



THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2023

THE BOSTON SUN

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SERVING BACK BAY - SOUTH END - FENWAY - KENMORE

Skating with Friends returns Sunday, Feb. 19, to the Frog Pond

By Dan Murphy

The Friends of the Public Garden will be hosting its third annual Skating with Friends event on Sunday, Feb. 19, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. at the Frog Pond on the Boston Common.

The event will feature free skate rentals (while supplies last), along with free hot chocolate, courtesy of the Friends' partner, the Skating Club of Boston. Skating assistants will be on hand for the event, and Frog Pond Freddie will make an appearance as well.

Free skating sessions begin at 10 a.m.; noon; and 2, 4, and 6 p.m., with space limited to 225 skaters per each 90-minute session. Free tickets are available beginning 30 minutes prior to each session.

Steve TenBarge, the Friends group's finance manager and Brewer Plaza liaison, wrote, "Last year's event was limited to



COURTESY OF THE FRIENDS OF THE PUBLIC GARDEN

Guests to the Frog Pond on the Boston Common enjoying last year's Skating with Friends event, hosted by the Friends of the Public Garden.

125 skaters per session due to the smaller rink, but this year, a full-size rink is available, and it can accommodate 225 skaters each over the five sessions. We invite everyone to join us for a magical

day of skating surrounded by the sights and sounds of the City."

Visit <https://friendsofthepublicgarden.org/2022/12/06/february-19-2023-skating-with-friends/> for more information.

Public gets a look at residential project proposed for rear of 165 Park Drive

By Dan Murphy

The public got a look at the residential project proposed for behind Holy Trinity Orthodox Cathedral in the Fenway during a virtual meeting sponsored by the city on Monday, Jan. 30.

Transom Real Estate intends to construct a pair of seven-story residential buildings in the rear of the parking lot for the cathedral at 165 Park Drive, across from the Back Bay Fens. Together, the buildings will occupy around 117,559 square feet and include a total of 115 dwelling units.

The first building would contain 48 home-ownership units, all of which would be affordable, while the second building will contain 67 market-rate apart-

ments.

Sixty percent of the units will be studios and one-bedrooms, said Peter Spellios, a principal with Boston-based Transom, while the remaining 40 percent would be two- and three-bedrooms.

The home-ownership units would be long-term deed restricted and available to a "blended" 90-percent AMI (area median income), said Spellios. (While these aren't actually AMI units by definition, the "same methodology" will be used here, he said.)

The affordable housing component of the project was made possible through a significant

(RESIDENTIAL PROJECT Pg. 4)

Wu sets ambitious agenda in State of the City Address

By Stephen Quigley

Boston Mayor Michelle Wu delivered her State of the City Address at the MGM Music Hall next door to Fenway Park last week in which the mayor noted the achievements that have been accomplished over the past year and outlined a vision for making Boston a greener and more affordable city in which to live and work by 2030.

"The state of the city is strong," said Wu adding, "We

have the resources, the resolve, and responsibility to make it even stronger."

Wu praised city employees for making "every accomplishment and constituent service delivered, every detail of the agenda we're sharing here tonight — this is only possible because of you.

"Our cabinet is two-thirds people of color," Wu noted. She singled out Boston natives Boston Police Commissioner Michael Cox; Trinh Nguyen, the Chief of Worker Empowerment;

and Segun Idowu, Chief of Economic Opportunity and Development, for their commitment to Boston's residents.

"Three bus lines are entirely fare free," said Wu, "and now we are accelerating over two dozen, new, dedicated bus lanes, expanding our bike network, and organizing even more neighborhood Open Streets events."

The mayor highlighted that public safety will be important,

(STATE OF CITY Pg. 3)



MAYOR'S OFFICE PHOTO BY ISABEL LEON

Mayor Michelle Wu delivers remarks during the 2023 State of the City Address at the MGM Music Hall.

EDITORIAL

GET READY FOR THE COLD!

We may have just finished what reportedly ranks as the fifth-warmest January on record, but by the end of this week, we'll be experiencing our coldest weather in seven years when an Arctic blast dips into the United States and delivers temperatures that will start to plummet during the day on Friday and extend through Sunday morning.

The weatherman is telling us that the temp will be at six below zero in the Boston area when we wake up Saturday morning and will reach no higher than 15 throughout the entire day.

In addition, the Arctic blast will be riding a northwest wind of 20-30 miles per hour, bringing the dreaded wind chill factor into the range of -20 or lower.

For those of us who live along the coastline, we will be treated to the eerie spectre of "sea smoke," the water vapor that forms when really cold air moves over the relatively warmer water (which presently is at a temperature of about 40 degrees in Boston Harbor).

Fortunately, this cold snap will be gone in a snap -- less than 48 hours -- with the temperatures getting back to more-seasonable levels by Sunday when the wind direction shifts from the northwest to the southwest.

Needless to say, outdoor activity of just about any kind will be impossible during the day on Saturday. While that may be a minor inconvenience for most of us, for those who are homeless, the extreme cold will be deadly, particularly for the recently-homeless who have not experienced weather this cold.

We trust that local officials and charitable organizations will do their best to get the homeless off the streets and into warming shelters during this life-threatening period.

As for the rest of us (who can turn our TV onto some golf tournament in California or Hawaii for a vicarious experience), we should make sure that all windows and storm windows are shut tight throughout our homes to ensure that cold air does not infiltrate, with the potential to cause freezing pipes. It also is smart to make sure that our thermostats are kept high enough to ensure that outside walls that have water or heating lines (and that may not be fully-insulated) are kept warm enough to prevent freeze-ups. We realize that this will increase our heating bills -- but that will be far cheaper than repairing the damage from a frozen pipe that bursts.

Oh! Man Winter has been kind to us up to now -- but this weekend he'll be letting us know that we should not take him for granted.

HEALTH CARE FOR ALL IS A PUBLIC GOOD

We were pleased to see that Chelsea's newly-elected State Representative, Judith Garcia, announced last week that she has co-sponsored An Act to Advance Health Equity, a bill that aims to close the gap in healthcare by prioritizing equity in state government, regulating data reporting on health equity, and improving access to and the quality of healthcare for historically-disadvantaged communities.

The COVID-19 pandemic brought into stark contrast the disparity in outcomes between those in our society who have good health care options vs. those who do not. The COVID-19 death rates in poorer communities far exceeded those in wealthier communities (which is typical for just about every disease and illness known to man).

Based on a data analysis of more than 3,000 counties across the US, Americans in poorer counties died at almost twice the rate of those in wealthier counties at the start of the pandemic. That dichotomy became even more pronounced in the later waves of the pandemic, when death rates in economically-disadvantaged counties were three and four times the rates of more-affluent counties.

But those of us who are fortunate enough to have access to healthcare should not be deluded into thinking that this is "someone else's" problem. The COVID-19 pandemic proved conclusively that what happens anywhere can have serious implications everywhere.

Communicable diseases are "communicable" because they spread and, as we learned from COVID-19, viruses do not discriminate between rich and poor. Persons in wealthier communities overall may have had better outcomes because of better access to healthcare, but when viruses spread rapidly through communities without good healthcare options, it is inevitable that all of us are affected (and infected).

The simple point we're trying to make is that in our interconnected world in which we rely on each other for everything, it is to the advantage of everyone to make sure that every member of our society has access to quality healthcare.

This is both a moral imperative and a common-sense goal that benefits every member of society.

