

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2020

THE BOSTON SUN

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SERVING BACK BAY - SOUTH END - FENWAY - KENMORE



The Fresh Truck is at the South End's Lenox Camden Apts, 3 Kendall St from 2:30-4:30 p.m. and the South End's Villa Victoria, 50 Aguadilla St. from 2:30 pm-5:00 pm on Fridays.

Nonprofit Fresh Truck in South End on Fridays

By John Lynds

Fresh Truck Program Coordinator Stephen James was motivated to help families take on personal challenges with the philosophy of starting each day with proper food access to live a healthy lifestyle.

In the South End James helps the Fresh Truck, which is in the neighborhood on Fridays, connect with volunteers, customers, and many partners in the community.

James was at a community meeting recently to discuss Fresh Truck and promote it as another option for those facing food insecurity.

"We are a mobile market that is currently stocked with over 30 fruits and vegetables," said James. "We are another resource for families like local farmers markets and grocery stores and my goal here tonight is to share this information and even if you are not food inse-

cure you may know someone in the community that may be in need."

James pointed out that food insecurity in Massachusetts has doubled from 8 percent to 16 percent due to the COVID-19 pandemic so the more food access options out there for families the better.

One program Fresh Truck participates in is the state's Healthy Incentives Program

(FRESH TRUCK, Pg. 3)

BFSNA virtually holds wide-ranging general meeting

By Dan Murphy

The Blackstone/Franklin Square Neighborhood Association met virtually for a wide-ranging general meeting on Tuesday, Nov. 17, that included news that the group had received special recognition from the Boston Police Department; an update on the intended demolition of the Villa Victoria Center for the Arts; the

MBTA's plans to cut back service, which includes the proposed elimination of its 43 bus line; and an appearance by the city's newly named liaison to the South End and Bay Village, among other agenda items.

Captain Steven Sweeney of the BPD's District 4 was on hand to congratulate both the BFSNA as the 2020 Top Crime Watch Group of the Year in the South End/Back Bay/Fenway

area, as well as Jonathan Alves, the group's vice president, who was recognized as the district's Crime Fighter of the Year.

Both accolades were awarded to their respective recipients during a small ceremony about six weeks ago, he said, after the event was postponed from August.

With the holidays fast

(BFSNA, Pg. 7)

Stores at the Front: Everything is on the table with unused commercial buildings

By Seth Daniel

As more and more companies decide they don't need office space in the Back Bay or downtown areas, several City and neighborhood leaders are warning of an impending commercial real estate crisis – particularly in the Back Bay.

With that in mind, Councilor Michelle Wu said in a neighborhood roundtable that all ideas should be on the table, including converting commercial space into housing, school space and other necessities that have arisen out of COVID-19.

(COMMERCIAL CRISIS, Pg. 5)

Talking about the T

MBTA proposes service changes following decreased ridership due to COVID-19

By Lauren Bennett

As part of its "Forging Ahead" program in response to ridership changes, the MBTA announced on November 9 several proposed changes to service, and is looking for feedback from riders.

MBTA General Manager

(MBTA CUTS, Pg. 4)

Councilors Bok, O'Malley, and Wu join community to protest proposed Green Line cuts

By John Lynds

Earlier this week the MBTA laid out its plan to cut service on the Green Line, a move that was publicly rebuked by City Councilor Kenzie Bok, Matt O'Malley, Michelle Wu and the community Wednesday during a rally at the Heath Street

(MBTA PROTEST, Pg. 5)



City Councilor Kenzie Bok, Rep. Ayanna Pressley, City Councilor Michelle Wu, City Councilor Matt O'Malley, and State Senator Sonia Chang-Diaz spoke out against the proposed cuts.

EDITORIAL

VACCINES ARE COMING, BUT WE STILL HAVE A DUTY TO STOP THE SPREAD

The announcements in the past week that two vaccines have been shown to be remarkably effective in providing immunization against the coronavirus have given our nation hope that the pandemic might be brought under control.

Finally, there is a light at the end of the tunnel.

However, with 250,000 Americans already dead from the virus and the holiday season approaching, this is no time for any of us to let our guard down. The virus does not take a holiday and is spreading like wildfire across the country, leading even Republican governors to issue mask mandates and resulting in additional shutdowns of businesses that already were on the edge of permanent closure.

It is estimated that if we do not wear masks and maintain physical separation, at least 250,000 more Americans will be dead in the coming months.

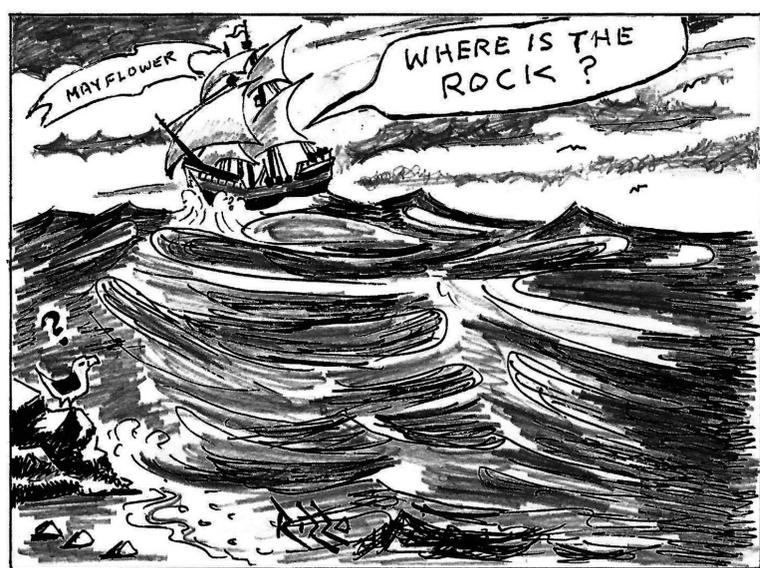
Hospitals and healthcare workers already are stretched to the limit in many states. If the pandemic is allowed to spread further, there will be a total breakdown in the American healthcare system, endangering the lives not only of healthcare employees and coronavirus patients, but anybody else who needs hospitalization from accidents, heart attacks, strokes, and cancer.

In addition, we would note that even for those who recover from the coronavirus, there can be lasting damage to the heart, lungs, and other organs.

We urge all of our readers to listen to the warnings and directives of our public health officials and to consider how we can spend the holiday season with our loved ones in a safe setting, if at all.

A small wedding in Maine in August was linked to 178 COVID cases and eight deaths -- and none of those who died attended the wedding.

Our government leaders can urge us to protect ourselves and others, but COVID-19 safety this holiday season ultimately comes down to each and every American assuming personal responsibility to observe and obey the rules.



DON'T PASS AMMENDMENT NUMBER 759

The Catholic Church teaches that life itself starts at conception and ends with natural death.

The Massachusetts state legislature is currently debating the annual budget to fund state government for the balance of the fiscal year. As part of that process many amendments are filed for consideration. House amendment number 759 will be considered by the full House in the coming days. This amendment would expand abortion access in the Commonwealth well beyond what is enshrined in state law.

While we acknowledge the amendment addresses some concerns that were raised about

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

the deeply troubling provisions of the ROE legislation, the fact remains that abortion would remain an option under certain circumstances for the full term of the pregnancy. That fact alone is in direct conflict with Catholic teaching and must be opposed.

In addition, current law requires a young woman under the age of 18 years old to gain the consent of a parent, guardian or the court to have an abortion. The amendment under consideration would decrease the age of consent to 16 years old. In its simplest terms, a 16 or 17 year old girl would be deprived of the guidance and support of an adult at the time of making this life changing decision.

Finally, although life-supporting equipment would be

required to be in the room for abortions performed after 24 weeks, the specific language in the amendment is nuanced enough that the physician would not be required to use the equipment. Specifically, it would "enable" the physician performing the abortion to take appropriate steps, in keeping with good medical practice... to preserve the life and health of a live birth and the patient.

For these reasons we urge the full House of Representatives not to pass amendment number 759.

His Eminence Seán P. O'Malley, OFM, Cap. Archbishop of Boston
Most Reverend Robert J. McManus Bishop of Worcester
Most Reverend Edgar M. da Cunha, SDV Bishop of Fall River

Walsh announces city will publicize new COVID metrics

By Lauren Bennett

Mayor Walsh and his administration announced on November 17 that they would be releasing more COVID-19 metrics to the public moving forward, as well as adjusting the metric on positivity rate.

Walsh said that in Boston as of Monday, there were 239 new cases reported and four deaths since Friday.

"We're going to continue to monitor the data that we have," said Chief of Health and Human Services Marty Martinez, but data will now be released to the public twice a week using six metrics.

The metrics include new positive tests for COVID-19 in Boston residents, which Martinez told reporters on Tuesday "tells us how many new cases we're seeing each day and how quickly COVID-19 is spreading in Boston." Each of these metrics comes with a threshold of concern as well, and in this case it would be 339.6 cases per day or 50 cases per 100,000 residents per day.

Another metric is positivity for COVID-19 in Boston residents, which shows the percentage of tests that are returning positive out of all those who are tested in a specific period of time. Martinez explained that a high positivity could indicate widespread infection in a particular community and/or "only a subset of the community at greatest risk for COVID infection is being tested." In this case, the threshold of concern would be a positivity rate of 5 percent or higher or four or more Boston neighborhood rates above eight percent.

"Up to now, Boston has used a person-level approach using a cumulative time frame that looks back to the beginning of the epidemic," the presentation said, "meaning each person is only counted once, even if they have been tested repeatedly."

Moving forward, a hybrid model will be used that includes person-level and test-level positivity, and will not include college testing, though that will continue to be monitored separately, he said. He said the

reason for this is to get a better look at positivity at the neighborhood level without college data skewing it.

"We think it more accurately depicts recent positivity due to a tighter time frame for testing," and "provides a more accurate depiction of unique new positives," Martinez said.

He said for those people who get tested multiple times a week, only one negative test will be counted, but any positive results get counted once every 90 days to prevent repeated reporting of the same positive test.

Martinez said that the current positivity rate in Boston as of November 12 using this metric is 5.4%, and the only one of the six metrics that has gone into the threshold of concern.

The third metric has to do with the number of COVID-19 molecular tests performed, which "helps us to understand whether we are performing a consistent amount of testing

(COVID METRICS, Pg. 3)

FRESH TRUCK (from pg. 1)

(HIP) for EBT/SNAP clients. James explained that the HIP program helps families or individuals buy more fruits and vegetables for their household through an incentive program. Residents can use their SNAP benefits to buy fruits and vegetables from a HIP authorized farm or vendor like Fresh Truck and they will receive \$1 for each dollar spent on eligible fruits and vegetables, up to a monthly limit. “Any family or individual that has an EBT/SNAP card is already enrolled in the program,” said James.

