



COVID UPDATES, SEE PAGE 13

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Chang-Diaz in support of the state's police reform bill, but calls out its flaws

BY LAUREN BENNETT

The police reform bill has been at the front of the minds of the Massachusetts Legislature this month, with the bill being sent to Governor Baker at the beginning of the month, which he sent back with amendments. A new version is now before the Governor again after being approved by the Senate and the House.

Baker initially responded with some amendments that some elected officials, including Senator Sonia Chang-Diaz, whose district covers Mission Hill, did not agree with.

In an email newsletter on December 19, Chang-Diaz wrote, "The changes cut at one of the central goals of the bill: to not just hold officers accountable for misconduct, but to reduce and prevent that very misconduct from

Continued on page 2

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR



Mission Hill Main Streets honored the 2020 award recipients who were recognized for their contributions to the community. Pictured, Volunteer of the Year Recipient - Dan Weldon, MH Little League with MHMS Board members Chorlette O'Neil, Toni Komst and Eric Alden. See Pages 8 and 9 for story and more photos.

COVID-19 vaccines arrive in Mission Hill

State launches phased vaccination plan and dashboard

BY JOHN LYNDIS

On Monday Shirley Nolan, a retired teacher and resident of the Benjamin Healthcare Center in Mission Hill, became the first long-term care resident in Massachusetts to receive the new COVID-19 vaccine.

Nolan received her vaccine during a closed media event at the Benjamin Healthcare Center in Mission Hill.

"I'm glad that I got a shot of something that can help this virus that's going around," Nolan told reporters after receiving the first dose of her COVID vaccine. "This could be the start of helping people stop dying."

Nolan, a resident of the Ben-

jamin Healthcare Center got her shot at the center's first floor dining room. The Benjamin Healthcare Center is a Joint Commission, accredited Medicare and Medicaid skilled nursing, rehabilitation, and long care facility on Fisher Avenue in Mission Hill.

This week the Baker-Polito Administration launched a COVID-19 vaccine dashboard to update the public on vaccine distribution and progress on a weekly basis. The dashboard will be posted every Thursday by 5 p.m. and will include information on vaccine supply distribution, administration and other data. The new dashboard can be found on the [mass.gov/covidvaccine](https://www.mass.gov/covidvaccine)

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Coalition for A Truly Affordable Boston calls for changes to the City's IDP

BY LAUREN BENNETT

The Coalition for a Truly Affordable Boston, a group of residents and community organizations who are calling on Mayor Martin Walsh to strengthen the city's Inclusionary Development Policy (IDP), held a virtual speak-out on December 9 where members explained the current ID policy and what they would like to see changed.

Jaya Ajyer, a Community Organizer at the Fenway Community Development Corporation (CDC) explained that the city's current IDP includes a rule that developers must provide 13 percent affordable housing in new buildings, but "we know that 13 percent is not enough," she said. "This 13 percent is supposed to go toward units in the building to be affordable, or it can go to external affordable development

or job training." She also said that "we know now that affordable is not really affordable," and many of these units are "out of reach" for Black and Indigenous people of color and households without housing vouchers.

The City of Boston uses Area Median Income (AMI) as a measure for defining affordability, she said, but the AMI for Bos-

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Shirley Nolan receives the COVID-19 vaccine at Benjamin Healthcare Center in Mission Hill. The retired teacher is the first long-term care resident in Massachusetts to receive a vaccine under a federal program to prioritize long-term care residents. (Photo courtesy of WHDH which was picked as for pool photography for the closed media event).

Update on vaccination schedule; residents in long-term care facilities receive their first doses

By LAUREN BENNETT

Governor Charlie Baker held a press conference on December 30 to discuss updates to the state's vaccination plan, as well as address the current state of COVID-19 in the state.

Baker said that as of Tuesday, there were 3,659 new confirmed cases of COVID-19. He said that 2,259 people were hospitalized with the virus, and 431 patients are in the ICU.

After the Thanksgiving holiday, the state saw a "sharp increase in new cases and hospitalizations," Baker said, and the numbers are still increasing. Baker urged people to stay home

for the New Year's holiday, as gatherings are leading to further spread of the virus.

Baker then talked about COVID vaccinations to date, which began earlier this week at the Soldiers' Homes in Chelsea and Holyoke. Phase One of the state's vaccine distribution plan is in full swing, with the long term care portion starting a few weeks after healthcare workers began receiving their first doses.

"Some of our most vulnerable residents who have served our country have been vaccinated and received their first dose," Baker said, which puts them "one step closer to being immunized..."

nized..."

He said that this week, as part of an effort with CVS and Walgreens, there will be more than 50 vaccination clinics in long term care facilities, with around 20,000 individuals expected to receive their first dose of the vaccine this week. Over the next month, approximately 219,000 first doses are expected to be administered to long term care facilities across the state.

So far, Massachusetts has received about 80,000 first doses of Pfizer's vaccine, and 146,000 first doses of the Moderna vaccine, Baker said. He said an additional 68,000 doses of the Pfizer

vaccine will be part of the CVS and Walgreens long term care vaccination program in the state, and so far, 388 sites throughout the Commonwealth have gotten vaccine shipments.

The state has an immunization database, which showed at the end of the day Tuesday that "just over 75,000 doses" of the vaccine have been administered in the state so far, but Baker said that there is a delay in the reporting and the numbers should be more accurate around Thursday of this week. He said a first order was placed for the second doses of vaccine to be shipped to sites that have administered first

doses already.

Baker said that more information will be available next week about first responders, who are next in line to receive the vaccine. He said the state will "continue to do our best to keep the public updated" as new information becomes available.

In the meantime, Baker said that he wants residents "to continue to stay vigilant..." and to "recognize and understand that the virus is still very much with us." He said it is "critically important for everybody to continue to be cautious and careful," especially with people outside of your immediate household.

Reform Bill

Continued from page 1

happening in the first place. Under the Governor's amendments, key powers to establish training curricula, set certification standards, and—most importantly—make rules about police use of force would be taken away from the civilian-led POST board ("Police Officer Standards & Training") and returned to an all-law

enforcement commission."

The Senate discussed the matter again on December 21, where Chang-Diaz said she was in support of the bill, but also mentioned the things she believes it still lacks. This new bill currently before the governor is a combination of the first bill that came from conference committee and the one with the amendments made by Baker.

Chang-Diaz said in her floor

remarks that the most recent version of the bill does not include "Substantial Qualified Immunity reform; transparency for the massive dollars we spend on locking up Black and brown bodies and a mechanism for re-directing hard-won savings out of those carceral institutions and back into communities; controls on the purchase of military-grade equipment for the policing of our domestic streets; [and] clear, legally-binding definitions to constrain the use of force by police."

Chang-Diaz continued, "It was especially heart-breaking to reach the turning point of getting a bill to the Governor's desk that already included so

much compromise on the part of communities of color, and to have it returned with still more refusals to take power away from those who've had too much for too long."

She said that after Baker sent the bill back with amendments, activists and leaders, including "...grasstops leaders spoke to me about the disappointment, rage, and deep mistrust it evoked among their grassroots about whether this process would ever lead to real change."

Chang-Diaz then focused on what the bill would establish, which she said includes a civilian police oversight board that "...has the potential to ripple through

the other 49 states," as well as banning chokeholds and restrict no-knock warrants, ban racial profiling as a police practice for the first time in Massachusetts, "diminish the school-to-prison pipeline for Black and brown youth," create a database where the public can see "substantiated records of police misconduct," and several other things.

"Communities of color pushed through heartbreak, rage, and exhaustion to get meaningful law enforcement reform this far—and made more sacrifices and compromises than they should have been asked for. There's a lot that remains undone, work that this bill will not finish," Chang-Diaz said in a statement.