We applaud Rep. Garcia for sponsoring this bill and we urge the legislature to pass it forthwith.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

BACK BAY RESIDENT EXPRESSES DEEP CONCERN OVER POTENTIAL CLOSING OF DARTMOUTH STREET

Dear Editor,

As a longtime Back Bay resident who lives near Dartmouth Street and Commonwealth Avenue, I am writing to express my deep concern on the potential closing of Dartmouth Street in front of the Copley library.

There seems to be a concerted push by the City of Boston (BPDA, Transportation, and Public Works) to close the major artery into Back Bay not only from the Pike but also from the South End.

Last year's test closure

increased my commute by 15 minutes just to go a few blocks as the exit ramp from the Pike and Stuart and Berkeley streets were turned into parking lots. In addition, businesses will be adversely affected as customers and employees avoid shopping and working as their travel times will be significantly more difficult.

The BPDA says they interviewed 1,000 people, which I do not believe, since I went during the closure looking for their ambassadors and could never find one to give my input.

In addition, a permanent closure would greatly reduce emergency/fire/police response times. During last year's closure, I contacted the D-4 police who are also

against the permanent closure for this exact reason.

I do not know of one neighbor who is for this or was contacted for their input. I reiterate that this is a neighborhood and the City management have strongly indicated that they have made up their minds without the input of a majority of the residents.

First and foremost, this is where we live and pay very high taxes. The residents and businesses should have a vote instead of being dictated by City Hall decree. What is even more concerning is the lack of response by our City Councilor, Kenzie Bok, who will not even reply to multiple requests for her position on this issue.

Phil Dubuque

GUEST OP-ED

Classified document stink piles

Dr. Glenn Mollette

An Old Testament story records an overwhelming infestation of frogs throughout Egypt. There was no place in Egypt where frogs were not present in large numbers. The plague was sent in response to Pharaoh's attitude toward the Israelite people who lived in slavery under his rule. When God ended the plague there were piles of dead frogs all over Egypt. In the streets, bedrooms, bathrooms, closets, storage facilities, and places we can only imagine. It became a very stinky situation as they raked up the

dead frogs and piled them up all over Egypt.

The Classified Document saga seems to be growing in similar fashion to the dead frogs of Egypt. They appear to be everywhere and they stink. The odor has to be particularly bad for Presidents Donald Trump and Joe Biden as well as Vice President Mike Pence.

First came the big raid of Trump's home in Florida. Late at night, FBI agents went through his home and personal items and carried out boxes of documents. Next, we hear that Biden has had classified documents in his home for years.

They seem to be scattered everywhere throughout his house. Then, Mike Pence in Indiana has more classified documents. What are these men doing with these documents? They are scattered out like the dead frogs of Egypt.

Again, what are these individuals doing with classified documents? I used to keep a big box of comic books when I was a kid. I would read a comic and then put it in the box. Sometimes I would read them again. I definitely knew that I had them. Why would

(Op-Ed Pg. 3)

THE BOSTON SUN

PRESIDENT/EDITOR: STEPHEN QUIGLEY
(STEPHEN.QUIGLEY@THEBOSTONSUN.COM)

MARKETING DIRECTOR: DEBRA DIGREGORIO
(DEB@THEBOSTONSUN.COM)

ART DIRECTOR: KANE DIMASSO-SCOTT

REPORTERS: DAN MURPHY, DMRPH4@GMAIL.COM

Children's Winter Fest returns to Boston Common February 22

Special to the Sun

Mayor Michelle Wu and the Boston Parks and Recreation Department present the annual Children's Winter Festival on the Boston Common Parade Ground on Wednesday, February 22, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Visit boston.gov/winterfest for more information about this fami-

ly-friendly school vacation week event.

The free festival is open to all and offers music, giveaways, winter activities, treats, and crafts. Featured attractions include large inflatable installations such as the All-Star Challenge, Everest Climb 'N' Slide, and a Fun House Maze. Kids and their caregivers can also enjoy

rides in the park on the Trackless Train, a ski lift photo booth, slap shot hockey, snow throw, pop-up mural activity from the Mayor's Mural Crew, a LEGO build activity with a Master Model Builder, and much more.

The event is hosted in partnership with title sponsor Highland Street Foundation, presenting sponsor L.L. Bean, contributing

sponsors Dunkin', H.P. Hood, College Hunks Hauling Junk & Moving, and media sponsor The Boston Globe. Additional support is provided by Xfinity, Mission Realty Advisors, LEGO® Discovery Center Boston, Lighthouse ArtSpace Boston, and the Baby Lab at UMASS Boston.

The Boston Common Parade Ground is located at the corner

of Beacon and Charles Streets. Call (617) 635-4505 or email parks@boston.gov for more information. To stay up to date with news, events, and improvements in Boston parks, visit boston.gov/Parks, join our email list at bit.ly/Get-Parks-Emails, and follow our social channels @bostonparksdept on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram.

STATE OF THE CITY (from pg. 1)

noting that 900 guns were taken off the streets and that violent and property crime are at the lowest levels in 15 years.

Bringing welcome news to many neighborhood residents who have bitterly complained about the indifference of the Boston Planning and Redevelopment Agency, Wu called for "charting a new course for growth, with people as our compass. Tomorrow, I'll sign an executive order establishing a Planning Advisory Council to fully integrate long-

range planning, and begin modernizing our zoning code."

Wu noted that she aims to "sustainably" increase the population of Boston from its current number of 675,000 to 800,000.

Affordable housing also figured in her goals. Wu said that more than 3,800 housing units were permitted, including 1,300 affordable units.

Wu said "every square foot of city-owned property" has been analyzed "and we have identified several parcels that could be used

for affordable housing units."

If "local builders work with us to design high-quality, affordable homes that enhance the surrounding neighborhood, we will give you the land for free. And we will provide increased mortgage assistance so our residents can afford to buy these homes," said the mayor.

Wu set a goal of 2030 to have the city's public housing developments become fossil fuel-free.

"Our neighborhoods must be climate resilient and community-focused. This year we will launch a civic space master plan," said the mayor.

Wu also offered some examples "of the things we're doing right now to strengthen our schools, support our teachers,

and do right by our students."

She pointed out the brand new Boston Arts Academy in the Fenway, and the resurrection of the decade-old plan for the Josiah Quincy Upper School in Chinatown to become the city's next state-of-the-art high school.

"This project was kicked off in 2012: three mayors and six superintendents ago. Students in the first grade when this project started will have graduated from high school by the time it is finished," said Wu.

She pointed out the early college and innovation pathways at five high schools and the partnership with UMass Boston that will provide real-life work experiences and offer college-level courses in finance, healthcare, and bio-

tech.

Wu closed her speech saying, "Boston is a city that will never stop reaching — up toward the progress we know to be possible, and out to the community whose work makes it lasting."

District 8 City Councilor Kenzie Bok said, "In her State of the City, I think Mayor Wu articulated a vision about how Boston can plan and grow sustainably by investing in public goods. She was focused on the right issues: housing affordability, climate resiliency, racial equity, and educational excellence. It's really about 'Boston for all.' I'm excited to work together to deliver that ambitious agenda."

OP-ED (from pg. 2)

past administrations hold on to classified documents? How did they get to the locations where they were found?

The National Archives has asked all the former Presidents to check for classified documents. Jimmy Carter? Where would he have them? In his family Bible? Mixed in with old Sunday school lessons that he has taught at the local Baptist Church? I don't think so but you never know who might have picked them up, packed them in a box, and placed them on a shelf in his garage. What about George W. Bush? Could documents be under the seat of his old truck? Bill Clinton has emphatically stated he does not have any classified documents but he has made emphatic statements before. These former Presidents have said they do not have such documents.