The Fresh Truck is in the neighborhood on Fridays at the South End’s Lenox Camden Apts, 3 Kendall St from 2:30 pm-4:30 pm and the South End’s Villa Victoria, 50 Agudilla St. from 2:30 pm-5:00 pm. Fresh Truck was started by Josh Trautwein while he was working as a health educator at the MGH Charlestown Healthcare Center. He kept hearing from his families that it was difficult to shop for healthy food — at that time, the only grocery store in the neighborhood was shutting down for a year-long renovation. The health center



Fresh Truck Program Coordinator Stephen James

had no way of solving for the fact that patients didn’t have access to the food they needed to stay healthy. It was this experience that inspired Fresh Truck to rethink the traditional grocery store model, make it mobile and bring food closer to the people that need it the most. In 2018, Fresh Truck expanded its efforts to address health disparities by developing Fresh Connect, a platform that makes it possible for health care providers to prescribe food as medicine.

COVID METRICS (from pg. 2)

among Boston residents,” the presentation said. The threshold of concern here is a decrease in testing for three or more consecutive weeks, he said.

The final three metrics have to do with hospitals, and include “emergency department visits to Boston hospitals, the availability of adult ICU and adult medical or surgical beds at Boston hospitals, [and] percentage of non-surge adult ICU beds occupied at Boston hospitals,” according to a slide presented.

These metrics help the city understand hospital capacity so they can come up with a plan to increase capacity if need be,

So far, Martinez said that although there has been increased positivity, it has not turned into a high number of hospitalizations so far.

There is also a focus on equitable impact, Martinez said, including taking a hard look at data to find where inequities lie and “ensure that understanding was incorporated into these metrics,” as well as making sure more data by race, ethnicity, and age is available “given the disproportionate impact over the duration of COVID, and use these metrics to ensure equity across testing, isolation, and prevention messaging in the communities hit hardest by the virus.

Dr. Jennifer Lo of the Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC) said it is difficult for many people to pinpoint where exactly they contracted the virus, but household contacts have been a major cause for more cases, as one family member or roommate brings it home to the rest of the household. She also said that there have

been a number of cases from workplace spread where people might have relaxed COVID distancing rules in the break room where masks are off for eating. She also said that vehicle sharing has been another cause of spread.

She said the BPHC is “monitoring those patterns,” and added that one person who may be particularly social could be just as quick of a spreader of the virus as super spreader events if they visit with multiple groups of people.

We are seeing it across the board,” Martinez said, between small gatherings, essential workers, people who travel—“it’s not just a couple scenarios,” he said.

“It’s important to us that our residents understand that the public health team is really focused on understanding what we’re seeing,” he said, and what that means and how the city can intervene to stop the numbers from getting out of control.

“If numbers continue to accelerate, we’re going to have to do more,” Walsh said at a press conference on Tuesday morning. “We’re going to put health and the health of our community first...there is no economic recovery without public health.”

He also announced that this week, 150 of the city’s highest-needs students were able to return to in person learning, but all other Boston Public School students continue to learn remotely.

For more information on COVID-19 and to view the data, visit boston.gov/coronavirus and bphc.org.

NABB’s virtual holiday program coming Dec. 16

Staff report

Join the Neighborhood Association of the Back Bay Special Events for a virtual holiday program called “Christmas Traditions in Boston” on Wednesday, Dec 16, at 7 p.m.

The featured speaker will be noted historian Anthony Sammarco, who is the author of more than 70 books on the history and development of Boston, including one that outlines the celebration (or lack thereof) of Christmas in Boston in the

first two centuries after the city was settled in 1630.

“Christmas Traditions in Boston” revisits the memories of the past and brings together the shared traditions of how Bostonians celebrated the holiday season. This will be a one-hour presentation including questions and answers; there is no charge for participants for this event.

Register at specialevents@nabonline.org, and a link will be sent to you for the presentation.

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Alleged Back Bay bank robber had gotten COVID release for bank robbery

By Seth Daniel

When Steve Williams was arrested last Friday, Nov. 13, for allegedly robbing the Santander Bank on Boylston Street, he was supposed to still be in jail for robbing two banks in 2016 – had it not been for a compassionate release granted in August by Federal Judge Wolf.

According to federal court documents, in July Williams petitioned the court to let him out of his five-year bank robbery sentence early due to

COVID-19 worries and a gastrointestinal issue he suffers from. He was to be in prison for the robberies until February 2021.

The judge agreed.

“Williams seeks a reduction in his sentence to time-served,” read the decision by Judge Wolf. “He is suffering from severe gastrointestinal issues and contends that because of the COVID-19 pandemic he is unable to get adequate medical care in prison. Therefore, Williams asserts that there are “extraordinary and compelling

reasons” for such a reduction... The court agrees that extraordinary and compelling reasons justify the reduction of Williams’ sentence to time-served.”

Last Friday, four months after being released from federal prison, Williams allegedly went into the Santander Bank at 575 Boylston St. around 12:24 p.m. and passed a note to the teller – to apparently rob the bank.

During the incident, Williams passed a note to a bank teller implying that he was armed with a firearm. After securing

the loot, he fled the area on foot with an undisclosed amount of U.S. Currency.

Officers were provided a detailed suspect description which was shared with additional responding units. A short time later, an officer working a paid detail in the area of 650 Albany Street in the South End observed a male matching the given description and attempted to stop him to speak with him.

Williams was placed in custody without incident following a brief foot pursuit at which

time the officers recovered cash and other evidence related to the incident from the suspect. The suspect, Stephen Williams, 57, of Boston, will be arraigned in Boston Municipal Court on charges of Armed Robbery (Bank).

As part of his release agreement, he was to be in home confinement at an undisclosed address until Feb. 25, 2021. His actions will have violated the terms of his federal supervised release plan, as well.

MBTA CUTS (from pg. 1)

Steve Poftak said at the MBTA Fiscal & Management Control Board meeting on Monday that for next year, there is nearly a \$580 million budget gap. He said the T is “in this position because of a tremendous loss in fare revenue as ridership has decreased,” and there is “very low ridership on certain services.” He added that “the service reductions are not intended to be a permanent shrinkage of MBTA services.”

Changes are proposed across the range of services offered by the MBTA, from rapid transit to ferry to the commuter rail to bus service. Starting this week, the MBTA will be engaging the public through virtual community meetings and a public hearing to gather feedback about the proposed changes to service. There is also an online comment form for riders to provide questions and comments.

“The MBTA’s fare revenue, while above the lowest levels seen at the beginning of the pandemic, has remained at unprecedentedly low levels and the ongoing impact of COVID-19 in Massachusetts is likely to limit our path to recovery,” Poftak said in a video posted on the MBTA’s Forging Ahead webpage.

He said that the T is currently still only running about 330,000 trips during an average weekday, but is running about the same level of service

as it did to have 1.26 million trips before the pandemic hit.

“This level of service delivery, along with the loss in revenue, is not sustainable,” Poftak said.

He said that since August, ridership, along with fare revenue trends, have been monitored by the MBTA, and he said that the MBTA is “taking steps to control costs,” which includes “implementing a head count freeze, pausing executive pay increases,” and “updating our savings projection” from the RIDE service because of lower ridership.

COMMUTER RAIL

Poftak reported that commuter rail ridership is currently around 12 percent of what it was prior to the pandemic, and the MBTA is proposing to end all weekday service by 9pm and eliminate all weekend service. Additionally, there would be a reduction in service levels to reduce the amount of service at peak hours as well as eliminate some midday service that would “result in a reduction of trains from 505 daily trips to 430,” Poftak said.

“This is a significant drop, but we are not ceasing service on any lines and we will still be running multiple trains in the peak,” he added.

FERRY

Ferry service also remains at about 12 percent, which is

about seven passengers per trip, Poftak said. The MBTA is proposing to eliminate all ferry service “until ridership returns,” Poftak said. For commuters who rely on the Charlestown ferry, alternative service will be provided by the 93 bus.

RAPID TRANSIT

Poftak said that a 20 percent reduction in frequency of rapid transit trains is proposed, and would be achieved by extending headways by about a minute.

“These changes are well within the service delivery policy that was passed in 2017,” he said, though he added that it is “obviously a reduction in service.”

Another large change proposed for rapid transit trains would stop service at midnight instead of 1am, and for the E Line to end at Brigham Circle, where passengers can transfer to the 39 bus for continued service to Heath Street.

BUS

Poftak said that bus service “remains among our most durable services in terms of ridership,” but changes are still being proposed including reducing the number of routes run as well as “consolidating and restructuring certain routes,” Poftak said. Some routes will also be eliminated. He said that 80 routes have been deemed “essential,” and

60 have been deemed “non-essential,” which could face a drop in frequency by 20 percent. Essential routes could see an aggregate drop in frequency by five percent, “but it will not be an across the board cut,” Poftak said, as crowding will continue to be monitored on bus routes and service can be adjusted accordingly.

Many riders are concerned about these proposed changes, and have spoken out in opposition. A coalition of “business, labor, transportation, and environmental justice organizations” has banded together to form a campaign called Transit is Essential. The campaign “will underscore the importance of keeping the T accessible and affordable to all,” according to a press release.

“A reliable public transportation system is essential to keeping businesses operating safely, efficiently, and profitably during and after the pandemic,” Chenelle Brown of the Alliance for Business Leadership’s Board of Directors and CMBG3 Law said in a statement. “We cannot allow public transportation, the lifeline of Greater Boston, to become a casualty of COVID-19. Pulling the rug out from under the MBTA now will put us further behind in meeting the long-term infrastructure and service improvement goals that are key to making Massachusetts a desirable and affordable place to do business.”

City Councilor and mayoral candidate Michelle Wu has advocated for accessible and free public transportation throughout her tenure as a councilor. She tweeted on Monday, “How many more times do we need to say it?? It’s unacceptable & dangerous to cut public transit service—aka crowd people into more limited spaces—during a pandemic. @BOSCityCouncil voted to stand w 500+ people who sent in testimony opposing this at today’s @MBTA board mtg.”

City Councilor Kenzie Bok also spoke out against the cuts, tweeting “This is wildly unacceptable—#TransitIsEssential! The ppl who build their whole lives around @MBTA dependability are our essential workers, our elders, our communities of color...everyone hit hardest! As we need more PPE & food during COVID-19, we need more T, not less! #mapoli”

A “Save Our Trolley” rally was also held by local elected officials on Wednesday at the Heath St. T stop to protest the proposed cuts.

The cuts are not yet set in stone, and the public is encouraged to provide feedback about the changes. A vote on the changes is expected by the MBTA Fiscal and Management Control on December 7. For more information on the proposals and to submit comments, visit <https://www.mbtta.com/forging-ahead>.

Frog Pond to close to skating this winter season

Staff Report

The beloved tradition of ice skating on the Boston Common will be put on hold for the first time in years this winter due to COVID-19 concerns, according to the Skating Club of Bos-

ton and the Boston Parks and Recreation Department.

The Frog Pond on the Common will not open this winter, as announced last weekend by the two organizations.

Because the guidelines in place now limit 25 or fewer

skaters at a time, the Frog Pond was not financially feasible.

“Due to the current Commonwealth safety mandate limiting outdoor ice skating to a maximum capacity of 25 skaters at a time, operating the Frog Pond ice-skating rink is not cur-

rently financially feasible,” read a statement. “The pandemic is a fluid situation and everyone’s safety is of paramount concern. If the numbers change and the mandate is lifted, we will re-evaluate the situation as the season progresses. We share in

everyone’s disappointment.”