"And yet this bill is a testament to the fact that, in the face of so many righteous voices calling for justice, the political system does bend to effort. "Power concedes nothing without a demand," and over the past several months, gutsy, sustained organizing has wrought landscape-changing reform to reduce police misconduct and strengthen accountability. It's because of advocates, organizers, and community members that this legislation stands so close to becoming law, and it's because of their ongoing efforts that next session we will continue on this path towards necessary, long-overdue justice."

According to Chang-Diaz's office, Governor Baker is expected to sign this bill.



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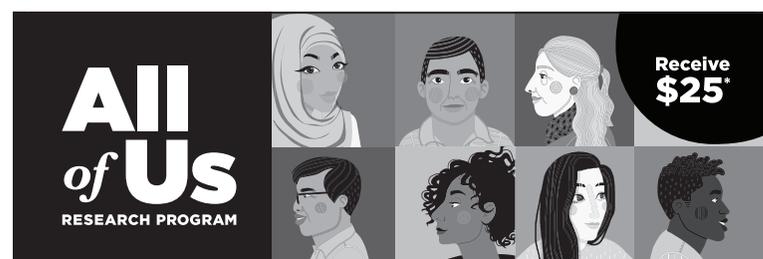
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New PBS documentary shows the inner workings of Boston city government

BY LAUREN BENNETT

Filmmaker Frederick Wiseman's 45th film takes a four and a half hour look into what makes Boston city government tick. Called City Hall, the documentary was filmed over 10 weeks in 2018 and 2019, and premiered on PBS stations across the country on December 22.

On December 18, GBH held a virtual public event called City Hall: A Look Behind the Scenes, where GBH president John Abbott spoke with Wiseman and Mayor Marty Walsh about the film.

The film was recorded "...pre-pandemic and kind of looking at the way we used to govern," Walsh said. "What we're doing now is a different type of government," he said, referring to the changes that came about following the pandemic.

The film shows various in-person meetings and scenes of people congregated together, but "all of that changed in March," Walsh said. "It all went to Zoom; it all went online." He said it's been important to his administration to "keep people connected to their city government," even though it now has to be done in non-conventional ways.

When making the film, Wiseman was given access to Boston City Hall for 10 weeks and shot over 100 hours of footage.

"Everything surprised me because I knew absolutely nothing about Boston city government," Wiseman said at the online event. He said that "visiting the various departments" and having access to meetings, among other things, "gave me a real sense of how the activities of City Hall, and the mayor, and the people who work at City Hall touch every aspect of our daily lives, much more so than any other form of government—state government or federal government..."

Wiseman added, "the film is the study of the contract between the citizens and the city."

As someone who does not typically know much about the sub-

ject matter of his films before he begins delving into the filming, Wiseman said that he takes an objective look at his subjects and tries not to "think about judgment or point of view." He said his films are a "combo of instinct, luck, and good judgment," and that he's "learned over the years to follow my instinct."

Abbott asked Walsh if having cameras inside City Hall for weeks affected his day-to-day activities and governing.

"It didn't really impact it at all," Walsh said, adding that "the first day might have been the only time that I recognized or was cognizant that Fred was in the room."

He said, "we didn't say certain things because he was there or not say certain things because he was there. I think you see the honesty throughout the film of people just talking and saying what they say...the movie being so genuine; that's what makes it unique."

Wiseman said that in making the film, "the shooting of the film is really the research. Really what I'm interested in is human behavior." He said he also worked to make sure he answered everyone's questions and "did whatever I could to de-mystify the process" to make himself seem like as much of a fly on the wall as possible during the filming.

Walsh also mentioned that the film was created prior to George Floyd's death.

"After the murder of George Floyd," Walsh said, there is "so much more to do as a nation but also as a city. In Boston, we're approaching it with the urgency it deserves. This is more than a moment."

He said he is going to use this film "as an opportunity to learn" about how the city operated before and how it should operate moving forward. "This is the time now; we have to do even more than we've done in the past," Walsh said. "When we talk about systemic racism, it's a systemic change in policies and that's really what we have to work on."

Wiseman said that he is "appreciative of the access I had," and "I began to have some appreciation of the complexity of the tasks. The mayor is like a conductor of the symphony orchestra," Wiseman said.

When asked by a viewer what one thing Mayor Walsh would change in the movie, he responded by saying that he wishes he could have added last week's nor'easter, as well as the national election.

He said he wanted to show the "public works department out there cleaning the streets" and working together while still being cautious of COVID-19. He also said that on Election Day, "we had everything counted by 9:00 [pm]. There was no recounts, and there was no waiting, and it was ready to go," Walsh said.

When asked about the length of the film, Wiseman responded, "the subjects I pick to make movies about are complicated subjects," and he said he wants to make it as "accurate" as possible. "My films come out at a length that I think appropriately reflects the material."

Walsh said that when he watched the film and how many meetings are included, including lots of internal meetings, he said he was surprised to see "one scene with Sheila Dillon in housing and she was at a table; people were talking. I initially thought it was an internal meeting of staff... As the camera spanned the crowd, I realized it was an activist meeting," he said.

"...I knew that this was something special because there was no editing and cutting of so called

potential 'controversial'...and that struck me."

Walsh thanked Wiseman for telling the story of Boston's government, and said that "more trust" in government is needed today.

Wiseman thanked Walsh for the access and said he has "great admiration" for all those who make City Hall operate.

On what he wants viewers to take away from the film, Wiseman said, "I think a greater appreciation for the effort and complexity of the task and admiration for the people who are working the issues."

The film aired on WGBH and other PBS stations on December 22, and will be streamed on the PBS app for four weeks following the premiere.

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Hill Happenings

By MOSSY MARTIN

The long, short ride: One evening last month, I was walking up the hill to my part-time job at the New England Baptist Hospital when I observed the Mission Hill Link bus parked in front of the Stop & Shop. I boarded the empty bus after the driver informed me he was going to the Baptist and of the amount to put in the fare box.

I decided that I'd take the one-minute ride instead of the 10-minute walk, but little did I know that before going to the hospital, the bus route runs down St. Alphonsus Street toward Annunciation Road and through the Mission Hill project. The rush-hour traffic on Ruggles Street approaching Huntington Avenue was brutal, and my anticipated one-minute bus ride took more than a half hour as a result. I

didn't mention why I was late for work because who would believe such a tale?

At the Baptist Hospital, Craig Galbraith is one of my fellow workers, as well as my friend. He has Native American heritage, with a 12-percent Wampanoag bloodline.

Recently we were chatting about the absurd decision by the Cleveland baseball franchise to drop the name "Indians," which they had been called since 1904. Craig agrees with me this is foolish, and that "Indians" isn't offensive.

Added Craig: "What irritates me are the people who think we should be offended. We can think for ourselves."

Washington's NFL team, under pressure, dropped the Redskins name this year. Originally the Boston Redskins, the