Did Trump carry these documents out of the White House when he and his family climbed aboard the Presidential helicopter? I've never seen Trump or Biden carry anything. Which aid picked up some boxes and tossed them into the moving van? Where is White House security

when it comes to classified documents?

Only time will tell and we may never know for sure about the plethora of classified documents. We hope they aren't reading some of them in China or Russia. Who can say for sure where they are not being read? We do not know for sure whether or not someone else has them. Could another family member have a box or two somewhere? How much money would China, Russia or others pay for classified documents?

Democrats and Republicans will point fingers and scream about all this in the next election. Both sides will try to make the other side look worse but it appears there is plenty of stink everywhere.

Glenn Mollette is the publisher of Newburgh Press, Liberty Torch and various other publishing imprints; a national columnist — American Issues and Common Sense opinions, analysis, stories and features appear each week in over 500 newspapers, websites and blogs across the United States.



Virtual Public Meeting

Fenway Zoning Public Meeting #2

February 15, 2023
6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Zoom Link: bit.ly/3H3ecmg
Toll Free: (833) 568 - 8864
Meeting ID: 160 441 6159

Close of Comment Period:
3/1/2023



Project Description:
Please join BPDA planning staff for a virtual public meeting focused on zoning in **West Fenway**. The team will review the established neighborhood planning context and community feedback received to date, and introduce draft recommendations for revisions to Article 66. Presentation materials will be translated into Cantonese and Mandarin with simultaneous interpretation in those languages provided for the meeting. Materials from the meeting, including a recording of the event, will be posted to the project website bit.ly/bostonplans-Fenway-Kenmore.

Meet the members of the Boston Planning & Development Agency's planning team, share your ideas, and learn about the planning process and how you can get involved.

mail to: **Cyrus Miceli**
Boston Planning & Development Agency
One City Hall Square, 9th Floor
Boston, MA 02201

phone: 617.918.4423
email: cyrus.miceli@boston.gov
website: bit.ly/bostonplans-Fenway-Kenmore

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Teresa Polhemus, Executive Director/Secretary

Wu leads the 43rd annual homelessness census

Special to the Times

With record setting cold weather approaching this weekend, Mayor Michelle Wu on Tuesday night led a group of volunteers, including U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development officials, City officials, State officials, homelessness services providers, and public health and first responders, in conducting the City of Boston's 43rd annual homelessness census. The street count is part of the City's comprehensive yearly census of unsheltered adults, youth, and families in emergency shelters, transitional housing, domestic violence programs, as well as individuals living outside. The census helps inform the City of Boston's policy development and allocation of resources for households experiencing homelessness.

"Boston's annual homelessness census is an opportunity to assess the need for housing across our neighborhoods and move us closer to ensuring that every resident has a safe, healthy, affordable place to call home," said Mayor Michelle Wu. "Last

night's Census is critical to ensuring that the City moves with urgency and care as we work to improve the lives of our residents and build a Boston for everyone. I am grateful for our state and federal partners and our volunteers across the city for working with us to safely undertake this year's count and who made this year's census possible. With this important data, we'll continue taking action to tackle our housing crisis across city departments and ensure that homelessness is rare, brief, and non-repeating in Boston."

This year, more than 200 volunteers canvassed 45 areas after midnight, covering every city neighborhood, Logan Airport, and the transit and parks systems. Volunteers canvassed assigned areas, identified those sleeping on the street, conducted a short survey, and provided individuals with important safety information and items to help keep warm. The surveys will be closely analyzed to ensure accuracy, and then cross-checked and combined with the results of a shelter count. The annual homelessness census required by the

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is a key component in Boston receiving more than \$38 million in federal grant funding for housing and services for households experiencing homelessness in Boston.

"Every year, cities and towns across America are required by HUD to do their Point-in-Time count, an assessment of homelessness on one night in January," said Richard Cho, HUD Senior Advisor to the Secretary for Housing and Services. "But this is about more than numbers – it is an opportunity to come together to understand that behind each data point is a human being who is struggling to survive and ultimately find their way back home. I applaud Mayor Wu and the City of Boston for their commitment to this issue and their continuous work to find solutions to the most pressing housing needs for their citizens."

In 2021, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) launched House America, a new federal initiative that invited mayors, city and county leaders, tribal nation lead-

ers, and governors into a national partnership. House America made investments provided through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to address the crisis of homelessness through a "housing-first" approach. As part of the House America initiative, the City of Boston committed to rehouse 1,100 households experiencing homelessness and build over 650 units of housing for people facing housing insecurity by the end of 2022. The City exceeded the goals set by HUD by housing 1,161 individuals and creating 739 units of housing.

"The homeless census brings together government, non-profit organizations and community volunteers to understand the needs of our unsheltered neighbors and to renew commitments to solve this critical issue," said Sheila Dillon, Chief of Housing. "The City remains committed to ending homelessness through the creation of permanent supportive housing, providing services that assist our most vulnerable residents and tracking our progress. Boston has the lowest number of unsheltered individuals in the country, but even one person

on the street is one too many."

The City of Boston and its partners continue to work to end chronic and veteran homelessness using the Housing First approach, an evidence-based approach to ending homelessness that uses principles such as the philosophies that everyone is "housing ready" and everyone deserves permanent and stable housing without preconditions like sobriety or treatment. City agencies and community partners have dramatically redesigned the way services are delivered to homeless individuals, increasing resources devoted to housing and deploying new technologies to match homeless individuals with housing and services.

"The annual census is an important tool that shows our progress toward ending homelessness in Boston," said Lyndia Downie, President and Executive Director, Pine Street Inn. "We are proud that Boston's street numbers are very low, especially in comparison to many cities across the country. However, as long as there is anyone on the street or in

(HOMELESSNESS CENSUS Pg. 6)



Richard Cho, HUD Senior Advisor to the Secretary for Housing and Services talks to the group conducting the census as Mayor Michelle Wu looks on.

Understanding heart disease discussion Feb. 14

Special to the Sun

Heart disease is the leading cause of death for both women and men. Join Drs. Kelley-Hedgepeth and Lewis on line, Tuesday, February 14, 2-3:30 p.m., as they present a brief overview of common cardiac conditions, including coronary atherosclerosis, heart failure and atrial fibrillation. They will review the treatments for these chronic heart diseases, the impact of lifestyle, and other strategies to stabilize disease. After their talks, they'll welcome your questions.

Dr. Kelley-Hedgepeth is Board Certified/Eligible in Cardiovascular Disease and Echocardiography. She has extensive experience in managing coronary artery disease, heart failure, and arrhythmias. Dr. Lewis is an Instructor in Medicine at Harvard Medical School. Her pro-



Alyson Kelley-Hedgepeth, MD



Dara Lee Lewis, MD

fessional interests include cardiac imaging, preventive cardiology, women's cardiac health, and general cardiology issues including coronary artery disease and valvular heart disease.

This program is presented in partnership with the Boston Pub-

lic Library, as part of Beacon Hill Village's Living Well Ending Well series. Registration required online <https://beaconhillvillage.org> or by calling Beacon Hill Village at 617-723-9713. Registrants will receive the zoom link for the program.

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RESIDENTIAL PROJECT (from pg. 1)

contribution from the Boston-based developer, Samuels & Associates, as part of the mitigation for its 1400 Boylston St. (Star Market) project, said Spellios.