The statement did, obviously, allude to the possibility of re-opening if the COVID-19 situation improves in Boston, but for now the ice melted.

MBTA PROTEST (from pg. 1)

MBTA trolley turnaround, outside the VA hospital.

The MBTA released its ‘Forging Ahead’ plan that would reduce weekday and Saturday service on the Green Line by one hour.

However, the biggest change is the plan to terminate the Green Line E Branch at Brigham Circle. This would force riders to transfer to Bus Route 39, which mimics E Branch service from Brigham Circle to Heath Street.

“This is wildly unacceptable,” said Councilor Bok. “The people who build their whole lives around MBTA dependability are our essential workers, our elders, our communities of color...everyone hit the hardest. As we need more PPE and food during COVID-19, we need more T, not less.”

Bok pointed to the thousands of riders with mobility issues that rely on E line stops between Brigham Circle and Heath Street—especially senior residents of Mission Park, and the patients of the VA hospital.

At the rally, she told an anecdote about her grandfather, who received a free burial space for his service in Korea. “Well that same spirit that gives that free burial space, that acknowledges the fact that that’s service to our nation, needs to extend to things like public transit for the people who have sacrificed for our nation,” she said.

“We should be extending the E line to Canary Square not ending it at Brigham Circle,” said Councilor O’Malley. “This is the absolute wrong approach. While ridership is obviously down due to pandemic, this will be devastating to essential workers who depend on public transit. The state must find funding to stave off these ruinous proposed cuts.”

The T will also reduce peak frequency by 20 percent and reduce off-peak frequency by



City Councilor Kenzie Bok, Matt O’Malley, Michelle Wu and the community protest planned MBTA cuts to Green Line service Wednesday at the Heath Street MBTA trolley turnaround, outside the VA hospital.

an additional 20 percent on the Green Line, as well as the other MBTA rapid transit lines.

MBTA General Manager Steve Poftak said the Blue Line is operating at about 24 percent of its pre-COVID level.

“As a result of the decline in ridership that is similarly impacting transit agencies across the country, the MBTA is now only transporting 330,000 trips on an average weekday – but is continuing to run the same high levels of service as it ran to serve 1.26 million daily trips prior to the pandemic, an unsustainable level of service delivery,” he said.

Councilor Wu, who is also running for Mayor of Boston, said, “In the midst of a glob-

al pandemic, while tens of thousands of essential workers across our city are relying on public transportation to get to work, the MBTA just announced significant, system-wide service cuts. Let’s be clear, cutting MBTA services at this moment is not just short-sighted but also extremely dangerous, and would only exacerbate the burden on our already struggling transit system. Together, these restrictive measures would reduce access for residents across the entire region, and crowding people into more limited spaces will only increase the risk of infection for both drivers and riders.”

Councilors Bok, O’Malley

and Wu were joined by Sen. Sonia Chang-Diaz, the Office of Rep. Nika Elugardo, North American Indian Center of Boston, and members of the Mission Hill and Jamaica Plain neighborhood.

The MBTA will be holding a number of public meetings to discuss proposed service cuts with communities and solicit feedback. The next meeting will be held online this Saturday, November 14, at 1pm. You can find details about this meeting and register for it at www.mbta.com/events/2020-11-14/forging-ahead-virtual-public-meeting-boston-and-milton-region-3.

“COVID-19 has had a significant impact on ridership and

the MBTA is releasing these proposed changes to adjust to the realities created by COVID-19, while protecting service for those who depend on it most,” said Poftak. “I want to reassure our riders that these service changes are not permanent, do not include any fare changes, and will not take effect immediately. We are carrying out a comprehensive outreach process and encourage all members of the public to provide comments and feedback, as we want to hear from riders to help us identify and protect the services that support transit-critical populations and communities.”

ABCD kickoff annual Fuel Assistance Program in South End

By John Lynds

With temperatures in the South End expected to dip into the 20s at night this week and not exceed 50 degrees for the next few days many residents and seniors will find it hard to pay their heating bill this winter.

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused even more uncertainty in the neighborhood as job loss, food insecurity and loss of income has become more prevalent in recent months.

However, there's relief from paying those high New England heating costs for hundreds of low-income residents in the neighborhood.

At the beginning of Novem-

ber, Action for Boston Community Development (ABCD) kicked off the annual Fuel Assistance Program at ABCD's South End office at 554 Columbus Ave. and workers say that the program is in full swing and are encouraging residents to sign up.

ABCD administers the federal Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) for income-eligible residents in Boston, Brookline, Newton and seven communities north of Boston. Last year ABCD provided fuel assistance to more than 25,000 households.

According to ABCD President John Drew, this year the need for heating assistance is

greater than ever as COVID-19 continues to take a huge toll on low-income neighborhoods and communities of color where long-standing health disparities make residents highly vulnerable to the virus

Drew said escalating unemployment has led to mounting distress as many make the decision to either buy food, heat their home or pay for necessary medications.

Drew said on November 5, the federal Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS) released \$3.36 billion to fund LIHEAP nationwide. Massachusetts received \$123 million – up about \$9 million from last year. Federal CARES

Act funding designated for fuel assistance increases the Massachusetts allocation to \$150 million.

Right now the maximum fuel assistance benefit is \$600 for South End families, with benefits scheduled to be increased soon. Last year the maximum benefit was \$1,140.

“We thank our Congressional delegation for their tireless advocacy for fuel assistance and appreciate the work of HHS in getting the funds released as bitter cold descends on America's northern tier,” said Drew. “With COVID-19 surging and no sign of Congress passing a second sweeping virus relief bill that would keep unemployed

workers and small businesses afloat and make it possible for struggling families to survive, the elders and families served by ABCD face a desperate situation.”

ABCD's Fuel Assistance Program opened for applications on November 1 and takes applications through April 30. There is a wide range of eligibility based on income and number of household members. The eligibility guidelines can be found at <https://www.masscap.org/eligibility-requirements-heating-assistance/>.

For example, South End families living at or below the feder-

(FUEL ASSISTANCE, Pg. 7)

COMMERCIAL CRISIS (from pg. 1)

“Because we are in a second surge in this pandemic, I think we have an opportunity and obligation to be very creative from the public sector in this moment of economic crisis that is spinning off of this public health crisis,” she said. “As more and more companies are announcing they will not return to downtown office buildings – LogMeIn was the most recent to say they won't need that commercial space – we should turn this potential impending crisis in the commercial real estate market as a chance to repurpose some new climate resilience beautiful buildings as housing. We should think if there's an opportunity for students to be incorporated into some of these spaces – to renovate and fix up and free up some of these spaces for housing that is badly needed across the city.”

Many companies are expected to use far less commercial space in the coming months and years. Wayfair in the Back Bay has seemed to back off their leasing interests. LogMeIn was located in the Fort Point Channel, and said they will only use a fraction of what they did in the past – the 220,000 sq. ft. headquarters. Company leaders have said they expect only about 5 percent of their workforce to come into the office five days a week. That has come about as many companies have found great success in having some workers stay

remote – increasing productivity, improving work/life balance and potentially saving money on building leases.

That is a trend that could catch on many places in the Back Bay and Fenway in particular. However, NABB President Elliott Laffer said he doesn't see the office and commercial market completely deteriorating – particularly the large towers and major landlords. That said, he also said there could definitely be some transition on Newbury Street and Boylston Street, in particular.

“I believe the large landlord people believe the office market is still there and I think people need to work in the presence of other people,” he said.

“I don't think Boston Properties (Prudential Tower) have walked about form their plans for the office building over by Back Bay Station. Druker has been active in the last couple of months with their building at the Shreve, Crump and Low site. The point is it hasn't been dead. There is stuff going on and people like them believe there will be an office market.”

However, he also said there could very well be some transition from retail and office uses at places like Newbury Street or Boylston Street. He said Newbury Street was originally residential, but transitioned to retail all the way down over time. That was expanded when professionals sought out office space in Boston above the retail

stores, which they preferred. Meanwhile, the cited that the original plan for Boylston Street was to be mostly residential.

He said he addressed this at the NABB Annual meeting, and they have been talking a great deal about any sort of post-COVID commercial transitions.

“We've talked about all of us putting our heads together and coming up with an ideal and what that might look like,” he said. “Then, what policies would need to be in place to approach that ideal?”

If some of the commercial property were transitioned, Laffer said NABB would support more of that space being dedicated to affordable housing – as Wu suggested.

“It may produce something we really need in the Back Bay and that is affordable housing,” he said. “NABB has been on record supporting on-site affordable housing for a long time...To the extent we could get some affordable housing in the neighborhood, I think we would be supportive of that and it's something to look at.”

Wu said she isn't looking at specific buildings or sites, but believes a creative approach could solve several problems at once.

Everything should be on the table as we're going through these multiple crises,” she said. “In this time of crisis we can't sit by and react to various announcements from various companies or different waves

of the crisis. We really have to be intentional about putting forward creative ideas. Some of it might work and some of it might not work, but there's a need to solve multiple of these crises at once, and protect our housing in addition to protecting people on the public health side and think of our transit problems.”

Wu elaborated that she has talked with real estate professionals about what the City could do and what it might look like in the market if multiple companies didn't come back – or didn't come back fully – to occupy their leases. That again led her to talk about solving multiple problems with one solution, such as using a vacant building to house Boston Public School students, or affordable housing partnerships.

“In certain cases there might be a building that makes sense for some partnership around affordable housing,” she said. “I think everything has to be on the table and we can't talk about all these issues in silos. Our housing only through DND and schools through BPS. We need space in a pandemic and need to stabilize everyone and many of those things could happen in coordination if we have a big picture plan.”

Laffer said he can think of several buildings in the Back Bay with giant question marks above them – including the Hynes Convention Center, which likely won't host a convention for months to come,

and its potential sale is now questionable in this new market.

Yet another, he said, is the Lord & Taylors store on Boylston Street. In late August, the company announced they would close the anchor Prudential Mall store on Boylston Street – leaving a giant hole in the commercial landscape. Laffer said that is the most interesting option that he sees in the neighborhood.

“The most interesting question is the Back Bay Lord & Taylor and what will happen to it,” he said. “It is part of the Prudential Center and it's a big site...It's a 1960s suburban department store sitting on Boylston Street and isn't the most architecturally appropriate thing to see there. It will be very interesting to see what Boston Properties has in mind there.”

In all, Laffer said he is optimistic about what may come out of the reorganization of the city post-COVID – noting that some things we never expected to stick will stay around, and other things we think are here to stay might fizzle out.

“If we can get everyone to sit down, I think we have the real potential to put wise heads together and have some good come out of this very difficult situation we're all dealing with,” he said. “Sometimes it takes a difficult situation to make things possible that wouldn't be possible otherwise.”

FUEL ASSISTANCE (from pg. 6)

al poverty level of \$26,200 for a family of four would receive the maximum fuel assistance benefit of \$600. A person living alone at or below the federal poverty level of \$12,760 would receive that same benefit.

But those with incomes above poverty level are also eligible.