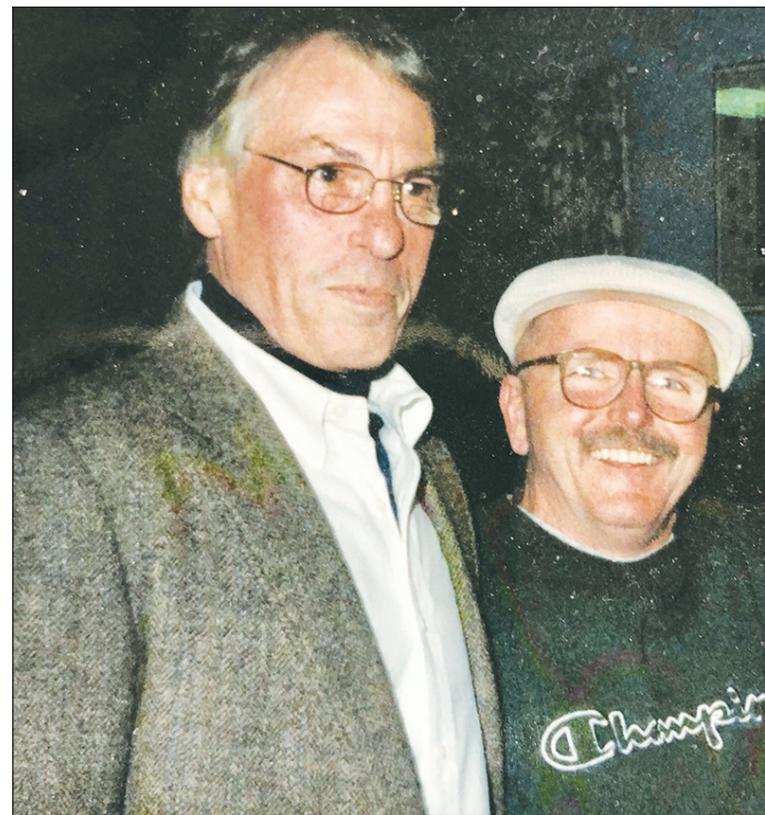
team began playing at Fenway Park in 1932 and the Redskins were named in honor of their coach, William "Lone Star" Diety (although this story has been refuted by some), who was part Sioux. The team is now called the Washington Football Club - an utterly bland name.

The Washington owner, Dan Snyder, was in Boston on a business trip last year and stopped by the Puddingstone Tavern, a fine Mission Hill establishment. He spent \$20 on a drink and food and left a \$5 dollar tip, generally a decent and moderate gratuity. However, Snyder's net worth is close to \$3 billion, and he should have had the decency to leave some more green on the bar.

I was sorry to hear of the passing of James Cosby last week. The Cosbys are a swell, old-fashioned, large family from Mission Hill.

James was my pal, and he was the type of friend who found humor in everything. He was a good athlete, although he didn't appear athletic when wearing his thick glasses. James was a fine right fielder in the Mission Hill Softball League. He was also my teammate on the last Killilea Club championship team in 1979.

One Sunday afternoon that



Mission Hill Post in 1999: the late James Cosby (at right) is seen with Joe Corsetti.

year, we were playing Concord Prison and James, a cornerback, was having vision problems after losing his glasses the previous evening at Ed Burke's Tavern. One play on an end run, James made a textbook tackle, leading with his shoulder into the

player's ribs. The problem was the player James flattened was his teammate, linebacker Brian Pierce. James got a big chuckle out of this, but he was replaced in the game until his optical needs were addressed by the next game. He was one of a kind. R.I.P., James.

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Gazette Pet of the Week

by Sarah Carroll



NICHOLAS

Nicholas is busy kneading (or making biscuits) in preparation for the holidays. This gorgeous, checkerboard boy is looking to spread warmth and cheer as the weather gets colder and the days shorter. At 9-years-old, Nicholas is a big fan of napping, purring, and following you around. He's also a big fan of snacks and unfortunately has diabetes. He's so tolerant for his insulin shots, but his adopters will need a close relationship with a vet to help keep his blood sugar regulated. Nicholas will pay you back tenfold with his unending affection and tolerance. He can live with other cats, dogs, and kids. If you're looking to add a little extra sweetness to your life, inquire about Nicholas today!



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Wayne Selden, the great hoopster from Mission Hill, is playing splendidly in the Israel Basketball Premier League for Nes Ziona. The former Kansas star played briefly in China last year, and in 2018, he played for the Chicago Bulls.

Wayne's younger brother, Anthony Selden, is also a terrific ball player. Anthony, a rugged 6-foot, 6-inch freshman forward, plays for Gardner-Webb University, a liberal arts college in North Carolina. He is named after his grandfather Anthony "Amps" Pitts, a Mission Hill resident who was a legendary basketball player on the courts in Roxbury and Mission Hill in the 1960s and early '70s.

I love talking sports with "Amps" every morning at Mike's Donuts. Last week, he arrived at the donut shop with a plethora of Christmas presents, including gifts for Mike's lovely workers, Mimoza and Ermiror.



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Vaccine

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website.

So far the state has vaccinated just over 35,000 during the first wave of vaccinations last week.

“This vaccination dashboard report builds on the state’s ongoing efforts to publicly report out data and will help track the state’s vaccination efforts for COVID-19,” said Gov. Charlie Baker. “Currently, the Commonwealth produces one of the most comprehensive public data reports on COVID-19 in the nation and includes detailed municipal-level data, information on contact tracing, COVID-19 clusters and more.”

The state will roll out vaccines during a three phase approach that will take place between now and April.

The first phase, which was kicked off last week, includes clinical and non-clinical health care workers doing direct and COVID-facing care. Most health care workers and first responders will be vaccinated at their place of employment. Individuals living and working in long term care will be vaccinated as part of the Federal Pharmacy Partnership Program.

Phase II will be between February and March 2021 and will include individuals with two or more comorbid conditions with a high risk for COVID-19 complications; other workers including early education, K-12, transit, grocery, utility, food and agriculture, restaurant and cafe workers; employees across the food, beverages, agriculture, consumer goods, retail, and foodservice sectors; meatpackers; sanitation, public works and public health workers, vaccine development workers, food pantry workers, Uber/Lyft/rideshare services/pharmacy delivery drivers, workers in the passenger ground transportation industry; water and wastewater utility staff; and adults 65 and over.

Starting in April the state anticipates the vaccine will be available to the general public once the higher risk groups in Phase I and II receive their vaccines.

David Halbert launches campaign for Boston’s At-Large City Council seat

This week, progressive activist, public servant and father of two David Halbert announced his candidacy for an At-Large seat on the Boston City Council.

“Boston is an incredible city full of opportunity and possibility – but sadly also rampant inequality,” said Halbert. “Whether we are talking about housing, education, job opportunities, experiences with law-enforcement, among other critical issues facing Bostonians every day, Boston is not the same for every resident. I am running for City Council to work every day to provide

the leadership, representation, and voice needed to ensure that Boston is a city that works for all, whether your Boston story stretches back generations or is just starting its first chapter.”

If elected, Halbert would be the first Black man directly elected citywide since Bruce Bolling in 1981. Halbert ran for City Council At-Large in 2019, where he was endorsed by the Boston Globe Editorial Board.

Halbert lives in Dorchester with his wife, Lauren, and their two daughters. Halbert has dedicated his career to progressive

causes and public service, working for two former Boston City Councilors as well as working in the Deval Patrick Administration. Halbert is a proud alumnus of the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts and has a Master of Public Administration from Northeastern University. In addition

to his extensive work in city, county, and statewide government, Halbert currently serves on the boards of the Greater Mattapan Neighborhood Council, East Boston Main Streets, and the East Boston Piers Park Advisory Council.

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IDP

Continued from page 1

ton “incorporates incomes from cities beyond Boston, including wealthy neighborhoods and towns like Newton, Wellesley, Weston, and even parts of New Hampshire,” she said. She added that a typical income level for Boston is about 50% of the AMI.

Right now, the IDP is for 70 percent AMI, which amounts to one person making about \$55,000 a year or less, or a household or family of four making \$79,000 or less.

“What many residents in Boston actually make is about 30 percent AMI,” Ajyer said, which is one person making \$23,000 a year or less or a household or family of four making about \$34,000 a year or less.

“The City has stopped the update for IDP, yet there are pandemics of all sorts hitting us,” she said, including systemic racism and others. “These all make the need for affordable housing even greater,” she said.

Sam Montano from the Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Develop-

ment Corporation (JPNDC) went through the coalition’s requested changes, and said that the coalition is demanding that the City increase the IDP from 13 percent to 33 percent by the end of next month. She added that this is a conversation with the City that has been happening for years.

“We would like to make sure that IDP units being developed are actually affordable to folks in Boston,” Montano said. She said that there should be a “deepening” of the IDP income levels to an AMI range of 20-70 percent for rentals, and about 50 to 100 percent AMI for home ownership.