Matt Thall, president of the Massachusetts Association of Housing Cooperatives board and directors, as well as an affordable housing consultant and professional, and a longtime resident of the Fenway, urged the Boston Planning & Development Agency (BPDA) and the developer to commit to a limited equity cooperative (LEC) for the home-ownership units – a model whereby residents purchase a share in a development, rather than an individual unit, and also agree to resell their share at a price determined by a formula.

Thall said an LEC arrangement would make purchasing units in the development “unattractive to absentee landlords.”

Moreover, Thall advised that

the project might be eligible for up to \$12 million in subsidies for home-ownership projects via MassHousing’s CommonWealth Builder Program. “This strikes me as an ideal candidate for that,” he said.

The project as proposed would adhere to zoning and planning regulations for the neighborhood, said Spellios, and therefore require no variances to move forward.

No changes would be made to the cathedral itself, added Spellios, while the project would intend to serve as a “backdrop” for the cathedral, rather than “overshadowing” the existing building.

Both of the new residential buildings would occupy a “significant portion” of the asphalt parking lot behind the existing cathedral, said Spellios, while the first floor of both buildings would contain parking. (The project would have no retail



COURTESY OF THE BOSTON PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
A rendering of the project proposed for 165 Park Drive in the Fenway.

component.)

Around 36 parking spaces would be located inside the garage, while an additional 10 or 11 surface parking spaces would also be created. Two additional outdoor “car-share” spaces for residents would likely be for elec-

tric vehicles, added Spellios.

On-site bike accommodations will consist of 115 bike racks located in a large room on the first floor of the first building, as well as 23 bike spaces outside.

The project also proposes landscaping features, including

maintaining the mature tree buffer along Park Drive to the Emerald Necklace, as well as creating new green space between the surface parking spaces.

Freddie Veikley, a member of the Impact Advisory Group (IAG) for the project, urged the project team to preserve the large, “seemingly healthy” oak tree and the black locust trees on the site.

Veikley also asked if one parking space could be “set aside informally” as a “swing space” during the week for elder services personnel.

The BPDA’s public comment period for the project is open through Friday, Feb. 3, and comments can be submitted to the BPDA’s project website at <https://www.bostonplans.org/projects/development-projects/165-park-drive>, or submitted directly to Quinn Valcich, BPDA project manager, at quinn.w.valcich@boston.gov.

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Wu submits Home Rule Petition to end Urban Renewal

Staff Report

Mayor Michelle Wu on Monday submitted to the City Council a proposed Home Rule Petition to end Urban Renewal in Boston. If approved by the City Council, the Home Rule Petition would be sent to the State House for approval by the Massachusetts legislature. The proposed legislation would create new

tools to meet future needs such as climate change resilience infrastructure, and retain the Boston Planning & Development Agency's (BPDA) ability to enforce restrictions that protect community assets, such as affordable housing and open space. The proposal will also update the statutory mission of the BPDA by establishing a new charter for advancing resilience, afford-

ability, and equity. Mayor Wu today also submitted an order to the City Council requesting a two-year extension of remaining Urban Renewal plans to allow time for legislative approval of the Home Rule Petition.

Urban Renewal

The proposed Act would end the ability to make land takings based on blighted, decadent, or

substandard conditions in the City. It also entitles the agency to enforce any conditions and restrictions in existing plans that protect important community benefits such as affordable housing, open space, and community uses.

New Charter

The legislation directs the BPDA to prepare and imple-

ment plans that address three key planning principles: 1) resiliency, including climate change mitigation and adaptation; 2) affordability, including the creation and retention of affordable housing and support for local businesses; and 3) equity, in the form of community development plans that ensure the equitable

(HOME RULE PETITION Pg. 7)

HOMELESSNESS CENSUS (from pg. 4)

shelter, our work is not done. We must continue to focus on strategies to move vulnerable individuals off the street, out of shelter, and into the safety and stability of permanent housing."

In September 2022, the City of Boston submitted a grant proposal of \$41 million to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to support Boston's homelessness programs in 2024, through HUD's McKinney Homeless Continuum of Care program.

"Homelessness is a public health crisis that significantly increases the risk of poor health outcomes," said Dr. Bisola Ojikutu, Commissioner of Public Health and Executive Director of the Boston Public Health Commission. "The Boston Public Health Commission will continue to work with Mayor Wu and the City of Boston to improve access to housing and provide critical wraparound services to support the health and wellbeing of our residents who are experi-

encing homelessness or housing instability."

In June 2022, Mayor Wu announced that the number of individuals experiencing homelessness in Boston on the night of the census decreased by 2.4 percent, from 1,659 individuals in 2021 to 1,545 individuals in 2022. This reduction builds on a decrease of 24.7 percent from 2020 to 2021, which was due in part to a coordinated effort by city agencies and homeless service providers to create alternative housing, shelter, and health-care options that concentrated shelters during the first wave of the pandemic. It also reflects sustained and successful efforts in housing individuals experiencing homelessness and at-risk individuals, and diverting individuals from emergency shelter to safe alternatives when possible. Additionally, in 2022, with the support of many City agencies and partner organizations, more than 470 individuals formerly living unsheltered in the Mass/Cass area have been connected with low-threshold, supportive housing.

The results from this year's homeless census will be available

in the coming months.

The Mayor's Office of Housing is responsible for housing people experiencing homelessness, creating and preserving affordable housing, and ensuring that renters and homeowners can obtain, maintain, and remain in safe, stable housing. The department develops and implements the City of Boston's housing creation and homelessness prevention plans and collaborates with local and national partners to find new solutions and build more housing affordable to all, particularly those with lower incomes. For more information, please visit the MOH website.

The Boston Public Health Commission, the country's oldest health department, is an independent public agency providing a wide range of health services and programs. It is governed by a seven-member board of health appointed by the Mayor of Boston. The mission of the Boston Public Health Commission is to protect, preserve, and promote the health and well-being of all Boston residents, particularly the most vulnerable. For more information, please visit www.bphc.org.



Mayor Michelle Wu (right) talks with a homeless person during the annual homeless census.



Lyndia Downie, President and Executive Director, Pine Street Inn helps with the homeless census.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

POETRY DISCUSSION: THE WORK OF REGIE GIBSON

Join King's Chapel members and clergy to read and discuss poetry and recorded performances of local poet, educator, and literary performer Regie Gibson on Mondays, February 6, and 13, at 6:00 PM via Zoom
 Contact kentwitt@gmail.com to register and receive materials.

The two sessions will be followed by a Reading/Performance by Regie Gibson

Letter and Spirit: The Rants, Chants, and Coos of a Literary Musician

Sunday, February 19, 1:00 PM, In-Person and via Zoom

Come join Regie Gibson for an afternoon of story, spoken word poetry, music and song. This will be an intelligent, thoughtful, bluesy, jazzy, touching exploration into what it means to live,

laugh, and love as a human being.

Regie Gibson is a multi-faceted artist and workshop leader

who has worked with schools, churches, and synagogues in Boston and New York. Read more about his award-winning poetry,

music, and acting career on Regie's homepage.

Register at laura@kings-chapel.org for the in person event.

HOME RULE PETITION *(from pg. 6)*

distribution of benefits derived from development in the City, and redress historical inequitable policies that may have led to inequities in the City's growth. The legislation would require that all plans be approved by the mayor.

will guard land use protections currently in place and give time for the Home Rule Petition to pass. Once passed, the temporary extensions will remain in place through March 31, 2025, or until passage of the proposed Home Rule Petition.