Drew said years ago the

state expanded eligibility levels in order to keep those slightly above poverty from slipping through the cracks. For example, under the current benefit levels, a family of four earning 60 percent of the state's median income or \$75,200 can receive \$430 in fuel assistance. A single person earning \$39,105 also receives \$430.

“Home heating assistance is vital to keeping disadvantaged individuals, elders, and families healthy by preventing hypothermia and subsequent hospitalization,” said Drew. “And it keeps them safe; too many would otherwise opt for dangerous alternatives such as space heaters or ovens.”

ABCD also offers qualifying

families a comprehensive range of energy services to keep families warm, safe and healthy including repair and replacement of inoperable or highly inefficient heating systems, utility discounts, weatherization, programs to improve energy conservation, and much more.

ABCD is grateful for any private donations to home

heating fuel assistance or the ABCD COVID RELIEF NOW campaign. Donations can stop a family from turning to dangerous heating substitutes, prevent illness, and dramatically improve the quality of life. To donate, please call 617-348-6559, email give@bostonabcd.org or visit bostonabcd.org donate.

BFSNA (from pg. 1)

approaching, Captain Sweeney underscored the spike in car breaks and package thefts that historically impacts the neighborhood at this time of the year, adding that he had recently spoke with a delivery driver in Rutland Square who said that around 20 packages had recently been pilfered from around the neighborhood.

A suspect was apprehended in connection with the package thefts, he added, but wasn't arrested because the individual apparently suffers from mental health and/or substance abuse issues, and will instead be diverted to treatment.

Also, numerous bike thefts left in back alleys and on stoops have recently been reported stolen in the neighborhood, although on the upside, Captain Sweeney advised victims to report the crimes as police have been successful in recovering some stolen bikes.

While Captain Sweeney said a much greater sum of money was lost in the area to bike thefts than to bank robberies, he reported that a recent bank robbery at 567 Boylston St. resulted in the arrest of a suspect he described as a “serial bank robber” and a “career criminal.”

“But that was the first bank robbery we've had in the district in a while, compared with hundreds of bikes stolen,” he added.

Discussions are also now underway with City Hall to install 42 cameras in the neighborhood to assist police in traffic enforcement and “more serious” matters, which, Captain Sweeney said, “seems like a dream from five or 10 years ago [that] is finally coming true.”

In another matter, Dr. Vanessa Calderón-Rosado, CEO of IBA (Inquilinos Boricuas en Acción) - the Boston nonprofit that purchased the one-time

German church at 85 West Newton St. in the '80s before converting into the Villa Victoria Center for the Arts - said they had applied to the city's Inspectional Services Department for demolition work and expect to hear back any day now, but in any case, it wouldn't commence until Monday, Nov. 30, at the earliest.

“We will notify neighbors once we know,” she added.

This first phase of the project is expected to last about a week, Dr. Calderón-Rosado said, while a second phase that would last about five months would entail the removal of all debris from the site.

Construction on the new building, which would accommodate all the uses of the existing Arts Center (e.g. performances, art exhibits and community gatherings), as well as create new office space for IBA staff, wouldn't commence until 2022 at the earliest, Dr. Calderón-Rosado said, since it's estimated to take about a year to complete fundraising, design and permitting.

Dr. Calderón-Rosado encouraged anyone with questions or concerns to email them to 85westnewtown@ibaboston.org.

Matters then turned to the future of the MBTA, which has launched its Forging Ahead initiative that proposes changes to service in response to the T's dwindling ridership, including the proposed elimination of the 43 bus line.

Dan Mueller, community liaison for the MBTA, said the average weekday ridership on the T has fallen to 330,000 from 1.2 million at this time last year, so in response, the new initiative is proposing 5 percent cuts on its “essential” lines and a 20-percent reduction on “non-essential” lines (which includes the 43), with the changes likely going into effect next May or

June.

Mueller encouraged those in attendance to provide testimonial during a virtual meeting on the proposal scheduled for Dec. 2, as well as to submit their feedback to the T before the comment period ends on Dec. 4; visit <https://www.mbta.com/forging-ahead> for more information.

Meanwhile, Kim Crucoli, Mayor Martin Walsh's new neighborhood liaison to the South End and Bay Village was in attendance for her first BFSNA meeting.

Crucoli, a recent Suffolk University graduate, as well as a newcomer to public service, is replacing Faisa Sharif, who was recently promoted to Deputy Director of the city's Office of Neighborhood Services.

And one day after cutting the ribbon its new Albany Street facility, Dr. Robyn Riseberg was on hand to introduce Boston Community Pediatrics - the state's first-ever nonprofit private pediatric practice.

The practice will offer exceptional pediatric care primarily to patients with Mass Health, she added, as well as provide “integrated mental-health services.”

Boston Community Pediatrics will also offer daily testing for COVID-19 beginning this week, said Dr. Riseberg, who encouraged to interested parties to call 617-934-6009 to set up an appointment.

In another agenda item, Manny Lopes, CEO of the East Boston Neighborhood Health Center (EBNHC), discussed the healthcare provider's recent merger with the South End Community Health Center (SECHC).

The SECHC had been struggling to find a partner for many years, Lopes said, and since it's now 51 years old while the EBNHC just recently hit the half-century mark, “We jumped

at the opportunity to keep it in the Community Health Center family.”

Today, the combined Health Center serves 20,000 patients in the South End, he added, and 110,000 patients in all.

The South End Community Health Center/East Boston Community Health Center was also awarded the city's contract for COVID testing and currently administers about 5,000 tests each day, including at the Blackstone School. (Call 617-568-4500 or visit EBNHG.org for more information or to schedule an appointment.)

Meanwhile, in response to the ongoing pandemic, the BFSNA has cancelled its annual holiday tree-and-wreath sale, said David Stone, the group's president, and instead are donating wreaths to businesses that have supported the effort in years past.

“Obviously, we'll be back in full force next year,” he added.

And while the BFSNA doesn't historically hold meetings in the month of December, Stone suggested that the group convene again virtually next month due to a mounting backlog of agenda items.

COVID-19 Testing

Safe, fast, easy, free

Walk-thru testing is available in the South End at the Dr. Gerald Hass Center, 400 Shawmut Avenue.

Pre-registration required: 617-569-5800.




Monday, Wednesday, and Friday
8:30am to 11:00am



South End

Community Health Center



Visit ebnhc.org/covid19 for other testing sites around Boston

City says workers are not advised to allow drug use in Comfort Stations

By Seth Daniel

City officials this week responded to a video posted by a Boston radio show that featured a man going undercover at the Engagement Center on Mass/Cass, and being told by someone in charge he can use drugs at the Comfort Station freely, but not at the Engagement Center.

The video was an undercover operation by the Kirk Minihane Show – a Boston radio show that specializes in sensational news – and features a man from the show at the Engagement Center on Southamptn Street talking with what appears to be workers at the Center. The man is looking for direction about where he can use drugs open-

ly, as the hidden camera pans around the patio of the Engagement Center to show dozens of used needles discarded on the asphalt.

“And even though the police are out, they’ll still let us do our thing?” said the man.

“As long as you’re on the other side (Comfort Station), the other side you can use and do your thing. This side – not so much. You can’t actually have any alcohol or anything. This is more relaxing. You use on the other side,” said the woman, who is not seen on the video.

“Ok,” says the man.

“Yea, so even the police are out they won’t say nothin’ as long as you’re over there,” repeated the woman.

“Ok police don’t really both-

er you over there,” said the man.

“Exactly,” concluded the woman.

The video was posted late last month, but the Mayor’s Office said this week that they believe the woman speaking on the video was not a staff member at the Engagement Center, though it is hard to tell since she is not on camera.

The Mayor’s Office said drug use is not condoned in either space, and they ask participants at the Comfort Station or Engagement Center the following:

- Use language that is considerate of others. This space is intended to be safe for everyone.

- Keep weapons or objects that could harm others out of the space.

- Do not share medications.

- Selling or purchasing items is not allowed in this space.

- Use the restroom for its intended purpose

- Guests are asked to wash hands often, wear face coverings and practice physical distancing when possible.

The video is shocking to some, but those from the neigh-

borhood in the South End familiar with the video and the conditions on Mass/Cass were not surprised. Most termed it as “old news,” and said they discovered last summer in walk-throughs that the Comfort Stations were pretty much de facto Safe Injection Sites. There hasn’t been a lot of blowback from the neighborhood though for two reasons, several sources said.

First, no one wanted to alert those coming from outside that this was happening and potentially bring more people onto Mass/Cass looking for a free-for-all drug situation.

Second, many have begun to understand that with the current Fentanyl situation, keeping people from shooting up – even in City spaces – is almost impossible.

“So in that way it’s like a SIF, but expecting that we will be able to interrupt the every 3-4 hour fentanyl hit is not realistic,” said one source who has seen people using drugs opening at both locations. “That is the reality of fentanyl. Do they ‘try’ to discourage this, yeah, but it’s not going to happen.”

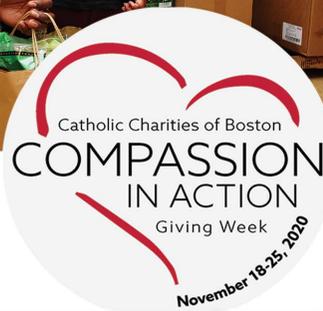
OPERATIONS COMMAND CENTER ON MASS/CASS

Mayor Martin Walsh announced – along with the Office of Recovery Services – that the City is in the process of locating an Operations Command Center for the Mass/Cass public safety operations.

The Boston Police Street Outreach Unit will begin by moving a headquarters into the Miranda Creamer Building at 725 Mass Ave., located in ground floor space under the BMC catwalk. That will be happening soon, and it will be the base of operations.

At a community meeting recently, Jenn Tracy of Recovery Services said it would give them a base of operations to work from, and also give a much needed presence in an area that is mostly vacant and promotes loitering.

Mayor Walsh added last week that there are plans for a full Operations Command Center for the Mass/Cass 2.0 plan in the space. The space is owned by the Boston Public Health Commission, which has okayed the use of the space.



Save the Dates. Support. Spread Awareness.
November 18-25, 2020

Catholic Charities of Boston's Giving Week: Compassion in Action will launch Wednesday, November 18, 2020. The goal of this one-week digital fundraising campaign is to raise the critical funding needed to support CCAB's response to increasing community demand due to the COVID-19 health and economic crisis.

The campaign will share inspiring stories of perseverance and dedication to raising awareness and funds for hunger relief and living assistance across the Eastern Massachusetts communities CCAB serves. Join us November 18-25 to support our neighbors in need by visiting: givingweek.ccab.org.



Virtual Public Meeting

BU Medical Campus Institutional Master Plan

Thursday, December 3
6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Zoom Link: bit.ly/2IEeOnR
Toll Free: (833) 568 - 8864
Meeting ID: 161 301 2349

Project Proponent:
Boston University

Project Description:

BU Medical Campus is proposing a new, ten-year Institutional Master Plan for their campus in the South End. We will discuss the plan at this meeting with the Community Task Force.

