reliable transportation,” he said, especially for healthcare and

other frontline workers who rely on it to get to their jobs.

Earlier this summer, Health Streets was launched and included pop up bike lanes downtown, connecting residents to major roads so they could commute more easily. Additionally, the City started offering 90 day free BlueBikes passes for essential workers.

Walsh announced on Tuesday that some of these upgrades will be permanent, such as the installation of new bus lanes in neighborhood corridors such as Columbus Ave. in Roxbury.

“Bus lanes have worked well and have proven popular,” Walsh said, adding that he wanted to thank the MBTA for their partnership.

Additionally, many pop up bike lanes will become permanent, in areas around the Boston Common and Boston Public Garden. Traffic signals will be adjusted to increase safety, and intersections will

be improved. He said that residents should be patient during the construction process, as the changes will add opportunities for bikers that weren’t there before.

Walsh also talked about extending the October outdoor dining program. The program was originally set to expire on October 31. He said that restaurants who use public sidewalks and parking spaces through the Temporary Outdoor Dining Program may continue to do so until December 1, when further assessment will take place.

“Requests for further extensions of this use shall be considered on a case by case basis in the coming weeks and months,” the City said in a statement.

On private property, outdoor dining is permitted to continue for as long as the COVID-19 public health emergency is in effect, he said.

He said that as temperatures begin to drop, the City

will waive application fees for propane heating in outdoor dining areas. While a permit is still required, restaurant owners will not have to pay for the application fee. Electric heaters will be permitted without a permit as long as cords are not draped across the sidewalk, causing a hazard, Walsh said.

Chief of Health and Human Services Marty Martinez also talked about colleges and how they are handling the pandemic, especially in light of the recent spike in cases at Boston College (BC).

Martinez said that the City continues to work with colleges on their reopening and testing protocols, and has “partnered with BC closely” to support their efforts to isolate students and increase testing capacity. He said that BC has “been very responsive,” and the City will “continue to monitor” the situation there and at every college in the City.

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# As teachers return, neighbors worry about their safety and security

By Seth Daniel

The Blackstone Elementary School in the South End – like many schools across Boston – has been a quiet and empty place for six months now, and as teachers return to teach remotely (starting Monday, Sept. 21) many are worried that the months of inactivity could spawn a lack of security for teachers – and eventually students.

The situation in Franklin Square and Blackstone Squares has become exponentially worse in relation to homelessness and drug use and other criminal elements since COVID-19 hit in March, and at the Blackstone Franklin Square Neighborhood Association meeting Tuesday, there was a vocal concern about

those returning to the area for school.

“The need to have a plan for this because many are going to be using outside spaces for classrooms,” said Domingos DeRosa, a guest at the meeting from the South End Roxbury United effort. “It’s going to be very tough for any student or teacher at the Blackstone who walks home to be able to successfully navigate what’s going on right now in that area.”

Jamie Golden, of neighboring Barre 3 on Washington Street, said once the fall comes and it gets dark earlier, she’s worried for the teachers and the neighborhood – as it has become a sort of “witching hour” for a bad element.

“With my neighbor Stella Restaurant gone, that’s going to be an interesting corner,”

she said. “I don’t know if the school dismissal time coincides with a break at the social services agencies, but there’s something there. It’s a scary time of day and it’s also when all schools and teachers are let out. It needs to be addressed. It’s going to be a very stressful winter there when it starts getting darker and not as many people are around.”

Parent and neighbor Chloe Voight seconded that, and said she would like to see a police presence in the area when students and teachers are leaving school buildings. She suggested the D-4 bike patrol make the Blackstone School area a priority during drop-off in the morning, and dismissal in the evening.

Blackstone President Toni Crothall and Secretary Jon

Alves said agreed that was a good idea and planned to suggest it to Capt. Steve Sweeny at D-4. Both said safety is much more of a concern now than it might have been at the school before COVID-19.