Modernizing the BPDA

Since 2016, the Boston Planning & Development Agency (BPDA) has been the operating name of two legal entities: the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) and the Economic Development and Industrial Corporation (EDIC) of Boston. This legislation will simplify Boston's quasi-governmental entity by abolishing the BRA and EDIC and transferring the powers and duties of those entities into a new, singular entity named the BPDA. As Mayor Wu announced in her 2023 State of the City address, the quasi-governmental entity, which will be named the the Boston Planning & Development Agency (BPDA) legally upon passage of this legislation, is envisioned to be staffed by City employees who work for a City Planning & Design Department and report to the Chief of Planning. The migration of current BPDA staff to this new City department will take place over the next 1 to 2 years.

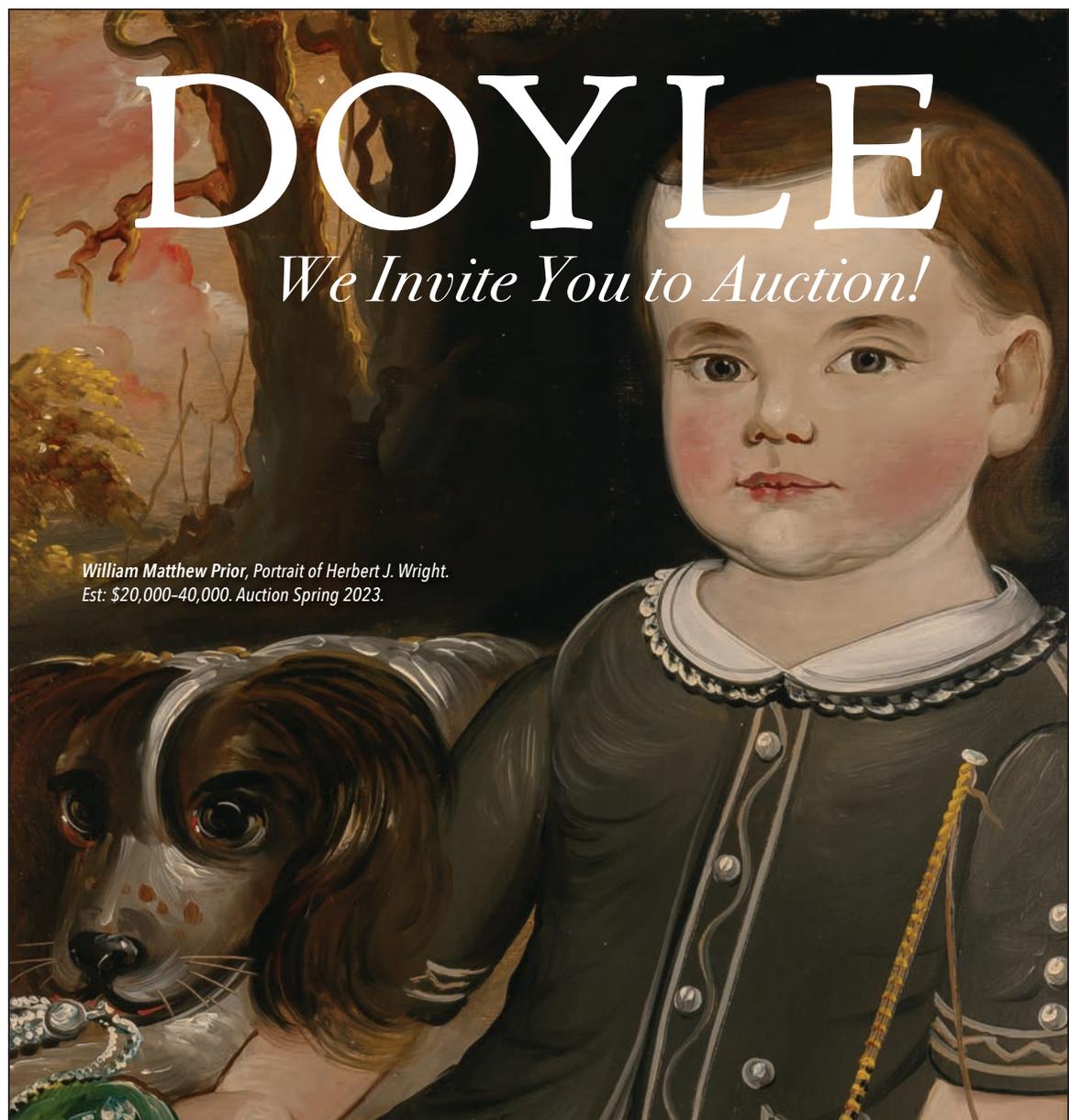
Executive Order on New Direction for Planning and Development

In her 2023 State of the City last week, Mayor Wu announced a new direction for planning and development that ensures resilience, affordability and equity goals guide the City's growth. Today, Mayor Wu also issued an Executive Order to ensure that direction. The Executive Order directs the BPDA to invest in reforming Boston's zoning code and to prioritize community engagement in that planning work. It also directs the Chief of Planning to create a coastal resilience delivery team responsible for preparing Boston for sea level rise and directs the BPDA to use its portfolio of property to advance the City of Boston's priorities. The Executive Order also instructs the BPDA to use its existing powers to act in accordance with the Home Rule Petition filed.

District 8 City Councilor Kenzie Bok said, "In her State of the City, I think Mayor Wu articulated a vision about how Boston can plan and grow sustainably by investing in public goods. She was focused on the right issues: housing affordability, climate resiliency, racial equity, and educational excellence. It's really about 'Boston for all.' I'm excited to work together to deliver that ambitious agenda."

Temporary Urban Renewal Extension

The Order submitted today, which requires approval of the City Council, the BPDA Board, and the Commonwealth's Department of Housing and Community Development, extends protections on 12 existing Urban Renewal plan areas beyond the current sunset date of March 31, 2023. The extension



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'Make Way for Ducklings, the Musical' coming to BU's Wheelock Family Theatre

By Sun staff

Mrs. Mallard and her aquatic kin from Robert McCloskey's classic children's book will come to life on the stage for the first time when "Make Way for Ducklings, the Musical" arrives at Boston University's Wheelock Family Theatre for performances from Feb. 17 through March 12.

The stage's Ducklings will trek through some of Boston's most celebrated landmarks, including the Public Garden, the State House, Louisburg Square on Beacon Hill, the Longfellow Bridge, and the Charles River.

The Ducklings then make their way down Mt. Vernon Street, Charles Street, and Beacon Street before heading back home to the Public Garden during a journey filled with song and dance.

Emily Ranii, the play's director and artistic director of Wheelock Family Theatre, describes the musical as a "tour of the city we call 'home'" and added that the "songs are one bop after another, and Boston audiences will particularly get a kick out of all of the local references."

Ranii said in a press release: "As we were all increasingly at home during the pandemic, the



D. MURPHY PHOTO

Nancy Schön's "Make Way for Ducklings" sculpture in the Public Garden.

BBAC meeting set for Feb. 8

Staff Report

The Back Bay Architectural Commission (BBAC) will hold its next public hearing on Wednesday, February 8, 2023 at 4:45pm

Please note: This hearing will be held virtually and not in person. To participate, please go to our Zoom meeting link or call 301-715-8592 and enter meeting ID 972 5218 9756 #. You can also email comments through email at backbayac@boston.gov

Public testimony begins at 4:45pm

Discussion Topics

1. Violations Committee - 4:45pm 48 Gloucester Street: Unapproved vestibule enclosure.

2. Design Review - 5:00PM 23.0494 BB 48 Gloucester Street: At front facade installation of temporary vestibule enclosure.