She also said that the current nine unit trigger to include affordable units should be lowered so that buildings with fewer than nine units will have IDP units as well.

She said the group has been “pressuring the city,” and is urging residents to make phone calls and post on social media to spread the word.

“Affordable housing is a key pillar of strong communities in the city, particularly in a neighborhood like the Fenway where we have such a transient popula-

tion due to the many colleges and universities in the area.,” said Fenway resident Sarah Jenness. “Affordable housing is also a racial justice issue, particularly in the city of Boston where we know there is a huge racial wealth gap between white families and black families. I hope to see more affordable housing in my neighborhood, because I believe affordable housing allows neighborhoods to become stronger.”

Chinatown resident Tian Yin Zhang said via a translator that he and his wife have been in the US “for several years,” and have had a lot of trouble finding a stable place to live. They both worked in the restaurant business, but Zhang was forced to retire after an illness, and his wife has recently lost her income due to the pandemic. He said that they have applied for both elderly and public housing, but were turned away because their income was too low. He said he would like to see more help for folks like him.

Karen Chen, Executive Director of the Chinese Progressive Association, said that even before the pandemic, one of the

City’s top issues was housing, and “during recovery, it’s going to continue to be the top issue.”

She said a question at hand is finding a way to ensure that affordable housing created in the city “reflects the need of the community.”

Chen added, “We need to have a stronger requirement so that working families have a fair game in the City of Boston.”

Chen also said that the state needs to work with the city to pass Bill H.4115 that “provides increased affordable housing, job training, and autonomy to Boston,” she said. “We really need our state legislators in the Boston delegation to call on the state to pass this bill.” She said this bill “gives the city the ability to work with the residents to find solutions to the housing need that is so critical and that is so urgent.”

City Councilor and mayoral candidate Michelle Wu told reporters at a press conference on December 11 that “I support efforts to make sure that our development and private development aligns with our community needs and affordable housing.” She also said that when IDP

units are included in a larger development, they need to be “dispersed throughout the building as opposed to segregating them.”

She added, though, that “there are ways to improve and strengthen that program, however, IDP will never be the solution to our affordable housing crisis,” as “we will not get to the scale and the level of affordability that matches what residents actually need.” Instead, she said that “generating resources at a target scale for affordable housing” is what needs to be focused on.

“The public sector has an obligation to be proactive and be creative about how we could be aligning our efforts with needs in the community,” Wu said.

The Coalition for a Truly Affordable Boston, put out three “action items” for residents to participate in, which includes signing a petition to make the changes to the IDP, posting on social media, and calling Mayor Walsh and Boston Planning and Development Agency Director Brian Golden.

For more information about the coalition and their mission visit affordableboston.org.



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Paid Family and Medical Leave benefit program launches for eligible workers Jan. 1

The Department of Family and Medical Leave (DFML) this week announced that workers eligible for Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML) may begin filing certain benefit requests on January 1, 2021, in accordance with legislation enacted in 2018.

PFML provides temporary income replacement to eligible workers. Starting January 1, 2021, workers can apply for leave for welcoming a new child into their family, for their own serious health condition, and for certain military considerations. Starting July 1, 2021, workers can apply for leave to care for an ill or ailing relative.

The program, which is offered separately from the federal Family and Medical Leave Act and any employer-offered leave, provides up to 20 weeks of paid leave per benefit year to manage a serious personal health condition, up to 12 weeks to care for a family member or to bond with a child, and up to 26 weeks to care for a family member who is a member of the armed service.

Beginning January 1, 2021, Massachusetts workers can apply for:

- Medical leave due to their own serious health condition. Workers may take up to 20 weeks per year of paid leave to manage a serious health condition.

- Family leave to bond with a child. Family leave can be taken by a parent or legal guardian to bond with a child during the first 12 months after the child's birth, adoption, or foster care placement. Eligibility for family leave used for bonding with a child is limited to the child's parents or legal guardians, although certain other family members may be eligible to take family leave for caring for a child that has a serious medical condition. Workers who are parents or legal guardians may take up to 12 weeks of family leave to bond with a child. The annual 12-week maximum remains the same even if multiple childbirths, adoptions, or foster care placements occur in the same year.

- Family leave to care for a family member with a serious health condition that relates to military service. Workers may take up to 26 weeks of family leave per year to care for a family member who is a current member of the Armed Forces, including the National Guard and Reserves, and who is:

- Undergoing medical treat-

ment, recuperation, or therapy for a serious health condition that was received or aggravated while the patient was deployed in a foreign country.

- *Being treated as an outpatient for a serious health condition that was received or aggravated while they were deployed in a foreign country.

- *On the temporary disability retired list for a serious injury or illness that happened while deployed in a foreign country.

- *On the temporary disability retired list for a serious injury or illness that existed before the beginning of the member's active duty and was aggravated by service while deployed in a foreign country.

- Family leave to manage any needs that occur immediately after a family member is deployed in a foreign country or has been notified of an upcoming deployment in a foreign country.

Workers may take up to 12 weeks of family leave per year to manage needs which may include:

- Caring for a deployed family member's child or other family member immediately before their deployment.

- Making financial or legal arrangements for deployed family member.

- Attending counseling.
- Attending military events or ceremonies.

- Spending time with a deployed family member during a rest or recuperation period.

- Spending time with a family member when they return from deployment.

- Making necessary arrangements following the death of a family member who had been deployed.

Beginning July 1, 2021 Massachusetts workers can apply for:

- Care for a family member with a serious health condition. Workers may take up to 12 weeks of family leave per year to care for a family member with a serious health condition. For the purposes of family leave used to care for a family member, family members include spouses, domestic partners, children, parents, grandchildren, grandparents or siblings; spouses' or domestic partners' parents; and guardians who legally acted as a parent when the worker is a minor. Workers can take paid family leave to care for a family member with a serious health condition regardless of where the

family member resides.

How to Apply for Paid Family and Medical Leave at paidleave.mass.gov

Timing

Workers should give their employers at least 30 days notice before beginning their application for paid leave. Applications for future paid leave may be made up to 60 calendar days in advance of the anticipated start date. Unplanned leave due to an emergency can be applied for retroactively up to 90 calendar days after a worker has taken time off from the job. Workers should make every effort to schedule their leave for a time that will not disrupt the employer's business.

Documentation

Workers will need to provide or fill out the following documents as part of the leave application process:

- Proof of Identity. This is to double-check that worker is eligible, and make sure the benefits are sent to the correct person.

- Certification of a Serious Health Condition form. This may be done in conjunction with a worker's healthcare provider. Workers applying for family leave to bond with a child, or family leave to manage family affairs when a family member is deployed in a foreign country, do not need to fill out a Certification of a Serious Health Condition form.

- Current employer's Federal Employment Identification Number (FEIN).

- A date when the worker informed the employer that he or she planned to apply for and take family or medical leave. (Workers filing for paid leave from multiple employers will need to fill out a separate application for each individual employer).

Benefit and Claim Information

Workers may not be paid wages or salary or use paid sick or vacation time or other earned time off that covers the same period for which the worker receives PFML benefits. Additionally, the amount a worker receives in paid leave benefits and the total amount of leave he or she is eligible for may be reduced by any wage replacement or disability program the worker is enrolled in or has used in the past, either through the government or through the employer. These include:

- Unemployment insurance.

- Worker's compensation.
- Social security.
- Temporary disability or paid family and medical leave benefits.

Claim to Payment Estimated Timeline

- Worker completes Application on DFML website (20 minutes-1 hour).

- Employer responds to DFML's Request for Information (1-10 business days). (It is in the worker's best interest to let the employer know that he or she is completing the application because it may speed up the process.) Employers have 10 business days to respond but may respond sooner.

- DFML reviews Application and makes claim determination (7-14 calendar days). Timelines are subject to the volume of claims received.