Members of the public are encouraged to attend and participate.

mail to: **Edward Carmody**
Boston Planning & Development Agency
One City Hall Square, 9th Floor
Boston, MA 02201
phone: 617.918.4422
email: edward.carmody@boston.gov

Close of Comment Period:
12/21/2020

Whole Foods Markets to support Community Servings' medically tailored meals program

Staff report

Until Thanksgiving, Whole Foods Market stores throughout Massachusetts will be selling specially baked apple and pumpkin pies to support Com-

munity Servings, a nonprofit provider of medically tailored meals and nutrition services. As part of its sponsorship of the 28th annual Pie in the Sky bake sale-style fundraiser, Whole

Foods will donate \$5 from each pie sale to provide a day's worth of nourishing meals to neighbors in need during the holiday season. For more information, visit www.pieinthisky.org.

Boston Ballet's 'The Nutcracker' to air on NBC10 Boston

Staff report

For the first time, Boston Ballet will bring Mikko Nissinen's "The Nutcracker" to homes across New England through a broadcast partnership with NBC10 Boston. The beloved holiday ballet will be broadcasted as a one-hour special excerpted from the 2019 production, with featured narration by Hoda Kotb ("Today") and Colton Bradford (NBC10 Boston's "The Hub") as Drosselmeier. The broadcast also features local talent, NBC10 Boston's JC Monahan and Telemundo's Grace Gómez and Miguel García. "The Nutcracker" will air on NBC10 Boston starting Saturday, Nov. 28, at 7 p.m., with encore airings and on-demand viewing opportunities on NBC10 Boston, NECN and Spanish-language Telemundo. It will also be available free of charge on bostonballet.org for a limited time.

Mikko Nissinen. "I am delighted that more audiences than ever before can experience the magic of The Nutcracker, as well as the talent of our artists."

Mikko Nissinen's "The Nutcracker" is based on the libretto by Alexandre Dumas père titled "The Tale of the Nutcracker," which is adapted from E. T. A. Hoffmann's story "The Nutcracker and the Mouse King." The story follows the wondrous journey of young Clara, who receives a nutcracker as a gift at her family's Christmas Eve party. Later that night, her nutcracker is magically revealed as a handsome prince, who leads her through an enchanted forest and on to the Nutcracker Prince's Kingdom.

When to watch:

- Saturday, November 28 at 7 pm on NBC10 Boston
- Sunday, November 29 at 7 pm on NECN
- Saturday, December 5 at 11 am on Telemundo
- Friday, December 25 at 5 pm on Telemundo
- Friday, December 25 at 7 pm on NBC10 Boston



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bostonplayground.com



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November 18-25, 2020

Catholic Charities of Boston's Giving Week: Compassion in Action will launch Wednesday, November 18, 2020. The goal of this one-week digital fundraising campaign is to raise the critical funding needed to support CCAB's response to increasing community demand due to the COVID-19 health and economic crisis. The campaign will share inspiring stories of perseverance and dedication to raising awareness and funds for hunger relief and living assistance across the Eastern Massachusetts communities CCAB serves. Join us November 18-25 to support our neighbors in need by visiting: givingweek.ccab.org.

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Mayor Martin J. Walsh

#BOSCanHelp

BOS:311

COVID on the rise once again in Back Bay and surrounding area

By John Lynds

After experiencing a 24 percent drop two weeks ago, the positive test rate in Back Bay and surrounding neighborhoods increased by 44 percent according to the latest data released by the Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC).

Last week the BPHC reported that 31,671 Back Bay, Beacon Hill, North End, West End, and Downtown residents were tested for COVID-19 and the data shows that 5.5 percent of those tested were COVID positive. This was a 44 percent increase from the 3.8 percent testing positive as reported two weeks ago. The citywide positive test rate average was 9.6 percent—a 35 percent increase from the 7.1 percent that tested positive two weeks ago.

Overall since the pandemic began 4.3 percent of Back Bay, Beacon Hill, North End, West End and Downtown residents were found to be COVID positive.

At his daily press briefing on Tuesday, Mayor Martin Walsh

reiterated the City's priority in this crisis.

"To keep people safe and contain this virus, we have to follow the science and we have to follow the data," said Walsh.

What that means, the Mayor explained, is that city public health experts collect comprehensive testing data and hospital data. They analyze it to understand how and where the virus is spreading, and the impact it is having.

"We shape our responses and our guidance based on what the data indicates," said Walsh.

"And, we share the data with the public, so you can be armed with knowledge to help keep yourself, your family, and your community safe. That's a process of continual feedback and learning because, just as this epidemic evolves and its impact on our neighborhoods evolves, our knowledge about it must evolve as well. We need to adapt and update our understanding of COVID spread in the community."

The Mayor announced that, starting this week, the City will be publishing a total of six key

metrics relating to test results and hospital usage. The goal, he said, is to give residents the most current and comprehensive picture of the virus as they can.

"The more we know, and the more you know, the better informed and prepared we can all be," he said.

The Mayor emphasized that every metric right now is telling city officials that we are in the midst of a significant and concerning increase in COVID activity in the city.

"The daily case increases we are seeing are starting to look like numbers that we saw near our peak, in April and May," said Walsh. "Hospital admissions are not at that level, but they have increased over time. We all must be focused on turning this trend around."

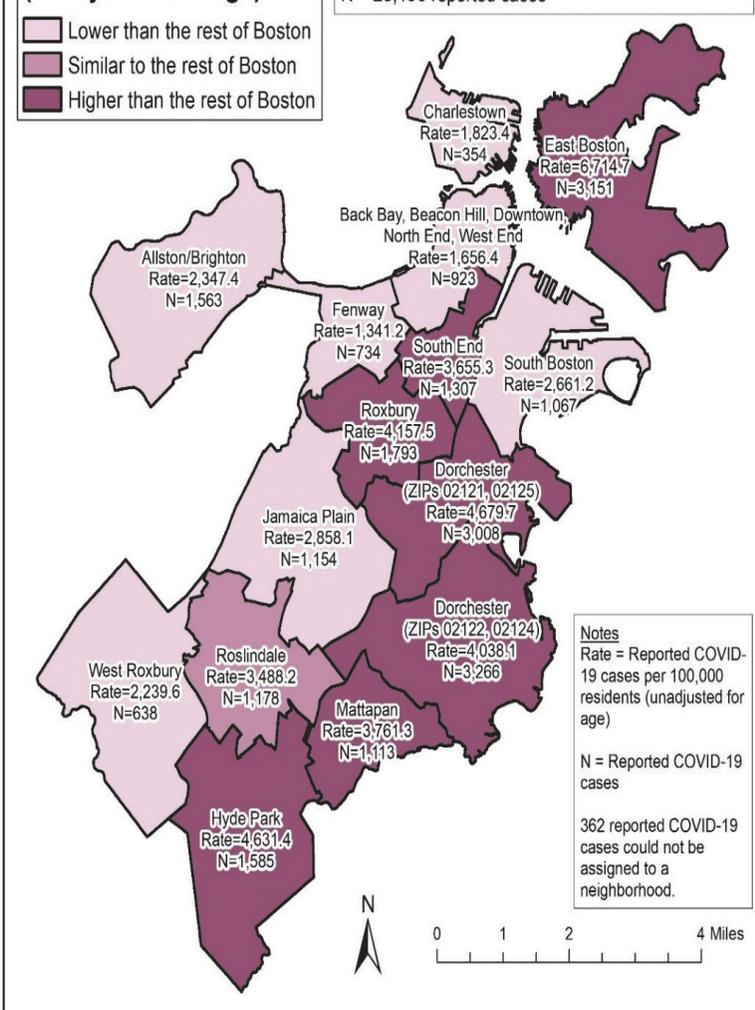
The Mayor said that the City is looking closely at what steps we can take to further limit the risk of transmission.

"We have taken a cautious approach throughout this pandemic, making safety our priority," said Walsh. "We pulled back on in-person learning in

COVID-19 rate (unadjusted for age)

Lower than the rest of Boston
Similar to the rest of Boston
Higher than the rest of Boston

Boston
Rate = 3,414.1 reported cases per 100,000 residents
N = 23,196 reported cases



On Friday the BPHC released its weekly COVID-19 stats by neighborhood that tracks infection rates and COVID testing results in Boston neighborhoods.

the Boston Public Schools. This week we were able to bring back 150 students with the highest needs, who desperately need in-person services. The Mayor thanked the families and teachers for making that possible. We have kept our limits on gathering sizes low. Private, indoor gatherings are limited to 10 people, and private outdoor gatherings to 25 people. For events in public spaces, the limit is 25 people indoors and 50 people outdoors. We've worked with the state to limit restaurant hours and retail hours, and put in place a Stay-at-home advisory for the hours between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m."

However, the Mayor cautioned, if these case numbers continue to go up, the city will have to go further but added that he is mindful of the impact that restrictions have on the local economy and small businesses.

"But we must put the health of our community first because, in the end, there is no economic recovery without public health," he said.

The infection rate in Back Bay and surrounding neighbor-

hoods increased 11.7 percent in one week according to the latest city statistics.

The BPHC data released last Friday showed Back Bay, Beacon Hill, North End, West End and Downtown had an infection rate of 165.8 cases per 10,000 residents, up from 148.2 cases per 10,000 residents.

Nearly 100 additional residents became infected with the virus last week and the total number of cases in the area increased from 826 cases to 923 cases as of last Friday.

The statistics released by the BPHC as part of its weekly COVID19 report breaks down the number of cases and infection rates in each neighborhood. It also breaks down the number of cases by age, gender and race.

Citywide positive cases of coronavirus increased 1 percent last week and went from 24,159 cases to 24,393 cases. Five more Boston residents died from the virus and there are now 889 total deaths in the city from COVID.

THANKSGIVING DAY TRASH COLLECTION

There is no collection on **Thursday, November 26.**

For neighborhoods with two collections a week on Mondays and Thursdays, **Thursday is canceled.**

The next collection will be **Monday, November 30**

For more info visit: boston.gov/trash

CITY of BOSTON



Public Works

Committee on Ways and Means holds hearing on police overtime

By Lauren Bennett

The City Council Committee on Ways and Means, chaired by Councilor Kenzie Bok, held a hearing on November 16 to discuss police overtime and police oversight protocols.

Bok said that it was a “major initiative of the council and administration” to pass a budget that includes a \$12 million reduction in police overtime. She said the actual overtime budget for Fiscal Year 2020 was \$72.5 million, and the goal is a \$24.5 million dollar reduction in budget, which Bok said “is not on track” to be achieved.

After passing the budget, the council called for quarterly hearings to “scrutinize the plans,” she said, so this hearing was one of them.

“In the last hearing, we got a lot of ideas and thoughts but no specifics,” Councilor Andrea Campbell said. “Since that last hearing, there have been concerns raised by many about the accuracy of overtime records and court overtime in particular.”

She and other councilors called for more transparency regarding police overtime data, citing documents released by the Woke Windows Project “as well as other advocates who have been paying close attention to this,” Campbell said.

Councilor Ricardo Arroyo said that though some electronic records were received, the “rest of the records are paper,” as court overtime slips and sign in sheets are on paper and the council has not seen these. He said that when cross-referencing these records with a database of available police reports, there were “discrepancies found on dozens of officers” who were in other places at the same time they were documented as being in court.