23.0511 BB 36 Newbury Street: At front facade replace existing wall sign and signage and existing entrance canopy; re-install second-story awning with signage; and install awning at third-story with signage.

23.0560 BB 299-301 Newbury Street: Accessibility upgrades at rear elevation to provide access to retail spaces. Work includes installation of a new lift from the rear alley and upgrades along the accessible path.

23.0531 BB 40 Hereford Street: At public sidewalk replace existing city street light with DAS node.

23.0530 BB 2 Commonwealth Avenue: At public sidewalk at Arlington Street replace existing city street light with DAS node.

23.0522 BB Zero Marlborough Street: Reinstall and re-landscape entrance to lower unit that was removed to install new drainage system.

23.0554 BB 4-5 Arlington Street: At front facade remove sphere finials from roof balustrade.

23.0559 BB 122 Beacon Street: At front facade replace seventeen six-over-six non-historic windows at floors three-seven with one-over-one wood windows; and at rear elevation replace ten non-historic windows at floors three-six in-kind.

23.0562 BB 12-14 Commonwealth Avenue: At front facade install access ramp at entrance. 23.0561 BB 358 Marlbor-

ough Street: Restore existing facades and replace windows - add new window at front dormer; at front facade replace door hardware and intercom; at rear elevation construct new two-story addition with terraces, install new garden fence and wall, and provide new plantings, trees and new brick paving at parking; and at roof construct new roof deck, green roof, bulkhead and mech. equipment.

3. Administrative Review/Approval 23.0572 BB 144 Beacon Street: At roof install decking at location of previous roof deck.

23.0550 BB 166 Beacon Street: At front facade and rear elevation replace nine first-story one-over-one non-historic wood windows in-kind.

23.0551 BB 280 Beacon Street: At front facade and side elevation replace nine non-historic wood windows in-kind.

23.0537 BB 520 Beacon Street: At rear elevation replace non-historic window in-kind.

23.0465 BB 222 Clarendon Street: At front facade, recover awning and install signage.

23.0570 BB 41 Commonwealth Avenue: At front facade replace three lower-level one-over-one wood windows in-kind.

23.0502 BB 180 Commonwealth Avenue: At interior courtyard replace three non-historic aluminum-clad windows in-kind; and at rear elevation replace six non-historic aluminum-clad windows with wood true-divided light windows.

23.0575 BB 36 Newbury Street: At front facade repair and re-point masonry.

23.0274 BB 126 Newbury Street: At front facade install wall sign and blade sign.

23.0556 BB 283-285 Newbury Street: At front facade and rear elevation re-point and repair masonry, and repair entry steps.

23.0557 BB 316 Newbury Street: At front facade and rear elevation re-point and repair masonry.

4. Ratification of 1-11-2023 public hearing minutes.

5. Staff updates.

6. Projected adjournment - 7:30pm

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question of 'what makes a home' took on new meanings. Mr. and Mrs. Mallard's quest for a forever home and the community that surrounds it resonated all the more."

Michael J. Bobbitt, the musical's co-writer and co-creator, said in a press release: "Even though this work started before I moved to the Boston area, so much of the play has been enhanced by my immersion into the Boston Community."

Added Bobbitt: "The story builds on the tropes of classic and golden age musical comedy but touches on themes that everyone can relate to. My little secret when writing children's plays is that I truly try to entertain the adults as much, if not more than the kids. I think it's a toe tapping, sing-along, laugh out loud, hug your children kinda show."

The production will feature some familiar faces from WFT@BU, like Jared Troilo and Ricardo Holguin, as well as newcomers and a talented youth ensemble.

"Make Way for Ducklings, the Musical" was co-commissioned by Wheelock Family Theatre and Adventure Theatre in Glen Echo, Maryland and adapted for the stage by Bobbitt, Sandra Eskin, and William Yanesh. The production is directed by Ranii, and its music is directed by Jon Goldberg and choreographed by Joy Clark.

Single ticket prices range from \$24-48 and can be purchased by calling 617-353-3001 or visiting wheelockfamilytheatre.org. Tickets can also be purchased at the Wheelock Theatre box office at 180 Riverway in Boston.

Mayor Wu's State of the City Address

Mayor Wu delivered her first State of the City Address on Wednesday, January 25, 2023, at MGM Music Hall. The following is her speech:

Good evening, Boston! Tonight we're at the beautiful new MGM Music Hall, and I want to thank the Red Sox and Fenway Music Company for hosting us, and for your commitment to our city.

I'm grateful to be joined by partners in public service: Council President Flynn and Boston City Councilors, Chair Robinson and the Boston School Committee, Mayor Janey, Ambassador Flynn and Mrs. Flynn, Governor Healey, Senate President Spilka, Attorney General Campbell, Treasurer Goldberg, State Representatives and Senators, US Attorney Rollins, county officials. Thank you so much for being with us. And to our interpreters, thank you for helping us reach all of our residents this evening, in seven languages.

A year ago this week, I was bundled up for my first snowstorm as mayor, riding shotgun with our Superintendent of Streets, Mike Brohel, as he drove the dark, icy roads before dawn, and worked with his team to salt, scrape, and win back the pavement from the snow. By the time we got to City Hall, Al Vilar was already hunkered down in the Traffic Management Center, lunch packed for a long storm, monitoring eight gigantic screens for anyone who might need help on the roads. As the rest of our city slept, Boston's 311 and 911 call-takers answered phones throughout the night, to send services where needed, while emergency management crews, EMS, police, and fire stood ready.

Our city is carried by so many people whose faces most of us never see. Who aren't on the news, or on stage accepting awards, but after a full day of serving our constituents, still find time to coach softball at Charlestown High Field or pack meals for new immigrant families in Mattapan Square.

That's why, on your way in tonight, you saw the beautiful portraits of just a few of these civic heroes. To all our City Workers: Every accomplishment and constituent service delivered, every detail of the agenda we're sharing here tonight—is only possible because of you. I'm so proud to work alongside you.

It's been three years since

we've been able to celebrate—and reflect on—the State of our City in person. And we've all felt the collective toll of these years and the continued impact on our hearts and minds, on local businesses and household budgets.

Boston has always been resilient.

But when resilience goes from a strength that we call on, to a constant state of being, it's time to stop hardening ourselves against the world, and start changing the world we live in.

Real change comes from community, so I knew my first and most important job as mayor was to build the team Boston deserves. That team is here tonight. Our Cabinet is two-thirds people of color! We're BPS parents, and graduates. We speak Spanish and Arabic, Vietnamese, Haitian Creole, and more. We speak honestly about Boston's past, present, and future, because we've lived the challenges and shared the dreams of the families we now get to serve.

The young man who started as a lifeguard in our community centers, now oversees them as our Chief of Human Services: José Massó.

The school lunch lady's daughter, who found her calling as a teacher, then launched a nationally recognized high school in Dorchester, is now our Boston Public Schools Superintendent: Mary Skipper.

The boy from Roxbury who wanted to serve and protect, who—against all odds, and over nearly three decades—rose through every level of leadership at the Boston Police Department, is now our Boston Police Commissioner: Michael Cox.

The girl who watched her refugee parents wash dishes at restaurants so their kids could lead a better life—now leads our efforts to ensure that all workers, no matter where they were born or what language they speak, have health, safety, and dignity on the job, as our new Chief of Worker Empowerment: Trinh Nguyen.