- DFML issues Payment to Worker (8-10 days after application review). It takes 3-5 days for the vendor to be established

in MMARs for the first payment, then another 5 days for the payment to be received. Timelines may differ based on the payment method selected by the applicant. Direct deposit is the quickest payment option.

Employer participation in the claim approval process is important to ensure DFML has accurate and complete information about the application. Employers may recommend to the DFML that a claim be rejected if an employee has already used the maximum amount of leave for the year or that information from the claim is missing, incorrect or fraudulent. Employers may not recommend a claim be denied because of budgetary, timing, or other circumstantial reasons.

For more information about eligibility, benefits, and how to apply, go to mass.gov/pfml. For multi-lingual support or if you have specific questions, call the PFML Contact Center at 1(833)344-7365.

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What's Happening on Main Streets

BY ELLEN WALKER
SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE

The New Year is here and with it hope for a healthier, safer time for all. Looking over the past twelve months and at all that we have accomplished, Mission Hill Main Streets would like to thank our Board of Directors and Advisory Board members for their hard work in 2020! On behalf of the Board and the Advisory Board, we would like to thank the Mission Hill community for your continuing support of our events and neighborhood programs.

MHMS wants to give a final shout out to the 2020 award recipients who were recognized for their contributions to the community – Dan Weldon as Volunteer of the Year (MH Little League), Pamela Carthy and Dermot Doyne, Business of the Year (Penguin Pizza), Mike Pires, Golden Broom Recipient (Kush Groove) and Patricia Flaherty, Kevin Fitzgerald Award Recipient.

Here is a list of our Top Ten highlights -

- Mission Hill Gazette featured monthly articles
- Voted Best Neighborhood Association in 2020 by Gazette readers
- New colorful lamp-post banners installed
- Worked with small businesses on City, State and Federal pandemic loans and grants
- Memorial Day and Veterans Day events, with MH Post 327 members, honoring our veterans
- Coordinated with Brigham & Women's Hospital distribution of gift cards for residents who participated at local COVID-19 health testing sites
- Launched first annual Go-Give Restaurant Week
- Annual display of Welcome Students posters, discounts and flyers with district businesses
- Facilitated grants from the Boston Housing Authority for youth workers
- Installed festive Winter Holiday Lighted Snowflakes and

banners

Lots of exciting, positive changes are going in the neighborhood. We would like to welcome Adam Mir, owner of Bucktown Chicken & Fish on Tremont Street. He recently became a Mission Hill resident and is excited to be planning the opening of his new business next Spring.

Also, the Boston Parks Service held several virtual meetings on the design for the Mission Hill / Smith-Sheehy Playground, located next to Mission Church. Boston Parks' Abigail Chatfield stated, "we have been getting great feedback at the meetings from community members" and recently sent a survey to the community for additional details. The community looks forward to seeing a more beautiful and functional playground. We will keep you posted on future developments and the direction of positive changes at Sheehy Playground.

Wishing everyone a wonderful, healthy and prosperous 2021!



Kevin W. Fitzgerald Award - Patricia Flaherty with Chris Dwyer and David Passafaro of New England Baptist Hospital.

MHMS looks forward to working with all of you and seeing many of you at our events in the coming year.

In the coming days, when

you are out enjoying the beautiful, crisp holiday season in the neighborhood, you can always stop in to one of your favorite

Continued on page 9

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Main Streets

Continued from page 8

Mission Hill haunts for hot coffee, pastries or order a dine-in or take-out meal! Mission Hill Main Streets promotes “Eat. Play. Live.” This is still the best neighborhood to enjoy it all - so eat locally, enjoy our parks, and

always “shop small, shop local!” Remember to visit our webpage www.missionhillmainstreet.com, “like” us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter and download our free mobile app at Distrx.com to get an update on the local business specials and events in the neighborhood!

“Don’t Count the Days. Make the Days Count.” Muhammad Ali



Business of the Year Recipient - Pamela Carthy and Dermot Doyne, Penguin Pizza with MHMS Board members Chorlette O’Neil and Chris Dwyer.



Golden Broom Recipient - Mike Pires, Kush Groove with friend, MHMS Board members Toni Komst and Eric Alden.

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BPDA approves more than 10,000 housing units, 27 percent of which are income-restricted

STAFF REPORT

The Boston Planning & Development Agency (BPDA) Board this year approved over 15.8 million square feet of new development worth more than \$8.5 billion and 10,123 residential units, including 2,826 income-restricted units, representing over 27 percent of total units. The new housing units build on the goals identified in Mayor Walsh's "Housing A Changing City: Boston 2030" and further cement Boston's leadership in percentage of income-restricted housing units. This year's Board approved projects will generate over \$5.4 million in new Inclusionary Development Policy (IDP) funds, over \$43.2 million in Linkage fees to support affordable housing, and over \$8.5 million in Linkage fees to support job training programs. The development projects approved this year are expected to create approximately 23,287 construction jobs and 12,012 permanent jobs.

Included in the BPDA's approvals is the Suffolk Downs redevelopment project, approved by the BPDA Board in September 2020. The project marks the largest single development project approved by the BPDA Board and the largest single contribution of affordable housing by one development project, and will be constructed over the next two decades.

"Under Mayor Walsh, the City of Boston has been steadfast in its commitment to residents throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and we recognized that the economic development, job creation, and housing creation that stems from the BPDA's process are especially critical during this time," said Boston Planning & Development Agency Director Brian Golden. "I want to thank Mayor Walsh and the BPDA staff for their unwavering dedication to the community and hard work in making Boston a better place for all."

BPDA COVID-19 Response

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic the BPDA paused the public review process for all development projects and planning initiatives in mid-March, allowing the agency to create a plan to transition its community processes to a digital platform in a way that was equitable for all residents.

After months of work by an

interagency working group and with support from local community groups and elected officials, in June the BPDA launched a program to resume public meetings virtually for Article 80 development projects and planning initiatives. The interagency working group consisted of City and BPDA employees across departments, and met regularly to develop best practices and test appropriate digital tools to host wide-ranging, engaging, and inclusive conversations with communities.

The BPDA held approximately 331 agency-sponsored meetings for every single Boston neighborhood this year, 223 of which were held virtually. While the BPDA has made strides to create a more inclusive public process over the past several years, the transition to virtual engagement presented an opportunity to increase language access by offering more interpretation and translation services for public meetings. For all virtual public meetings, the BPDA also included ways to participate via phone to provide accessibility for residents without internet access.

The agency's response to the pandemic also included support to the small and large local businesses on BPDA-owned property that fuel Boston's economy and employ hundreds of Boston's residents. The agency first entered into a rent deferment agreement for qualified commercial tenants at BPDA-owned property in April and recently extended the program through June 2021. Since the beginning of the pandemic, the BPDA has provided our \$2 million in various forms of relief for qualified tenants at BPDA properties.

These efforts build on the Walsh Administration's ongoing work to support individuals and businesses during this challenging time. In December, Mayor Walsh launched the Financial Navigator Program within the BPDA's Office of Financial Empowerment to help residents access free services that address financial issues brought on by the pandemic.

Furthering Investments in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

This year the BPDA made strategic investments that promote diversity, equity and inclusion. These investments build on the BPDA's progress transforming into a community-led, planning first agency that supports

growth that reflects the needs of each neighborhood.

In May, the BPDA Board unanimously voted to elect Priscilla Rojas as Board Chair. Priscilla is the first woman and Latina to hold the position.

The agency appointed Barry Reaves as the first ever Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. In this role, Reaves serves as a member of the agency's senior leadership team is charged with development and oversight of the BPDA's racial equity and diversity priorities, establishing collaborative partnerships with internal and external stakeholders, and fostering a more inclusive, equitable, welcoming, supportive, and diverse agency.

Additionally, the agency created an Equity and Inclusion Fund as part of the BPDA Fiscal Year 2021 budget to fund activities directly related to addressing racial equity and inclusion in the BPDA's work.