“That was concerning and alarming...” Arroyo said.

Councilor Flynn said that he is aware that “many police officers are required to work overtime,” and due to that, he wants to advocate for more police officers in the city to take the burden off of those who work so many hours. He said that a “serious conversation” around retirements and forced overtime needs to be had, as well as looking at hiring more

officers.

Boston Police Superintendent Jim Hasson along with Deputy Superintendent James Chin were on hand to answer questions from councilors.

Bok said that the council sent an information request to the police department in search of data from the first quarter “and follow ups on things that have come up.” She said that “substantial” information had been received from the department as well as the reports from advocacy groups.

According to the Boston Police Department, in Quarter One, there was a 14.6% decrease in overtime hours compared to first quarter of last year. Additionally, replacement personnel, which is 43.9% of total overtime costs, “remains relatively flat,” special events have been reduced by 37.6%, court has been reduced by 77%, and primarily discretionary extended tours have been reduced 12.1%.

She also said that “court overtime is way down,” but “how much is due to the fact that much court business has been reduced?”

Hasson said that the way he determines the minimum level of staffing is related to the amount of crime, the population, the number of 911 calls in a given area, as well as the response time to the incidents.

“That’s a conversation that’s held between the chief of the bureau of field service and each district captain,” Hasson said, which is “constantly” reviewed in a weekly deployment call.

He also presented some data related to staffing, saying that the BPD is currently projecting 156 retirements, and a class of 110 recruits began on Novem-

ber 3 with the expectation of 100 new police officers. In the spring of next year, another class of 60 recruits will commence with the expectation of 50 new officers.

“The Office of Budget Management and the BPD are continuously looking at retirements to ensure our staffing resources are met,” a slide read.

Campbell asked if it would be possible to make all overtime information and breakdown public so people would not have to put in a formal request for it. While some of the data is public, not all of it is, she said.

Hasson said that there has been “no discussion on that,” but said he would be willing to have one and he will bring it up to Commissioner Gross.

He said that “four hour overtime is contractual,” and any changes made to contracts “would have to be determined at the bargaining table.”

However, he said there have been dome discussions on capping overtime and reorganizing the department.

According to a slide presented by the BPD at the hearing, commitment to overtime reductions include “increased tracking, monitoring, and analysis, increased communication, [and] a regional lockup proposal.”

The BPD said that is has been “greatly impacted” by the pandemic as well as social and political demonstrations that were prevalent over the past several months.

“Proposed internal structural changes are on hold due to the increase in crime, demonstrations, and the impact of COVID on our staffing levels,” the slide read.

“Again, public safety is the

paramount issue there and some of those units that we discussed are critical to providing the safety that the residents of Boston expect from us,” Hasson said. “Those are ongoing. We’re trying to come up with innovative and strategic ways to achieve that \$25 million.”

Councilor Arroyo pointed out some discrepancies in data where officers logged court overtime for 150 days out of the year. Hasson clarified that officers can only receive court overtime if they are off duty.

“The system would kick that out,” Hasson said. “You can’t put an overtime slip the same time you’re working a regular tour of duty.”

Councilor Julia Mejia wondered how officers’ hours are capped or how they are helped by the department so they aren’t harmful to themselves or the people they serve.

“How safe is it for officers to work 17 hours a day?” she asked. Hasson said that “there are many officers that work that, especially during times of

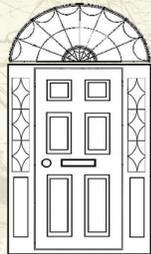
potential issues that people are going to be needed. Some do it willingly and some not willingly.”

He said that if an officer goes beyond 17 hours in a single day, they are sent home. He said that officers working more than 17 hours happens only on “rare occasions when no one is available,” but it does happen.

Mejia said she is trying to see this situation “from all sides,” but she thinks the system needs to be examined. “I think that working 17 hours a day is unhealthy and irresponsible,” she said.

Hasson said that the Boston Police Department is “committed to officer safety and public safety,” and “the solution has to lie in there. The residents of Boston, they depend on us. When they call 911, they have an expectation that we’re going to be coming.”

Councilors agreed with this, but said that they will continue to push for more transparency and more answers to their questions.



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SELDC provides more feedback on 41 Berkeley proposal

Says senior care building “too tall”

By Lauren Bennett

A second advisory review for the proposed project at 41 Berkeley St. was held by the South End Landmark District Commission (SELDC) on November 2. As previously reported by the Sun, the project proponents, Related Beal and Hacin + Associates, are proposing to redevelop the Benjamin Franklin Institute of Technology (BFIT) site, as the school will be moving to a brand new campus in Nubian Square.

The first advisory review was held at the end of August. A meeting regarding the project was also held by the Ellis South End Neighborhood Association, an Impact Advisory Group meeting was held on October 19, and a BPDA public meeting was held on October 29.

The proposed project consists of retaining the existing Franklin Union building with restoration and an addition to be used as commercial and office space, a senior care building, and an affordable housing building with community space along Appleton St.

At the last advisory review hearing, the SELDC provided feedback to help shape the project into something that would fit within the commission's guidelines, which architect David Hacin said has been worked into the updated presentation of the proposal. The presentation at the November 2 hearing was focused on just the senior care and the Franklin Union Building portion of the proposal.

The team also announced that William Young has been brought on as a historic preservation consultant, who went through some history of the Franklin Union building and the area surrounding the parcel to provide background for the newly proposed buildings.

“The immediate area was once characterized by some quite large buildings,” he said, including the Castle Square Theater and Hotel, Odd Fellows Hall, the National The-

ater, and the YWCA building at the corner of Berkeley and Appleton.

EXISTING SITE PLAN

Hacin explained that the site as it is now is “fairly inaccessible at this point except for students and people who are on the campus of BFIT itself,” he said. The campus is fenced in and has grade changes throughout.

The proposal includes opening up the site with various pathways and building entrances on all sides, as well as “significant landscape and sidewalk improvements, new green spaces and public amenities,” retail, and a new plaza at the intersection of Appleton and Tremont Streets, Hacin said.

SENIOR CARE BUILDING DESIGN

Hacin first talked about the proposed design for the senior care building, which will be located in the lower left of the triangle at the intersection of Berkeley and Tremont Streets. The brick portion of the building will be residential, while the upper floors clad in metal will be the restaurant and lounge spaces.

Hacin said that they believed the Commission told them last time that they did not want to see the senior care building be any taller than the Atelier building across the street, but the Commission said they do not recall saying such a thing, as the height restrictions according to the guidelines say that new buildings cannot be more than 70 feet tall. The senior care building was originally proposed to be 146 feet tall (the same as the Atelier), but the new proposal puts it at 144 feet.

The Commission also said that the mechanical penthouse should be better integrated into the building, and suggested the addition of “rhythm and variety” to the brick bays on the facade.

To address these concerns, Hacin said that the top floor of the building has been removed, the mechanical penthouse has been integrated, and shifted the brick bays “up and down from one another” to create an “exciting rhythm...” he said. There are now two upper floors

instead of three.

He said the bays reflect the “modular program” of the senior care units, where there is a “classic window for the bedroom” and the bay window is part of the living space that allows the resident to look up and down Tremont Street. The vertical bricks have also been eliminated from the design, and detail has been added to both the ground floor soffit and the canopy fascia.

At the previous hearing, the Commission also made comments about “distinguishing the corner” as well as incorporating metal into the facade, Hacin said. The new design includes metal wrapped into the corner and the facade and planting at the sidewalk.

Hacin also talked about the side of the Franklin Union Building, where the metal design has been lifted off the ground and brought Ito the bays, and the base is now proposed to be granite and masonry. All portions of the buildings will be “at or below the height of the Atelier building,” Hacin said.

FRANKLIN UNION BUILDING

Hacin then talked about the Franklin Union building proposal, which includes “preserving the primary facades and interior floors,” he said, as “no facadectomy” will be completed.

He said the goal is to “provide a leasable office floor plate,” as well as create an outdoor terrace space and to make the building energy efficient.

He presented two schemes for the proposed addition to the Franklin Union Building. Scheme One involves a two story addition that is set back on all sides and pulled back from the sides of the building. Hacin said it “reads primarily as a one story addition,” as most of the first floor is hidden by the building's existing parapet.

Scheme Two involves the same floor plate but it “floats a little bit above the Franklin Union Building,” he said. He said it is “more avant garde, and potentially more memorable in a good way.”

COMMISSIONER FEEDBACK

Commissioners took turns offering feedback on the new proposal, but all were in agreement that the senior care building is too tall, and some were still unsure if they would approve an addition on the Franklin Union Building.

“The max height of a new building on this spot would be 70 feet,” Commissioner David Shepperd said, referring to the SELDC's Standards and Criteria, adding that he is worried about the proposed height.

“There doesn't seem to be justification for the rooftop addition that is in line with the description that we discussed in the last meeting. I believe what was mentioned was that we were trying to steer away from having a rooftop addition on the Franklin Union.

Shepperd said he did like the new bays and the way they look up and down Tremont St., but added that he was concerned about putting new windows into the Franklin Union Building that don't fit within the historic nature of the building.

Commissioner Fabian D'Souza thanked the design team for addressing some of the concerns raised by the Commission at the August hearing. He said there is a “long way to go in terms of the height of the building as well as the aesthetic features.” He agreed with Shepperd that the new bay style was on the right track, but he said he believes it still needs more work.

Commissioner Freeman said that he is “usually the Commissioner that has the least problem with height,” but he thinks this building “feels too tall.” He said he thinks the top portion of the senior care building “still feels like a mechanical floor.”

He said that more changes to make the bays “more in the vocabulary” of a South End bay window “would make a difference.”

He also said that he would “rather not see an addition” on the Franklin Union Building, but he said he would entertain the idea of an addition if it was done properly. He said he preferred scheme two, but said it either needs to be more similar or more separated from the

existing building. “Right now it seems like it's perched on it,” he said of the addition.

Commissioner Catherine Hunt said she felt like Scheme One was “less intrusive,” and she appreciates the details proposed and the attention to the brick work, but she agreed that the building “seems too tall.”

Commissioner John Amodeo said that the senior building is double the maximum height according to the guidelines, and the height of the Atelier building doesn't matter because the Planned Development Area allowed the building to be that tall.

“There's a major disconnect there,” Amodeo said. “It's not our role to make the numbers work for the developer.”

He said it's “hard to talk about detailing” when he doesn't believe the massing issue has been settled. “We haven't even talked about the absence of a setback on Tremont Street which I think is an area of concern,” he said.

“Just because the Atelier is at a certain height does not give this license to do the same,” Hunt said.

Shepperd said he agrees with the need to have a setback on Tremont Street.

“The purpose of an advisory review is to help an applicant create a proposal that is approvable,” Amodeo said. “We have to remember our charge as Commissioners and not to be mesmerized by clearly attractive elements of this proposal,” he continued.

“It is astonishing to me that the developers know what the guidelines are, yet they come in with a proposal that is over twice the allowed height,” Hunt said. “How is that justified, or how do they think it's going to be justified?”