The toddler who took his very first steps in City Hall daycare, grew up to hold city leaders accountable for vast racial disparities in city contracting as President and CEO of the Black Economic Council of MA, and is now our Chief of Economic Opportunity & Inclusion: Segun Idowu.

Just like our communities, this



MAYOR'S OFFICE PHOTO BY JEREMIAH ROBINSON

Gov. Maura Healey, Mayor Michelle Wu and State Treasurer Deborah Goldberg after the 2023 State of the City Address at the MGM Music Hall in Fenway.

team refuses to accept that things must be how they've always been. We're taking on the hard, complicated issues our residents face, no matter how deeply entrenched or politically fraught.

When we took office with winter looming, and hundreds living in unsafe, unsanitary encampments—we didn't look away: We built a new model for housing and services so tents could come down and people could heal. And through the Newmarket BID's Back to Work program, folks who were once living at Mass & Cass are now part of the team working to keep the area clean and safe for everyone. Some of those leaders are here tonight. Mike, and Mike, Tim, Carlos, and Melissa: we are honored to be doing this important work together.

When Omicron spiked and pushed our hospitals to the brink, we didn't turn away: taking decisive action for public health, because, no matter the backlash, Boston will never compromise on protecting our people. And I want to thank everyone at the Boston Public Health Commission, Executive Director Dr. Bisola Ojikutu, and all of our public health and healthcare workers.

When we learned the MBTA would finally make major repairs to the Orange line—but with just two weeks' notice—we didn't back away: every City department stepped in to keep Boston moving and proved that a more connected, coordinated system is possible. Tonight, I'm renewing my call for the people of Boston to have a seat on the MBTA Board.

Under extraordinary circumstances, our team has refused to settle. Over the last year:

We made three bus lines entirely fare-free. Now, we're accelerating over two dozen

miles of new dedicated bus lanes, expanding our bike network, and organizing even more neighborhood Open Streets events.

We worked alongside residents in Egleston Square and business partners to secure a Community Peace Garden on Washington Street; and helped 40 artists in Uphams Corner go from facing eviction to owning their own building—the Humphreys Street Studio is here to stay. And, this year we'll make Boston's largest investment ever in artists and the arts.

We made the spaces and services of our City more accessible: opening a new, fully-accessible City Hall Plaza and senior center in Orient Heights, partnering with the City Council and our Disability Commission to require closed captioning on public TVs, connecting 19,000 seniors to services; and making our 311 app multilingual for the first time, in eleven languages. We reopened a newly renovated Roslindale Branch library...this year we will reopen the Faneuil Branch in Oak Square, and begin design in Fields Corner and the South End.

Our Office of Early Childhood made dozens of new Pre-K classrooms free for our littlest learners and launched a professional development program to help early educators teach in Boston, debt-free. We fought off a state takeover of Boston Public Schools, onboarded a new district leadership team, and just welcomed our first electric school buses at the Readville bus yard.

Our police officers took nearly 900 guns off our streets and worked with community to achieve the lowest level of Part One, violent and property crime in 15 years. I want to thank Commissioner Michael Cox for coming home to Boston, Superintendent-in-Chief Greg Long

for your service over 18 months as Acting Commissioner, and all our officers for your hard work.

We are looking to end community violence with new strategies to address trauma and provide essential supports—from our Youth Safety Task Force, to an alternative crisis response program with EMS and behavioral health services. And, this April, we will launch a Fire Cadet Program thanks to the leadership of our new Fire Commissioner, Paul Burke.

We also graduated our first class of students from Boston's PowerCorps program, training young people from our neighborhoods for great jobs in the green economy. Many of them are here tonight.

We've invested in longstanding Legacy Businesses and are helping new entrepreneurs fill vacant retail spaces to revitalize our neighborhood commercial districts. And we're excited that Lego is building their North American headquarters in Boston this fall. We made progress on closing the supplier diversity gap, awarding contracts worth more than \$100 million—from school lunches to snow removal—to businesses owned by women and people of color. Thanks to legislation passed by the City Council and approved by the state legislature last month, we'll be able to do even more. And we did all this on top of filling 5,000 potholes, collecting more than 500 tons of curbside composting, and plowing through 53 inches of snow last year.

In so many other cities, none of this would have been possible. But Boston has never let anyone else define our possibilities.

It's thanks to the people of Boston that I can stand here tonight and say—the state of the City is strong.

And we have the resources, the resolve, and the responsibility to make it even stronger. As we look to the year ahead, our administration is focused on building a green and growing city for everyone.

Doing so will require that we reckon with—and rebuild—the systems that got us here. When the "Boston Redevelopment Authority" was created nearly 70 years ago, its purpose was singular: to clear the way for new development, even if that meant displacing tens of thousands of

SPEECH (from pg. 9)

working class, immigrant, and Black and brown residents.

Since 2016 it's been called the Boston Planning and Development Agency, or "BPDA," but the focus on building buildings rather than community has held back the talent of its staff and deepened disparities in our city.

Over the last decade, Boston saw the largest building boom in generations: cranes in the sky and jobs on the ground. But that growth wasn't harnessed for the benefit of all our communities. Not planning for community stability meant that even as our population grew, many were squeezed out. Not planning for affordability, and transit, meant that housing prices soared, and traffic snarled. Not planning for sustainability meant that as new development reshaped our skyline, public infrastructure continued to age: subway tracks and school buildings, pools and community centers.

Now, stronger storms and hotter summers raise the stakes. The pandemic has thinned our usual Downtown crowd, and inflation has forced many workers to balance two or three jobs just to keep milk in the fridge or make rent. In this moment of need, we have an opportunity and an obligation to change how we plan for Boston's future.

Under the leadership of our Chief of Planning, Arthur Jemison, we're charting a new course for growth, with people as our compass. Tomorrow I'll sign an executive order establishing a Planning Advisory Council to fully integrate long-range planning, and begin modernizing our zoning code. It will be led by Chief Jemison and consist of Cabinet chiefs in capital planning, transportation, climate, housing, and the arts.

Over this next year, we'll shift planning efforts from the BPDA to a new City Planning and

Design Department—to expand planning and urban design as a coordinated effort that guides our growth. Our vision is for Boston to sustainably reach our peak population of 800,000 residents with the housing and schools, parks and public transit to support that growth.

Next week we'll file a home-rule petition to formally end the decades-old urban renewal mission of eradicating so-called "blight and urban decay," and instead rededicate our resources toward Boston's urgent needs today—resiliency, affordability, and equity. Together, these changes will, for the first time since the 1960s, restore planning as a central function of City government.

I've also charged our team with improving the uneven and unpredictable approval process that frustrates community members and developers. Next month, we'll form a steering group of real estate and community leaders to recommend changes to our Article 80 development review process. We'll simplify and accelerate timelines so that good projects get shovels in the ground faster. We'll also transfer compliance and enforcement from the BPDA to the Office of Housing so our communities can be confident that we're always getting the full benefit of development agreements.

Of course, we can't grow sustainably unless our residents are secure in their homes. Our housing crisis displaces children and families, drives down enrollment in schools, hurts local businesses, increases homelessness, and strains our public health and safety systems.

So, our housing plan must be just as comprehensive. We'll deploy every tool, every strategy, and every resource to create more housing that residents can actually afford. We will prioritize

keeping residents in their homes, and closing the racial wealth gap by boosting home ownership.

Last year, our Office of Housing permitted 3,800 housing units—the most since 2018, including 1,300 affordable units—the most in a generation. And we'll do even more by directing the bulk of our federal recovery dollars to housing. In the coming weeks, we'll be sending the City Council a Home Rule Petition on rent stabilization to end rent gouging, and protect our families from eviction and displacement.