Building on its ongoing commitment to create a more user-friendly website experience, BPDA added two new features to its website to address translation and accessibility. A new translation feature is now available in the top right navigation of every page on the agency's website, bostonplans.org. Already implemented on the website is PageAssist by Monsido, a toolbar which gives users control over their website experience through personalized options in font size, colors, and keyboard navigation.

The BPDA also furthered diversity, equity and inclusion requirements in its planning, development, and real estate practices. In August, the agency reissued Request for Proposals (RFPs) for three BPDA-owned properties (Building 108 in the Charlestown Navy Yard, 142 Shawmut Avenue in the South End, and Charlestown Main Street) that had not sufficiently outlined plans for further the agency's mission regarding diversity and inclusion.

Most recently, the BPDA tentatively designated Nubian Square LLC, a diverse development team with roots in the community, to transform the agency-owned Blair Lot parking lot in Roxbury's Nubian Square. The proposal responds to the community vision laid out through the BPDA's planning initiative for the neighborhood, PLAN: Nubian Square. If approved, the project will create a new cul-

tural and economic destination in Boston with a marketplace to support local businesses and artisans, a food hall with an on-site culinary program, and a multipurpose cultural hall and theater. The proposal also meets the BPDA and City of Boston's diversity and inclusion requirements for publicly-owned land to create increased opportunities for people of color, women, and for the participation of Minority Business Enterprises (M/BEs).

Building on Mayor Walsh's overall efforts to address discriminatory housing practices, the BPDA voted to add Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing requirements to Boston's zoning code. With this vote, Boston is expected to become the first major city in the nation to include fair housing requirements in the zoning code. The requirements will require developers in Boston to take substantial steps to stem displacement and provide further access to housing to those historically discriminated against. The action received unanimous approval from the Boston City Council on December 9, 2020 and is expected to go to the Boston Zoning Commission for a vote in early 2021.

Implementing Imagine Boston 2030

Under Mayor Walsh, the BPDA is leading an unprecedented number of planning studies, each guided by Imagine Boston 2030 the first city-wide master

plan in 50 years aimed at guiding growth. To reinforce these efforts, this year the BPDA named Lauren Shurtleff as the agency's Director of Planning. She will oversee the 29 full-scale and smaller-scale planning studies currently underway.

This year, the BPDA Planning Division also released a draft Allston-Brighton Mobility Plan for community feedback, published an interim report for PLAN: East Boston in English and Spanish, entered into consultant services for the PLAN: Newmarket the 21st Century Economy Initiative to draft a planning document, and, in January 2020, launched the formal public process for PLAN: Charlestown.

Currently, there are neighborhood planning studies moving forward in Charlestown, Downtown, Dorchester's Glover's Corner, East Boston, Mattapan, Newmarket and Allston-Brighton's Western Avenue, and since 2014, planning guidelines have been passed for PLAN: JP/Rox, PLAN: South Boston Dorchester Avenue, and PLAN: Nubian Square. In coordination with City staff, the BPDA is also conducting transportation studies such as the Allston-Brighton Mobility Study, PLAN: South Boston Dorchester Avenue Transportation Study, and South Boston Seaport Strategic Transit Plan, and neighborhood-level climate resiliency planning across the city.

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Mission Hill/Roxbury positive test rate increases

By JOHN LYNDIS

Last week the overall COVID-19 positive test rate in Mission Hill/Roxbury increased and Mayor Martin Walsh said there's still a long way to go in this worldwide crisis.

According to the latest data released by the Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC) of the 32,385 Mission Hill/Roxbury residents tested for COVID-19, 20.5 of those tested overall were COVID positive. This was a 17.8 percent increase from the 17.4 percent that were found to be positive overall at the beginning of December.

Last week 1,824 residents were tested and 10 percent were positive. Citywide, 36,332 residents were tested and 7.3 percent were COVID positive.

Overall since the pandemic began 8.3 percent of Mission Hill/Roxbury residents were found to be COVID positive.

Governor Charlie Baker announced a 25 percent capacity limit for most industries. These restrictions went into effect on Saturday, December 26 and will last until January 10.

At his daily press briefing Mayor Walsh reminded residents that on December 16, Boston moved back into a modified Phase 2, Step 2 of reopening, for at least three weeks.

"We are also going to be following the State's rollback on capacity but that does not change the industries temporarily closed to in-person use in Boston," said Walsh. "Museums, movie theaters, gyms, etc. will not reopen to in-person use until at least January 6."

Walsh said on Saturday, in accordance with the State's new restrictions, restaurants, close contact personal services, places of worship, indoor golf facilities, and retail businesses in Boston will be reduced to 25 percent capacity. Office spaces will be reduced from 40 percent to 25 percent as well.

The Mayor reminded everyone that the goal of these rollbacks is to slow the spread of the virus now, so the city can avoid a more severe shutdown later.

"We still have a long way to go in this crisis. But we have turned a corner in this pandemic. And we have reasons to be optimistic," said Walsh. "The vaccine is rolling out. Every day, people are getting vaccinated -- including right here in Boston. When the time comes, I ask everyone to follow the lead of our health care heroes and medical experts and take the vaccine. It's another act that we can all take as individuals to protect ourselves and our families, and bring our community safely through this

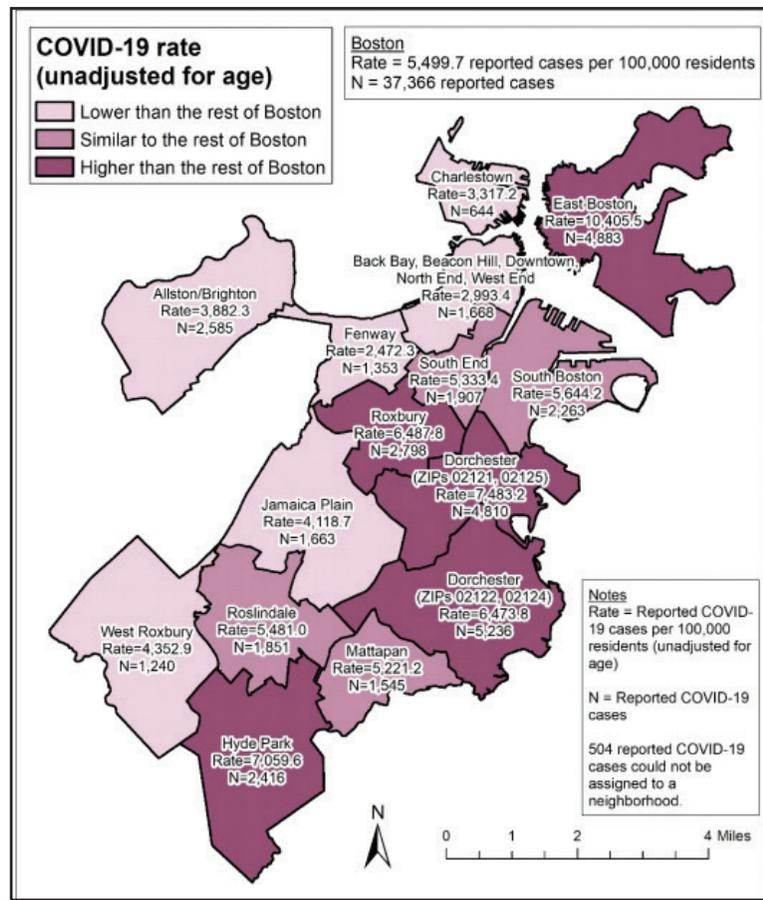
crisis. We are finally at a point where we feel like we have less days ahead of us in this virus, than we do behind us. And while we don't know exactly when this pandemic will end, we know that better days are coming. So I am asking everyone to hang in there. Take care of yourself, and look out for one another. Listen to the public health officials and keep doing your part to stay safe and protect those around you. We will get through this difficult time, if we all continue to work together."