## EXCITED TO RETURN

Blackstone teacher and South End resident Emmie Lindholm talked to the Association on Tuesday about how excited she is to return to teaching 5<sup>th</sup> grade on Monday, Sept. 21 – even if just remotely.

She said they have been in the school preparing for remote learning, and she had to remove her ‘March Objectives’ from the classroom bulletin board this week. She said she was very happy to be back.

“I love the school and I love the students and I love this

community,” she said. “In the spring, most of the faculty at the Blackstone School worked really hard and it was all hands on deck to get through the school year successfully. We all thought we could push through and be back in the classroom in the fall. I kind of came to terms with the fact that we wouldn’t be going back in July or August. That was a hard pill to swallow, to realize I have to totally reinvent the way that I am an educator to make sure I’m the best teacher for my students.”

She said she doesn’t have any students that are high-risk, so there won’t be any students in her classroom likely until November.

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# South End Student selected as a member of the Red Sox Scholars Class of 2020

Staff Report

Eriberto Pimentel, 13, of the South End from the Hurley K-8 School was selected as one of 12 Boston Public School 7th graders to be welcomed the Red Sox Scholars program and receive a \$10,000 college scholarship from the Red Sox Foundation. The college success program provides academic, professional and social support to each student for at least nine years to ensure they graduate from college with as little debt as possible and are prepared to enter the workforce.

Eriberto Pimentel was awarded for his work as a well-rounded student-athlete. He received the 'Hurley Hawk Award' from his school for

achieving Student of the Month and loves to play baseball and basketball. In addition, Eriberto is a member of his school's Debate Team. He is also a member of Sole Train, a running group that meets in order to prepare and run 5-mile and 13-mile races.

Red Sox Scholars is a college success program managed by the Foundation and presented by Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center (BIDMC), the Official Hospital & Official Health Care Provider of the Boston Red Sox and Fenway Park. The Red Sox and Red Sox Foundation have supported and empowered 313 students to pursue their goals since the program's creation in 2003. Throughout the years, 100% of the Red Sox

Scholars have graduated from high school and are enrolling in a 2- or 4-year college program. With that, approximately 80% of Red Sox Scholars in the Class of 2020 graduated from a post-secondary program within 4 years.

The Red Sox Scholars program receives funding from American Student Assistance, Aramark, Biogen Foundation, Eastern Bank, Doris Buffett's Letters Foundation, The Lynch Foundation, Northern Trust and PGA Tour, Sunovion Pharmaceuticals, and Winter-Lehman Foundation as well as by Red Sox Foundation fundraising events. Red Sox outfielder Jackie Bradley Jr. and his wife Erin serve as the Program Captains.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE BOSTON RED SOX

As a recipient of the 2020 Red Sox Scholars, Eriberto Pimentel of the Hurley K-8 School was honored with a \$10,000 college scholarship as part of the Red Sox Foundation's Red Sox Scholars Program during a special ceremony at Fenway Park on August 24.

# As banks readjust to COVID-19, some branches look to close

By Seth Daniel

Two major bank branches announced they will be closing in the downtown neighborhoods this week, marking a potential trend as people move more to online banking and

cash-less living, but industry insiders said they expect it to be a short-term re-alignment.

The Hingham Institute for Savings announced last month it would be closing its long-time Beacon Hill branch on Charles Street, getting approval this

month from the Division of Banks, but said it would keep its South End branch open on Tremont Street to handle in-person visits.

Meanwhile Cambridge Trust Company put in an application to the Division of Banks this month to close its long-time, anchor branch in on Tremont Street in the St. Cloud building. That branch has been in operation for years, and the loss would open up a huge hole in the heart of the South End business district.

Cambridge Trust did not return an email looking for information on the closure, which hasn't yet been approved.

That said, Hingham President and Chief Operating Officer Patrick Gaughen said they have no intention of leaving the South End. He said the closure on Beacon Hill was a trend uncovered through COVID-19 that banks lighten up on the numbers of branches as more people of all ages use online banking.

"We've been in the South End since 2006 and we will be there permanently," said Gaughen.