And we're putting City land to work. We've analyzed every square foot of City-owned property and identified several parcels that could generate thousands of affordable housing units. We also have 150 vacant lots in our neighborhoods ready for housing. Local builders: work with us to design high-quality, affordable homes that enhance the surrounding neighborhood, and we'll give you the land for free. And we'll provide increased mortgage assistance so our residents can afford to buy these homes. We'll accelerate zoning changes for predictability and equity in our growth. Our team will update zoning for squares and corridors across the City, and complete neighborhood planning processes to bring thousands of new homes and support the small businesses, retail, and jobs that make Boston a vibrant cultural hub.

Our neighborhoods must be climate resilient and community focused. This year we will launch a civic and green space master plan, and begin design for new community centers in Grove Hall and the North End.

And, we'll help residents invest in retrofitting older homes, like triple deckers, to save money on utility bills and protect against flooding and heat. And we'll walk the walk with municipal buildings, too.

Meeting our climate goals starts with ending our use of fossil fuels, so I'm signing an Executive Order requiring all new City construction and major renovations in our schools, municipal buildings, and public housing, to be entirely fossil-fuel free.

And because "green" and "affordable" go hand in hand, together with the Boston Housing Authority, by 2030, we will end the use of fossil fuel in the City's public housing developments. This will mean unprecedented investments to modernize these buildings and meet Gov-

ernor Healey's ambitious goals for heat pump deployment—ensuring that the families with greatest need, benefit first—from healthier homes, and lower energy costs.

Together, we can build a Boston that's more green than concrete. Where housing is a given, not a godsend, and mobility is the minimum, not a miracle. Where the things we build inspire—but don't define—us; and where each generation shines brighter than the last.

Which brings me to the next generation. As mayor, and as a mom, fighting for the future that my two boys—and all our kids—deserve is what drives the urgency behind all that we do.

Like our approach to planning, Boston's approach to education has been deeply shaped by our history. The story is one that many of us know well—and it deserves telling—but that's for next year's State of the City. Tonight, I want to share a few of the things we're doing right now to strengthen our schools, support our teachers, and do right by our students.

I'll start with the spaces where learning happens: we know what world-class school facilities feel like. Just around the corner from here, is the brand new Boston Arts Academy—it's beautiful, energy efficient, meeting the needs and the possibility of our young people. But we haven't been moving fast enough. The Josiah Quincy Upper School in Chinatown will be our next brand new, state-of-the-art high school, but the project was kicked off in 2012: three Mayors and six superintendents ago. Students in 1st grade when this project started will have graduated from high school by the time it's finished.

We're making changes to speed up not just individual schools, but our whole district. Our school design study will take a full year off the planning process for every new school in the City, and we'll get more projects going at once than ever before.

Of course, our vision for our students goes beyond facilities: Superintendent Skipper and I won't settle for anything less than academic excellence across all our schools, accessible to all our students. Under newly created leadership roles focused on academics and getting resources down to the school level, we're investing in staff, professional development, and curriculum—for the equitable literacy foundation that empowers rigor and engagement across all subjects.

We'll follow through on our

landmark agreement with BPS teachers to co-design and transform how we serve students with disabilities by investing \$50 million in inclusion so every student gets the education they deserve. And, because we know our students are people and family members first, we are investing in social workers and counselors at every school, with dedicated bilingual social workers trained to meet the needs of our multilingual students and families.

Last spring, to prepare our students for tomorrow's opportunities, we announced new early college and innovation pathways at five high schools across BPS where young people get real work experience and take college level courses in fields like finance, health care, and biotech. Tonight, I am announcing that—in partnership with UMass Boston—we'll build on that foundation by piloting a Year 13 program at Fenway High School. This will give our students an additional full year of college-level courses debt-free as they transition to college and accelerate toward a degree.

If we expect our young people to be the leaders our world needs, then it's on all of us to take every step to ensure they have the skills and experience to meet this moment.

We recently celebrated the creation of our new Office of Youth Engagement and Advancement—that's right, OYEA—with a group of students from the Blackstone School and they didn't hold back. They asked about plans for after school programming and when the pool would reopen. And a third grader in a pink puffy coat wanted to know: "Como se siente ser alcaldesa? How does it feel to be mayor?" And I didn't know what to say. "Ocupada," I told her. "Busy." Which is true. But it's also so much more than that.

It can feel surreal and stressful, exhausting and empowering—it feels like the most important work in the world. But more than anything, it feels like a gift: To be able to get up every day and go to work for the city I love with people who love it, too. People unafraid to do things differently—willing to meet crises with creativity, and reach deep in the dirt to pull up the roots of the challenges that block our view of the sky. Boston is a city that will never stop reaching—up toward the progress we know to be possible, and out to the community whose work makes it lasting.

Thank you, and God bless the City—and people—of Boston.



MAYOR'S OFFICE PHOTO BY ISABEL LEON

Mayor Michelle Wu delivers remarks during the 2023 State of the City address at the MGM Music Hall.

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| Zeng, Cynthia | Haydock, Charles | 164 Beacon St #9 | \$3,200,000 |
| Markovic, Katarina | Orr, Margaret L | 286 Beacon St #8 | \$1,200,000 |
| Brittany L Gove RET | Layman, Melissa | 50 Commonwealth Ave #901 | \$1,887,500 |
| Awad, Ahmed | Hmd Newbury Nt | 249 Newbury St #R2 | \$1,280,000 |
| BEACON HILL | | | |
| Oconnor, Lawrence J | Fakhri, Nikta | 53 Grove St #3 | \$690,000 |
| 23 South Russell St LLC | Davidson, Elaine M | 23 S Russell St | \$1,600,000 |
| J B Small & M P Webster R | Mccullough, Gregory | 3-5 Walnut St #1 | \$1,761,000 |
| BAY VILLAGE/SOUTH END/KENMORE | | | |
| Panas, Alexander S | Kim, John J | 1 Charles St S #14C | \$2,250,000 |
| Li, Yichen | Fpg Lagrange Owner One | 55 Lagrange St #801 | \$775,000 |
| Reed, Adrian | 761 Harrison Church LLC | 771 Harrison Ave #402 | \$213,700 |
| Hefferan, Michael | Anderson, Renee | 530 Massachusetts Ave #1D | \$710,000 |
| Kreder, Paul J | 119 St Botolph LLC | 119 Saint Botolph St #4 | \$3,755,000 |
| See, Alec K | Farahmand, Joan M | 32 Traveler St #407 | \$602,500 |
| Eahg Boston 2 LLC | Thi Vi Boston LLC | 90 Tremont St | \$82,630,000 |
| Leddie, Colleen V | Moran, Kristine | 1180-1200 Washington St #120 | \$196,807 |
| WATERFRONT/DOWNTOWN | | | |
| Zhong, Huachun | Row Houses LLC | 95 Hudson St #2 | \$199,700 |
| Rw 710 Rt | Sunrise T | 20 Rows Wharf #709 | \$4,250,000 |

Attention to Detail

PHOTOS AND TEXT BY PENNY CHERUBINO

THIS WEEK'S ANSWER



The cutouts in the last clue are on the sculpture "Bridge" on the St. Botolph Street campus of New England Conservatory. The work is by David Phillips and is one of three sculptures made possible by a donation from the late Tony Lopes of Brookline. It was installed in 2022.

The next clue will be found in the South End. Do you have a favorite building or detail you would like featured? Send an email to Penny@BostonZest.com with your suggestion.

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