The Mission Hill/Roxbury COVID-19 infection rate increased 27.8 percent throughout the month.

According to data released last Friday by the Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC) the COVID-19 infection rate here jumped from 507.3 cases per 10,000 residents to an infection rate of 648.7 cases per 10,000 residents during the month.

Six hundred ten additional Mission Hill/Roxbury residents became infected with the virus throughout December and the number of cases increased from 2,188 to 2,798.

The statistics released by the BPHC as part of its weekly COVID19 report breaks down



Stats released by the Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC) as part of its weekly COVID-19 report breaks down the number of cases and infection rates in each neighborhood.

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 11.3 percent last week and went from

35,201 cases to 39,182 confirmed cases in a week. Forty-seven additional Boston residents died from the virus and there are now 988 total deaths in the city from COVID.

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EDITORIAL

Have a happy -- and safe -- New Year

The arrival of a new year marks a time for reflection, as to both the year that has passed and the year that lies ahead.

In the words of the poet Alfred Lord Tennyson:

*Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.*

To put it another way, we might ask ourselves, "Where have we been -- and where are we going?"

The latter question asks us to foresee the future, which by definition is an impossible task. Though we may make our best guess to predict what may lie ahead -- and to plan accordingly -- none of us has a crystal ball. The vicissitudes of life more often than not throw us curve balls that lay to waste even the best-laid of our plans for the year to come.

Who among us imagined on December 31, 2019, that 2020 would bring a world-wide pandemic that already has killed more than 330,000 of our fellow Americans, devastated our economy, and directly impacted the lives of each and every one of us?

As bad as 2020 has been, we dread to contemplate what 2021 might have in store for us. There is no certainty that 2021 will be any better.

However, the former question is equally as tricky. Answering it requires both introspection and self-awareness, two qualities that typically are in short supply, even during a pandemic when most of us are house-bound for more hours of every day than we ever have experienced.

But trying to figure out the, "Why?" of what we have done with our lives is essential if we are to meet the challenges of the future.

As the philosopher said, if we do not learn from our mistakes, we are condemned to repeat them.

We do not pretend to have all (or any) of the answers, but we do know that in the difficult days ahead one thing is true: Each of us must step up to do our part to ensure the safety of ourselves, our loved ones, and everyone around us.

We all have a role to play in combating COVID-19 (by wearing masks, not gathering in large groups, and maintaining a physical distance from others wherever we may be) AND in helping those who desperately are in need of assistance because of the devastating economic effects of the pandemic.

Although a New Year is here, our problems are not magically going away.

We wish all of our readers a happy, safe, and healthy New Year.



~ HAPPY NEW YEAR ~

OP-ED

Decisions for 2021

BY DR. GLENN MOLLETTE

2021 is here, and will it be just another year? If it's just another year then that won't be bad at all because too many will not have another year. The opportunity and privilege to have another year is the gift of life. Being alive and living your life is about as good as it gets. Aim for being alive this time next year.

Make some decisions about 2021. Where do you want to be this time in 12 months? Would you like to be ten pounds heavier? Maybe you would like to be ten or twenty pounds lighter? If you cut back on your portions and get off the couch you can lose a pound a week on average. This is daunting but just think about where you can be the first of March if you start today? Don't start tomorrow. Start right now. Today. This minute. Throw all that junk cake and pie in the trash. This is a tough decision because we hate to say goodbye to all those holiday cookies and candies. Your body will thank you and you will feel so much better very soon.

Decide about financial habits. Millions of Americans carry credit card debt. Minimum payments on \$3,000 of credit card debt is

like swimming up river. If you have missed a few payments your credit card company may be anxious to hear from you. Ask them if they will consider a settlement payoff. A friend of mine owed \$5,000 and his credit card company settled for a \$2800 payoff. Your company might or might not but it never hurts to negotiate. You might be able to sell some things in order to erase that back breaking high interest debt.

Make some money in 2021 - if you want to. Most Americans need to make money in 2021. Work on job applications. Peruse the newspaper. Search online. Consider places you have heard about and call them, go see them. Knock on doors of opportunity. You get nowhere if you do not try. You might complete 20 or 30 applications to get one job interview. Complete the application thoroughly. Give them a reason to consider you. Put together a good biographical sketch, resume. Have a friend or two to review and edit because two heads are better than one. Have some good trusted references. Wherever you work do a good job because you want them to say a good word about you. A good word may seal the deal on your

next job opportunity.

Jobs sometimes are scarce. Consider your personal knowledge and abilities and what might you do to make a dollar or two? What do you know that others need to know? What can you offer that others need or might want? Can you make something? Can you fix things? How can you help others? Creating your own life and business might be the financial and mental sanity answer for you. If you create your own work and are good at what you do, you will not run out of something to do.

Our decisions determine our destiny. Whatever decision we make we have to put into action. Faith without works is dead. May your life be good, healthy and filled with wonderful love, family and friends in 2021. Let's work together for a good year.

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.

The opinions expressed on these pages are not necessarily those of this newspaper.

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CITY COUNCIL UPDATE

COUNCIL PASSES ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING PROTECTIONS AGAINST CREDIT DISCRIMINATION

STAFF REPORT

This month, after a unanimous vote, the Boston City Council passed an ordinance to establish protections against credit discrimination in employment practices.

The ordinance, sponsored by Council President Kim Janey (District 7) and Councilor Andrea Campbell (District 4), makes it unlawful to seek, procure or use credit information regarding an employee or applicant in connection with hiring, discharge, tenure, promotion or discipline or any other aspect of employment that are neither job related nor consistent with business necessity and causes a disparate impact on the basis of sex, religion, race, color or national origin.

“There is no evidence that one’s credit history is determinative of one’s success as an employee, but it can be a significant barrier to obtaining a job, especially for Black and Latinx people who are more likely to report bad credit. By eliminating this barrier for most jobs, this legislation makes access to employment opportunities more equitable and seeks to close the profound racial wealth gap in Boston, which has been further widened by the pandemic,” said Councilor Campbell.

“The practice of conducting credit checks for prospective employees is discriminatory and targets already vulnerable populations in our communities,” said Councilor Janey, continuing on to say, “I am proud to have worked with Councilor Campbell to put an end to this practice in our city, and to continue fighting for racial equity in our economy.”

According to Campbell and Janey’s legislation, credit checks have proven to be a barrier to employment for individuals who have been unemployed, impacted by the criminal justice system, or burdened with debt from student loans, medical bills, mortgages or foreclosures. This year, due to the

COVID-19 pandemic, thousands of Bostonians have lost their jobs or had to leave work to take care of family members, have fallen behind on rent and mortgage payments, and are burdened with emergency medical bills, any of which could hurt one’s credit but should not hurt one’s ability to get a job.

The ordinance extends to any employer in the City of Boston: any individual, partnership, association, corporation, trustees, public charity, foundation, political subdivision, board, department, commission, agency. However, the ordinance specifies exemptions to restrictions on the use of credit checks for certain kinds of jobs, including jobs that include significant financial managerial responsibilities or that require employees to handle large sums of money or debts, and for employees of small businesses that have under 6 employees.

The ordinance codifies these protections against credit discrimination through the Boston Human Rights Commission, which will have the authority to review and investigate complaints of discrimination based on credit history. Employers found in violation would pay a civil penalty of \$100.

If adopted, Boston would join other large cities like New York, Chicago and Philadelphia in establishing these protections at the municipal level, as well as 11 states (California, Colorado, Connecticut, Vermont, Delaware, Hawaii, Nevada, Oregon, Washington, and Illinois) that have adopted similar laws at the state level.

To go into effect, the ordinance needed to be signed by Mayor Walsh.