"As we close our Beacon Hill office, we are consolidating our services for all of our Boston customers in the South End office...I think banks are generally finding that we can serve a broader geography because of the uptake of digital banking tools and the declining use of cash."

Daniel Forte, director of the Massachusetts Bankers Association (MBA), said the consolidation in geography, especially in cities, is to be expected. He said the expansion of branches over the last several years has led to far more branches from far fewer banks.

"We're up about 7 percent on the numbers of branches in the last 25 years despite the fact that the number of banks has consolidated by 47 percent," he said.

He said he doesn't expect any significant shift or bank branches fleeing business districts in huge numbers, but he said they do expect some re-alignment as businesses come out of COVID-19.

"I don't think it will be significant," he said. "You might

see a 10 percent consolidation in branches over the next five to 10 years. I think you'll see changes in the branches though as well – in the technology and how employees there are used."

He said he expects branches to move away from employees that are just tellers and just processing transactions. With online banking prevalent, more banks offering electronic check processing and more ATMs, branch employees will likely be tellers, advisors, customer service specialists, lending agents and a friendly face too.

"Even seniors that have a higher propensity of visiting a branch in person did an excellent job of recognizing you can do 90 percent of retail banking online," he said.

"Electronic banking will be our future, but branches will remain important and recognizable from a branding standpoint," he added. "When branches are built or remodeled, they will be smaller and smarter than they have been in the past."



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# Essaibi-George launches weekly 'Lunch & Learn' series

By Lauren Bennett

On September 11, City Councilor At-Large Annissa Essaibi-George launched a Facebook Live series called Lunch & Learn, where she will chat with Boston Public Schools (BPS) staff and community members weekly about the BPS Ready plan.

"As a BPS parent, former teacher, and Chair of Education, my top priority is ensuring our kids receive a high quality education, keeping our school communities safe and healthy, and keeping the BPS community informed about how BPS is responding to the impact of COVID-19," Essaibi-George wrote.

The September 11 "lunch hour" discussion was centered around food distribution in BPS with Laura Benavidez, Executive Director of Food and Nutrition for BPS.

Essaibi-George said that since the beginning of the pandemic, 1.8 million meals have been served to youth in the City through BPS distribution sites.

BPS schools officially closed on March 16, Benavidez said, and 17 food sites were up and running by March 17. "Since March, we've been growing strong," she said. Meals were provided during holidays and vacation breaks throughout the summer.

"Hunger doesn't take a break," she said. She also said that the pandemic has allowed BPS to be more creative about how to get meals to students and making sure they always have access to healthy food.

Moving into the new school year, she said that breakfast will be offered in three different models for in-person learning: they can receive the meal at the door, they can go down to the cafeteria to get something, or there will be a different point in

the school building where they can pick up a breakfast and eat it in the classroom.

"Parents will have options for when school starts," Benavidez said. There will be 21 distribution sites across the city for parents to pick up 10 pack meals (five breakfasts and five lunches) for the week for students who are learning remotely. They will be open on Tuesday and Wednesday from 10am to 6pm.

"Our goal is to constantly create that access to meals for our students," Benavidez said. Meals are also available at no cost to every child in Boston under age 18—they do not have to be a BPS student to receive meals.

It's an "open environment," Benavidez said. "We want to make sure families feel welcome." She added that BPS will be collaborating with YMCAs and BCYFs in the City as well, as they have received a grant to be able to provide groceries at the 21 sites as well to help out entire families.

Essaibi-George is a mother to four boys in BPS schools, so she wondered if thought had gone into how the meals would be packaged for ease of transport and storage once it is home.

Benavidez said that there has been "constant planning" for that factor. Some meals will be pre-plated, and for schools with fully equipped kitchens, meals will be packed on site. Meals will include shelf stable options as well as fresh and frozen options as well.

Additionally, Friday is "pizza Friday" in BPS schools, so Benavidez said they wanted to make sure that things like that are still available for kids to enjoy.