Amodeo said, “perhaps we may have not been as clear in the first advisory, although I do remember us mentioning that we were not comfortable with the height and the height limit within the regulations for the district is 70 feet.”

Alex Provost of Related Beal said that when looking at the height, “it is a balance that we have worked through over the

Police News

INDECENT ASSAULTS

At about 2 p.m. on Friday November 13, officers assigned to District A-1 (Downtown) arrested Fitsum Teklehaimanot, 28, of Chelsea, in the area of 170 Tremont Street in Boston as part of an ongoing investigation currently being led and coordinated by the BPD Sexual Assault Unit. At the time of his arrest, the suspect was wanted in connection to two separate indecent assault and battery cases involving three adult female victims in the Downtown Boston area which occurred on Nov. 13. The suspect will face arraignment on three counts of Indecent Assault and Battery in Boston Municipal Court.

This arrest comes as the Boston Police Department continues to investigate a recent sexual assault in the Public Garden which remains active and ongoing at this time. Anyone with any information is asked to call detectives directly at (617) 343-4400.

OFFICER HIT BY CAR IN FIREARM INCIDENT IN SOUTH END

At about 7:10 p.m. on Tuesday, November 10, officers assigned to the Youth Violence Strike Force, while on a firearm investigation in the area of Berkeley Street and Gray Street in the South End, attempted to conduct a traffic stop of a motor vehicle being operated by the suspect known to them.

SELDC (from pg. 12)

past year with BFIT to determine the best and most optimal use for the community. Height is obviously something we need to further discuss.”

He said that they are “pursuing a PDA” under the zoning code, which would give different height allowances, and that the team is also going through reviews with the Boston Planning and Development Agency (BPDA) and will be going before the Boston Civic Design Commission (BCDC) next week

As the suspect came to a stop, officers exited their cruiser and approached the motor vehicle on foot. Upon seeing officers’ approach, the suspect immediately drove around the police cruisers, accelerated in an attempt to flee and struck an officer with the motor vehicle causing a non-life-threatening injury to the officers’ arm. As the vehicle fled a black handgun was thrown from the vehicle and safely recovered by officers.

The passenger of the motor vehicle, later identified as Tarik Wright, 23, of Roxbury, was located several minutes later in the area of Brimmer Street, Downtown. The driver and the vehicle could not be located. The officers will seek charges in Boston Municipal Court against the suspect for multiple offenses.

Tarik Wright was arrested and charged with Unlawful Possession of a Firearm. He is expected to be arraigned in Boston Municipal Court.

TWO ARRESTED WITH FIREARM IN SOUTH END TRAFFIC STOP

About 9:33 p.m. on Sunday, Nov. 8, officers assigned to District D-4 (South End) made an on-site firearm arrest in the area of 685 Tremont Street, Boston.

While on patrol, an officer observed a motor vehicle with excessive tint operating on Aguadilla Street toward Tremont Street. The officer activated his emergency lights and sirens, signaling the operator to pull

Amodeo said that the SELDC has participated in joint reviews with both the BPDA and the BCDC before, and “this project might benefit from that as well.” Hunt agreed, adding that she thinks it would be helpful to hear from different agencies about the proposal.

Alexa Pinard of the BPDA said that the agency has been working on holding a joint meeting with the BCDC.

Amodeo said that “it seems like the Commission as a whole feels similarly about the issues,”

over. The operator ignored these signals, and continued down Tremont Street, taking a right turn and then a left turn into the rear alley of 685 Tremont Street, where the vehicle came to a stop.

As the officer exited his cruiser and approached the motor vehicle, a male exited the rear left passenger seat and ran down the alley towards Rutland Street, where he took a left causing the officer to lose sight of him. The officer broadcast a description of the male for responding units.

Responding officers observed an individual, matching the description of the fleeing male, walking on W Springfield Street away from the officers. As the officers stopped to speak with the male in front of 154 W Springfield Street, they observed that he was breathing heavily and visibly sweating. Officers retraced the possible flight path of the male, from the rear of 685 Tremont Street to 154 W Springfield Street, and recovered a firearm in the rear of 748 Tremont Street.

The firearm, a silver and black Kahr PM9, was loaded with (1) round in the chamber and (7) rounds in the magazine. A query on the firearm revealed that it was reported stolen.

The male, Jhonniel Guevara Osorio, 19, from Boston, was placed under arrest and charged with Unlawful Possession of a Firearm, Unlawful Possession of Ammunition, Carrying a Loaded Firearm without a

and Preservation Planner Mary Cirbus said that she will be in touch with Pinard about a potential joint hearing on this project as it moves forward.

Public comment was not permitted at this advisory review hearing, but Cirbus said there will be “several more advisory meetings” and neighbors are encouraged to send questions and feedback regarding this proposal to southendlc@boston.gov.

License, and Receiving Stolen Property (Firearm). The operator for the motor vehicle, Isaac Almendarez, 24, from Boston, was arrested and charged with Failure to Obey a Police Officer, he was also issued a MA Uniform Citation for Excessive Tint. A third occupant of the motor vehicle was released from the scene.

Both Osorio and Almendarez are expected to be arraigned in Boston Municipal Court.

19-HOUR STANDOFF ON STUART STREET ENDS PEACEFULLY

At about 4:30pm on Thursday, November 5, 2020, officers assigned to District A-1 (Downtown) along with members of Boston EMS, responded to a radio call for an Emotionally Disturbed Person at 100 Stuart Street (W Hotel), Boston.

Upon arrival, officers spoke with members of the individual’s family who expressed concern for his mental health and safety. Officers attempted to offer services to the individual to no avail, causing them to request negotiators from the Boston Police Negotiation

Team.

After the individual broke through the 14th floor window, throwing debris onto the street and hitting vehicles below, a Code 99 was declared. The Boston Police SWAT Team responded as negotiations continued, trying to provide services to the individual. After 19 hours of negotiating, entry was made. Upon entry, officers utilized verbal commands to de-escalate the situation resulting in the individuals surrender.

The individual was taken into custody without further incident and transported to a local hospital for treatment.

Detectives from District A-1 will further investigate, and Stuart Street will remain closed while detectives process the crime scene.

The Boston Police Department would like to thank management at the W Hotel and the Boston Transportation Building, Boston EMS, Boston Fire Department, BEST Team, both the Emerson College Police Department and Emerson College, and the local businesses for their assistance and cooperation throughout this tense situation.

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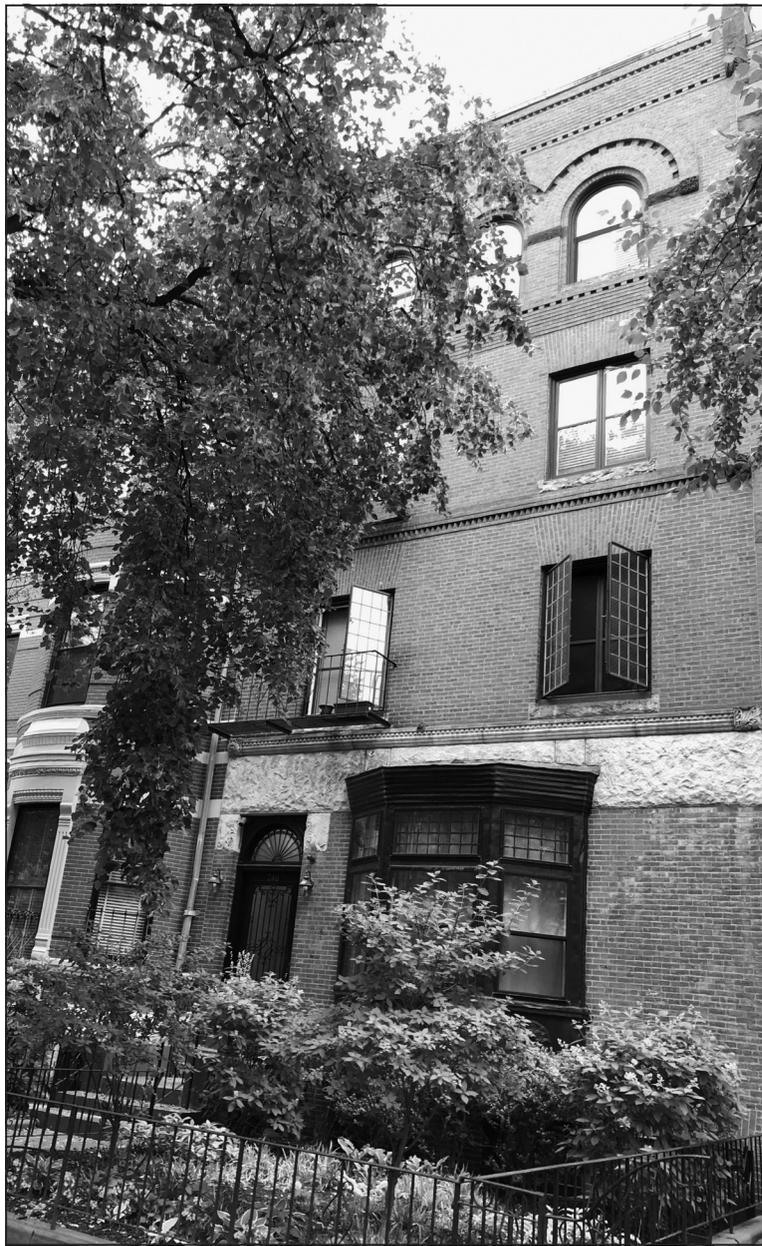
MASSACHUSETTS
GENERAL HOSPITAL

BOSTON
MEDICAL

ATTENTION TO DETAIL

BY PENNY CHERUBINO

THIS WEEK'S ANSWER



The casement windows in the last clue are on 248 Marlborough Street. In the answer today, you see a rebricked space on the right side of the building. The website www.BackBayHouses.org has photos of this building when it had two doors. The one used today was the entrance to the residence of the dentist who lived there, the other was numbered 250 and was the doorway to his office. The next clue will be found in the Fenway.

Do you have a favorite building or detail you would like featured? Send an email to Penny@BostonZest.com with your suggestion.