"We're working with our parents and our vendors so we have the packaging that we need so it travels well," she

said;

Another topic of discussion was the menu, and balancing exposing kids to foods that are familiar to them with some they might be unfamiliar with.

She said that feedback from kids about the menu is very important, as is having conversations with kids as they're engaging with the choices offered. When there is only one or two options that are all packaged up, it doesn't offer much of an availability for conversation, she said, but when a full spread is laid out with a salad bar, for example, or a choice of red or white sauce on pasta, there is more room for conversation with the kids about what they prefer.

Benavidez also said that kids have to try a specific food seven times before they can decide whether or not they like it, so BPS tries to include new foods several times to get a true reading of how the kids feel about it.

When asked about incorporating cultural foods into the menu, Benavidez said that "that's what we're constantly learning about." She said that "pricing can be limiting" for buying certain food items for certain areas, but buying base items like rice and a protein like chicken or beef can be helpful because they can be turned into something that children recognize depending on how they are prepared.

"It's not necessarily that they don't like it," she said, but "it could be that they don't know it."

Benavidez also said that they work hard to ensure proper portion size according to grade level, and offer a "rainbow" of fresh fruits and vegetables throughout the week.

About 60 percent of a child's daily caloric intake is provided by these breakfasts and lunch-

es, and help to fuel students so they are better able to learn at school.

"We are a major provider of food security for our kids," Essaibi-George said.

Essaibi-George also wondered if there is potential to arrange for a virtual cooking class that could demonstrate a BPS meal being prepared, or to show families how to cook with the "rainbow" of fruits and vegetables.

"I love that idea," Benavidez said. She said that there are three chefs who do training as My Way Cafe makes its way to more areas. She said they have a lot of experience and a virtual cooking class is definitely some-

the new school year is underway.

Benavidez said that BPS is focused on making sure that healthy, nutritious meals continue to be provided to BPS students as the hybrid school year starts up shortly.

"We're trying to be nimble and quick and creative to make sure...that whatever does happen, students or parents don't feel the burden of that," she said. "It's up to us, making sure that children feel welcome and they're ready. Their job is to be there and be ready to learn and we're there to feed them and

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# Global march for universal basic income set for Sept. 19 on Boston Common

Staff Report

Hosted by Humanity First Collective and Income Movement, the Boston Rally for Basic Income will commence at noon on the historic Boston Common on Sept. 19.

Massachusetts leaders from social justice organizations, thought leaders in universal basic income (UBI), elected officials, congressional candidates and religious leaders will be among those joining supporters to demand economic justice for the millions left behind in today's economy.

The Basic Income March, led globally by the Income Movement, is a non-partisan, people-powered movement demanding that the economy evolve to meet the challenges of the 21st century. Thirty-eight marches and rallies, with more being planned, have been announced. This will be the first ever rally organized in Boston to join other metropolitan cities around the world as part of this annual event. "2020 has brought a lot of changes and it's just the start. It is long overdue that we provide people with the resources they need to survive,

resources we have, so they can tackle our biggest issues: our climate crisis, our public health, the explosion in technology, all of which we are seeing the effects of right here in Massachusetts. Poverty is excluding many great workers and thinkers from joining in on moving humanity forward." said Lewis Black III, the rally's planning committee chair and Volunteer Lead with Humanity First Collective. The Boston Rally for Basic Income will be peaceful with all pandemic guidelines observed, such as physical distancing and masks required,

while calling for universal basic income.

Through citizen engagement and activism, the global Basic Income March is changing the conversation around UBI and its viability as a core solution to end poverty. From a single mother's story of escaping a financially abusive relationship, welfare creating barriers for a local resident to escape poverty, and how UBI can create a new era of political freedom and activism, speakers will highlight personal stories and community perspectives on why Basic Income is critical. Prominent

elected officials and political candidates will also be speaking and in attendance, including State Senator Jamie Eldridge, Cambridge City Councilor Quinton Zonervan, and others. The event lineup will conclude with a call to action and a people's demand for the support of Massachusetts leadership to adopt and pass a universal basic income as a means to a healthier, more innovative, and just society. The Boston Rally for Basic Income will demonstrate the immediate need for basic income in Massachusetts and nationwide.