THIS WEEK'S CLUE



Real Estate Transfers

BUYER 1 BACK BAY	SELLER 1	ADDRESS	PRICE
Sherin, Peter	Shapiro Eli Est	180 Beacon St #5B	\$1,475,000
Ballas, Nicholas P	Baker, Andrew S	50 Commonwealth Ave #604	\$1,525,000
169N Real Estate LLC	Howlett, D Roger	169 Newbury St	\$6,300,000
282 Newbury Street RT	Ishikawa, Leigh	282 Newbury St #5	\$850,000
Sobel, Eitan	Sandra C Crocker RET	409 Beacon St #3	\$655,000
Greenberg, Michael	Vincze, Leslie S	484 Beacon St #4	\$3,800,000
Haylon, William	Fred E Anzalone RET	492 Beacon St #24	\$1,250,000
Wettstein, Gal	Donohue, Thomas R	520 Beacon St #2A	\$770,000
H P Camoion 2016 RET	Chase Insurance T LLC	390 Commonwealth Ave #408	\$2,156,000
H P Camoion 2016 RET	Chase Insurance T LLC	390 Commonwealth Ave #409	\$2,156,000
Mathew, Paul	Grobleski, J Timothy	406 Marlborough St #1	\$1,950,000
Todrys, Drew	Kerns, John J	416 Marlborough St #303	\$765,000
H P Camoion 2016 RET	Chase Insurance T LLC	425 Newbury St #7	\$2,156,000
BEACON HILL			
Chen, Diana M	Brown, Charles	18 Hancock St #3	\$1,030,000
Deodhar, Vinita	Jain, Priyank	2 Hawthorne Pl #2N	\$715,000
Shivers, Julia C	Ronald T Hearle RET	116 Mount Vernon St #4	\$1,675,000
BAY VILLAGE/SOUTH END/KENMORE			
Sleeper, Naomi	Finkel, Erin	150 Chandler St #5	\$700,000
Leventhal, Alyson B	Harris, Tyree W	285 Columbus Ave #605	\$1,675,000
Coyne, John H	Fentin, Michael	15 Melrose St #1	\$1,225,000
Budiman, Phillip H	Soltz, Mark	188 Brookline Ave #21K	\$2,275,000
Claremont Park 19 LLC	Herman, Gerald N	19 Claremont Park #1	\$1,700,000
CKG Columbus LLC	United South End	566 Columbus Ave	\$13,250,000
Goodwin, Matthew M	Clerc, Peter	23 Milford St #1	\$1,590,000
Sanford, Zachary	Griffin, Michael	30 Union Park St #305	\$1,395,000
Wan, Jimmy	Kam, Frederick	112 W Concord St #1	\$1,775,888
Schnitzer, Thomas M	Lintz, Philip H	140 W Concord St #1	\$2,650,000
Healy, Liam	Harrington, David P	86 Worcester St #5	\$747,000
WATERFRONT/DOWNTOWN			
Devin, John	Bickert, Madeleine	38 Commercial Wharf #38	\$1,150,000
75 Fulton U21 LLC	Pinch, Brian M	75 Fulton St #21	\$999,000
Zhang, Richard Y	Lincoln Plaza Realty LLC	70 Lincoln St #L417	\$560,000



PLAN: Nubian Square

Roxbury Strategic Master Plan Oversight Committee

Monday, December 7
6:00 PM - 7:45PM

Zoom Link: bit.ly/3jZ22xs
Toll Free: (833) 568 - 8864
Meeting ID: 161 689 4331

Event Description

The Roxbury Strategic Master Plan Oversight Committee was developed to oversee projects that fall under the Roxbury Strategic Master Plan. The committee meets monthly to discuss development and planning in Nubian Square. All meetings are held on zoom and open to the public. For more information, on how to Join, Engage, and Take Action, please visit the website.

Upcoming meetings/Próximas reuniones/Dat pwochen rankont yo se:

December/ Diciembre/ Desam 7
January/ Enero/ Janvye 4
February/ Febrero/ Fevriye 1

For interpretation services, contact the planner listed below one week before each meeting.

Para los servicios de interpretación, comuníquese con el planificador que se indica a continuación una semana antes de cada reunión.

Si w bezwen sèvis entèpretasyon, kontakte moun kap planifye a pi ba a, yon semèn anvan chak reyinyon.

Contact:

Kelly Sherman
Boston Planning & Development Agency
One City Hall Square, 9th Floor Boston, MA 02201
617.918.4593 | kelly.sherman@boston.gov

Baker addresses second COVID-19 surge and Thanksgiving holiday

By Lauren Bennett

Governor Charlie Baker held a press conference on November 18 to address COVID-19 response in the state and what people can do to control the spread of the virus as the state deals with a second surge.

Baker reported that as of Tuesday, the Commonwealth saw 2263 new cases of COVID-19, and the seven day average positive test rate is 3.25 percent. He said that 835 people are currently in the hospital with the virus, and 159 are in the ICU.

He said that cases are up

eight times what they were on Labor Day, and hospitalizations are up just over four percent. He said that these numbers are “moving in the wrong direction,” adding that the upcoming Thanksgiving holiday will increase the risk of people contracting the virus and passing it along to family members and friends.

Baker said that most new cases are coming from household spread, and that the virus “thrives in indoor social environments where people let down their guard,” which could potentially create a dangerous spike in cases following

the holiday.

“Today, we’re urging everybody to make a difficult choice this Thanksgiving,” he said. He continued, “the best way to celebrate Thanksgiving is to only gather with members of your household.” Guidelines from the state Department of Public Health (DPH) for how to safely celebrate Thanksgiving can be found at mass.gov/thanksgiving2020.

Baker reminded residents that the state indoor gathering limit for private residences is 10 people. He also reminded residents of the travel restrictions, which include getting a nega-

tive test result 72 hours before returning to Massachusetts, or quarantining for 14 days. The list of restricted states can be found at mass.gov/mattravel.

He also talked about colleges and universities, and said that college students traveling home for the holiday should receive. A negative COVID Test within 72 hours of departure,” and colleges and universities should offer tests to both on and off campus students.

If a student does test positive, they should remain in isolation in university housing dedicated for this purpose, and when students return to campus after

the holiday, they need to have a negative test within 72 hours of their return to campus, whether they live on or off campus.

He said that while there has been “lots of optimism” surrounding the recent news about vaccine trials, “we still have a way to go,” Baker said. “Until we get there,” everybody needs to do their part to help stop the spread, he said, including respecting the stay at home advisory from 10:00pm to 5:00am, wearing a mask at all times in public and avoiding social gatherings with those outside of your own household.

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.

SUPER SITES FOR BPS MEALS

Beginning October 26, BPS Super Sites open for Mondays through Thursdays, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. BPS families can pick up free breakfasts and lunches. Some locations also provide free toiletries and free groceries on select days.

•FENWAY

Boston Latin School – 78 Avenue Louis Pasteur

•SOUTH END

Boston Chinese Evangelical Church, 120 Shawmut Ave. Wednesdays 8:30 to 11:30 a.m.

The Chinatown location at the Josiah Quincy Elementary School near the South End is open on Wednesdays, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

From the Nov. 18 Public Facilities Commission, online:

•Donald Wright, Deputy Director, Real Estate Management & Sales Division

Transfer of the care, custody, management and control from the Public Works Department (PWD) to the Department of Neighborhood Development (DND): Vacant land located at unnumbered parcels on Tremont Street and Melnea Cass Boulevard, South End.

An unnumbered parcel on Tremont Street, Square Feet: 10,258

An unnumbered parcel on Melnea Cass Boulevard,

Square Feet: 3,942

in the South End District of the City of Boston containing approximately 14,200 total square feet of land, be and the same hereby is, transferred from the care, custody, management and control of the Public Works Department to the care, custody, management and control of the Department of Neighborhood Development.

From the Nov. 19 Public Improvements Commission, 10 a.m., Online:

• On a petition by GUGV II 212 Stuart Property Owning LLC for the making of Specific Repairs within the following public ways in Boston Proper, consisting of curb realignment, sidewalk, roadway, and pedestrian ramp reconstruction, as well as new and relocated specialty pavement, street lights, street trees, irrigation infrastructure, stormdrain infrastructure, groundwater recharge infrastructure, driveway curb cuts, and a “Silva Cell” groundwater retention/tree root protection system:

•Stuart Street – on its southerly side at address no. 212, east of Church Street;

•Church Street – between Stuart Street and Shawmut Street;

•Shawmut Street – on its northerly side between Church Street and Cocoonut Grove Lane.

From the Nov. 19 Zoning Advisory Board meeting, 5 p.m., Online:

•11 HF Claremont Park, South End. Applicant: The Newt, LLC. Purpose: AMEND ALT1043959 to construct a Rear deck (2nd story above street grade).

CITY COUNCIL Nov. 19, 10 a.m., COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS WORKING SESSION: Ordinance restricting the use of chemical

crowd control agents and kinetic impact projectiles. This matter was sponsored by Councilors Ricardo Arroyo and Andrea Campbell. It was referred to the Committee on June 17, 2020.

CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE Nov. 23, 3 p.m., ON PUBLIC HEALTH AND COMMITTEE ON PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT AND TRANSPORTATION HEARING:

A joint committee hearing to discuss speeding cars as a public health emergency and infrastructure improvements and pedestrian safety, traffic enforcement, and Vision Zero. These matters were sponsored by Councilors Ed Flynn, Frank Baker, Kim Janey, and Kenzie Bok

From the Nov. 24, 4 p.m., Boston Landmarks Commission meeting, via Zoom (HTTPS://US02WEB.ZOOM.US/j/88401275593):

DESIGN REVIEW

•Commonwealth Avenue Mall: Replicate existing granite Union bench and install between Arlington Street and Berkeley Street.

•Arlington Street Church - 351 Boylston Street: At south (Boylston Street) elevation redesign landscape including installation of ADA sidewalk and new plantings.

•Arlington Street Church - 351 Boylston Street: At front façade remove two existing signs and install one sign at planting beds facing Arlington Street.

ADVISORY REVIEW

•Boston Common: Review of proposed Boston Common Master Plan.

COMMITTEE ON PLANNING DEVELOPMENT AND TRANSPORTATION HEARING:

Order for a hearing to review

the Melnea Cass Blvd Design Project. The Boston City Council’s Committee on Planning, Development & Transportation will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, November 24, 2020 at 4:30pm. This hearing will be held virtually. The subject of the hearing is: Order for a hearing to review the Melnea Cass Blvd Design Project. This matter was sponsored by Councilors Kim Janey and Julia Mejia.

OUTDOOR DINING EXTENSION

The Mayor announced an extension of the Outdoor Dining Program beyond its original end date of October 31. Restaurants using private outdoor space can continue to do so for the duration of the public health emergency. And restaurants using public space on streets and sidewalks can continue until December 1. The City will also waive application fees for the use of outdoor propane heaters in dining areas. Restaurants will still need a permit from the Fire Department, and safety regulations around their use will remain in place. Restaurants can use electric heaters without a permit, as long as no cords are crossing sidewalks.

FIRST THURSDAYS AT THE GARDNER MUSEUM

First Thursdays are back at the Gardner Museum! Entry is free on the first Thursday of each month from 3-9 p.m., however, timed ticket reservations are required and guests must adhere to all safety protocols once inside. Visit the museum’s ticket website to reserve now.

FREE BPS BREAKFAST IN SOUTH END/FENWAY

Students who wish to get a free breakfast Monday through Friday, 8:30 to 11:30 am.,

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.



FOUR LEVELS OF LIVING SPACE

82 DARTMOUTH STREET #12
3 BEDS | 2F 2H BATHS | 2,339 SQFT
\$2,790,000



21 BEAVER PLACE
5 BEDS | 4.5 BATHS | 5,000 SQFT
\$9,150,000



334 BEACON STREET #3
2 BEDS | 2F BATHS | 1,420 SQFT
\$2,250,000



492 BEACON STREET #14
2 BEDS | 2F BATH | 1,273 SQFT
\$1,250,000



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