## 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.*

**From the Sept. 16 License Board meeting, online:**

•Sombbrero Chiquito; D/B/A: Sombbrero Chiquito, 197A MASSACHUSETTS Ave., Back Bay. Has applied for a Common Victualler License to be exercised on the above - In one room on the first floor, kitchen and storage in rear. Manager: Bruce Sabokrooh. Hours of Operation: 11 a.m. to 10 p.m.

•44 Concord Square LLC, 44 Concord Sq., South End. Has applied for a Lodging Houses (Fraternity/Dormitory) License to be exercised on the above - 6 story building. The building contains 16 lodging rooms (16 person capacity), each with its own private bath and small kitchenette. There are three (3) rooms on each floor on floor 1-5, and one (1) room in the basement. Shared laundry facilities are located in the basement. Manager: BRUCE PERCELAY.

**From the Sept. 17 Zoning Advisory Board, 1010 Mass Ave., or online, 5 p.m.:**  
•283 Dartmouth St.,

South End. Applicant: IContour Anti-Aging Center. Purpose: Change occupancy to include Body Art/Permanent Cosmetics. No construction required.

**From the Sept. 17 Emergency License Board meeting, 11 a.m., online:**

**NOTICE OF EMERGENCY INFORMATIONAL HEARING REGARDING TEMPORARY HEATERS AND OUTDOOR DINING.** You are hereby notified that the Licensing Board for the City of the Boston in partnership with an interdepartmental team including, but not limited to, the Boston Fire Department, the Inspectional Services Department, the Boston Transportation Department, the Public Improvement Commission, the Department of Public Works, the Office of Economic Development, and the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services (the "Interdepartmental Team") will hold two (2) virtual informational hearings regarding temporary heaters and outdoor dining.

**From the Sept. 17 Boston Groundwater Trust meeting, 3 p.m., online:**

•Financial report and update from Fidelity Investments:15

•EXECUTIVE SESSION re: Discussion on legal analysis regarding relationship with the City and Trust Leadership: 30

•Remote monitoring proposal update:10

•BPDA GCOD Revision Update:10

•Executive Director's Report: 10

**From the Sept. 22 Licensed Premise Violations hearing, 10 a.m., Online:**

•BOYLSTON STREET HOTEL LLC, D/B/A: MANDARIN ORIENTAL, 776 BOYLSTON St., Back Bay. 4/07/2020: Assault and battery patron on patron.

**From the Sept. 22, 11 a.m., CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON CITY AND NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES Hearing:** *A hearing regarding rodent control and illegal dumping in the City of Boston. This matter was sponsored by Councilors Ed Flynn and Liz Breadon, and referred to the Committee on City and Neighborhood Services.*

**From the Sept. 22, 2 p.m. COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT HEARING:** *Cooperative housing in Boston and strategies for its further expansion. This matter is sponsored by Councilor Kenzie Bok and was referred to the Committee on Housing and Community Development on February 5, 2020.*

**From the Sept. 22 Boston Landmarks Commission hearing, 4:30 p.m., Online via Zoom (HTTPS://US02WEB.ZOOM.US/J/88339103373):**

**DESIGN REVIEW**

•Boston City Hall - 1 City Hall Square: Congress Street elevation install flood mitigation barriers at public entrance, window walls, entrance to Mayor's parking garage, and doorway to

fire pump room.

**ADVISORY REVIEW**

•Museum of Fine Arts - 465 Huntington Avenue: At Fenway Façade create opening for window to provide natural light to basement area space.

**CITIZENSHIP FEES TO INCREASE**

The United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is making significant changes to the naturalization application. Starting October 2, it is raising the cost of application from \$725 to \$1,200 and eliminating the fee waiver for most low-income residents. USCIS is also increasing the permanent residence (green card) application fee and implementing an asylum application fee, making the United States one of four countries to do so. The City of Boston and the Mayor's Office for Immigrant Advancement (MOIA) are encouraging eligible Boston immigrants to apply for citizenship before the October 2 fee increases. They can contact Project Citizenship at 617-694-5949 for free, high quality legal help with their application.

**FREE BPS BREAKFAST IN SOUTH END/FENWAY**

Students who wish to get a free breakfast Monday through Friday, 8:30 to 11:30 a.m., have three sites to choose from in the South End and Fenway. This is the BPS initiative, but other organizations are also serving meals in the area as well.

•Blackstone Elementary School - 380 Shawmut Ave.

(South End).

•Boston Chinese Evangelical Church, 120 Shawmut Ave. (Monday, Weds., and Friday only - South End).

•Boston Latin School - 78 Avenue Louis Pasteur (Fenway).

**REPORTING WORKPLACE SAFETY CONCERNS**

•Workers in any size organization have options if they feel they are being pressured into an unsafe situation. Attorney General Maura Healey has created resources for workers to report safety concerns during reopening. They include an online form at the [Attorney General's website](#) and a dedicated Fair Labor hotline at 617-727-3465. People can also find those resources by calling 311.

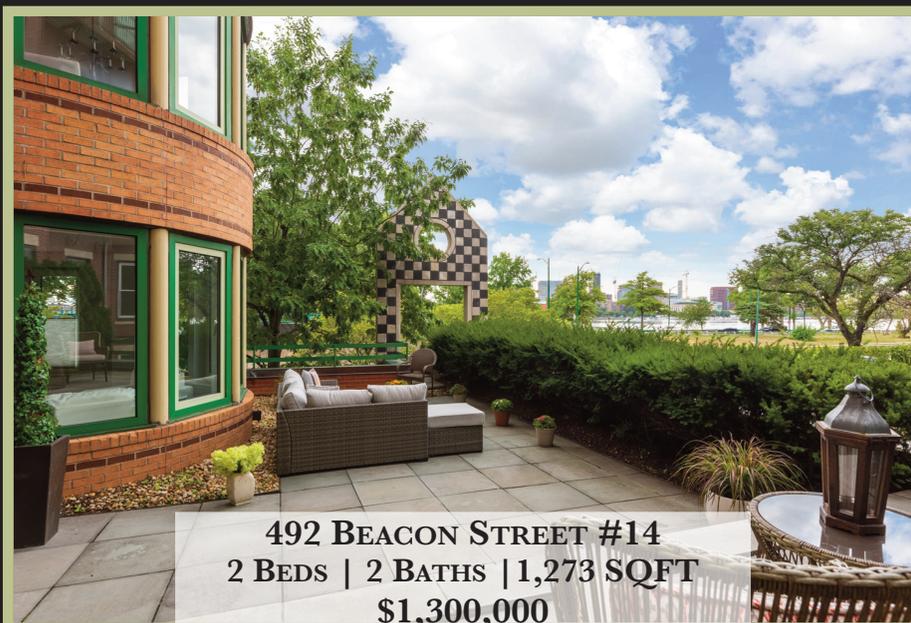
**HOW TO REPORT A PROBLEM PROPERTY**

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.



**EPITOME OF LUXURY**

**122 COMMONWEALTH AVE #PH**  
**3 BEDS | 3.5 BATHS | 4,144 SQFT**  
**\$13,200,000**



**492 BEACON STREET #14**  
**2 BEDS | 2 BATHS | 1,273 SQFT**  
**\$1,300,000**



**188 BROOKLINE AVENUE #PH28E**  
**3 BEDS | 3.5 BATHS | 2,548 SQFT**  
**\$4,990,000**



**54 PINCKNEY STREET**  
**5 BEDS | 4F 2H BATHS | 3,825 SQFT**  
**\$5,995,000**



**80 COMMONWEALTH AVENUE #PH**  
**4 BEDS | 3F 2H BATHS | 3,560 SQFT**  
**\$6,250,000**