COUNCIL ESTABLISHES OFFICE OF POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY AND CIVILIAN OVERSIGHT BOARDS

STAFF REPORT

The Boston City Council voted 12-1 this month to pass an ordinance establishing the Of-

fice of Police Accountability and Transparency, which also creates a Civilian Review Board and an Internal Affairs Oversight Panel, to establish a system of effective civilian oversight, accountability, and transparency in policing.

The legislation is the result of a collaboration between the Council and the Administration to reconcile two ordinances, one filed by Mayor Walsh to establish the Office of Police Accountability and Transparency and another filed by Councilors Andrea Campbell (District 4), Ricardo Arroyo (District 5), and Julia Mejia (At-Large) to establish a Civilian Review Board. It respects and reflects the intensive work done by the Boston Police Reform Task Force, as well as years of thought-equity by advocates, and incorporates recommended best practices for civilian oversight.

“This ordinance establishes, for the first time in Boston, an empowered office and civilian review board to provide consistent and effective oversight over our police department,” said Campbell. “This is a win for the City, and a major step forward toward eliminating racial disparities in policing and ensuring justice in this system, both of which require systems of accountability and transparency. My priority has always been passing the strongest possible legislation to create a civilian review board, and this ordinance, which combines the Mayor’s legislation with the Council’s, is exactly that. I’m also not losing sight of the other systemic work we have to do to eradicate the inequities that perpetuate cycles of poverty, violence, and trauma in Boston.”

Said Mejia, “In Boston, we’ve been having the same conversation around police accountability and Civilian Review Boards for years. And while the creation of this system may feel like the end of a journey, we’re really only just scratching the surface of police accountability and transparency. We fought hard to include the voices of young people in this space. Our ordinance calls for a paid youth delegate, between the ages of 18-21, to represent the lived experiences of young people, because too often in these

spaces young people are talked about, never talked with. We will continue to create space for resilient yet underrepresented voices in all agencies of our government.”

The ordinance ensures the City of Boston will have an effective system of civilian oversight by ensuring the OPAT, CRB, and IAOP have authority, with subpoena power, to investigate complaints of police misconduct and review internal affairs investigations to create true accountability; establishing a system for regular, public reporting of data on police stops and arrests, police use of force, police misconduct, and findings related to disparate treatment, discipline or termination of BIPOC officers (broken down by demographics including race) to increase transparency; and ensuring this office is independent from the police department and accessible to the public.

This ordinance maintains key recommendations from the Administration and Police Reform Task Force, most notably the overall structure of the OPAT that houses and supports the CRB and IAOP. It also includes important provisions from the Council’s legislation, such as requiring reports of complaints and policing data on a monthly basis, a designated seat for a young person on the CRB, and an empowered role for the Council in nominating CRB and IAOP members, and, most importantly, ensuring all three elements of this system are codified in an ordinance -- which must be passed by the Council and signed by Mayor -- to create an enforceable, lasting system of civilian oversight.

To go into effect, it must be signed by the Mayor.

Summary of the Ordinance Establishing an Office of Police Accountability and Transparency:

The ordinance establishes an Office of Police Accountability and Transparency (OPAT). Within the OPAT, there is also established a Civilian Review Board (CRB) and an Internal Affairs Oversight Panel (IAOP). The CRB will review civilian complaints against BPD, and the IAOP will review internal affairs cases.

•The 9-member CRB and 5-member IAOP will be composed of members appointed by the Mayor based on nominations from the City Council and the community, and will receive extensive training upon appointment and annually thereafter.

•The OPAT administrative office will be under the charge of an Executive Director, and will include staff to support the work of the CRB and the IAOP, as well as carry out various other designated review and reporting duties.

•Together, the Chair of the CRB, the Chair of the IAOP, and the OPAT Executive Director comprise the OPAT Commission, which will oversee the OPAT at large, create rules and regulations for the OPAT, have the authority to issue subpoenas, and hold community meetings regarding the work of the OPAT.

•In addition to reviewing civilian complaints, the CRB will review and make recommendations regarding BPD policies and procedures, allegations of disparate treatment by BPD in human resource matters, instances where a BIPOC officer is disciplined or terminated, and alternatives to the civil service examination process.

•In addition to reviewing internal affairs cases, the IAOP will also review policies and procedures relevant to the integrity of the complaint and internal affairs process.

•In addition to supporting the duties of the CRB and IAOP, OPAT staff will also review and analyze FIO data and BPD statistics to identify trends, track and report on the progress of BPD reform goals, coordinate with BPD staff to review and provide recommendations related to the selection and implementation of grants, publish publications and results of investigations, and maintain a publicly available website to publish OPAT data, updates, findings, and reports. OPAT will release semi-annual reports to the public, deliver an annual report to the Mayor and Police Commissioner to be filed with the City Council, and will publish disaggregated complaint data and BPD statistics on a monthly basis.

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Massachusetts, New England states, and D.C. commit to groundbreaking regional program to reduce pollution

Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker, Connecticut Governor Ned Lamont, Rhode Island Governor Gina Raimondo and Washington, D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) committing to a groundbreaking multi-state program that will reduce motor vehicle pollution by at least 26 percent and generate over \$1.8 billion in Massachusetts by 2032. The bipartisan Transportation and Climate Initiative Program (TCI-P) will allow participating jurisdictions to invest in equitable, cleaner transportation options, and create significant new employment opportunities while substantially improving public health across the Commonwealth and New England.

Underscoring the importance of regional action, other Transportation and Climate Initiative (TCI) jurisdictions released a joint statement committing to continued collaboration on the development of the regional program, as well as working to identify additional regional strategies to reduce air pollution, create healthier communities, and invest in cleaner,

more equitable transportation systems. Significantly, the State of North Carolina joined the joint statement, committing for the first time to working with the other TCI jurisdictions on the development of the program. With the issuance of the MOU, the remaining TCI jurisdictions have the ability to formally sign the MOU at any time. The program is slated to begin in 2023 after a reporting year to allow for additional jurisdictions to sign on.

“As a Commonwealth, we have an obligation to address climate change head on and a challenge this great requires action across our region and nation. That’s why I am proud to join Governor Lamont, Governor Raimondo and Mayor Bowser to launch this trailblazing program to reduce greenhouse gas emissions while building the clean, resilient transportation system of the future,” said Governor Charlie Baker. “By partnering with our neighbor states with which we share tightly connected economies and transportation systems, we can make a more significant impact on climate change while creating

jobs and growing the economy as a result. Several other Transportation and Climate Initiative states are also committing to this effort today and we look forward to these partners moving ahead with us as we build out this first in the nation program.”

In a region with nation-leading climate goals, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island and Washington, D.C. are committing to bold action to ensure the achievement of emissions reduction targets while positioning the jurisdictions and region as leaders in the clean transportation economy. Accounting for 73 percent of the transportation emissions, 76 percent of the vehicles, and 75 to 80 percent of the gross domestic product in New England, the three states and Washington D.C. are taking this action at a time when the impacts of climate change continue to be felt across the country and region.

In New England, transportation is responsible for over 40 percent of greenhouse gas emissions, and exposure to air pollution exacerbates lung and heart ailments, causes asthma attacks, and in-

creases the risk of a stroke and other serious health conditions. To address these challenges, the new program will make available over \$160 million in allowance auction proceeds to Massachusetts by 2023 — money to provide better transportation options that result in less pollution, improved health, and a growing economy.

The TCI-P jurisdictions have committed to invest 35 percent of annual revenue in communities underserved by current transportation options, and with disproportionately high levels of pollution. To ensure equitable clean transportation outcomes, Massachusetts will designate an advisory body with diverse representation to identify underserved and overburdened communities, provide guidance for investments, and define goals and metrics for measuring progress.

TCI-P will require large gasoline and diesel fuel suppliers to purchase “allowances” for the pollution caused by the combustion of fuels they sell in the regions. The total number of emission allowances would decline each year, resulting in less transportation

pollution. Each participating jurisdiction will independently decide how to invest program proceeds. These proceeds will be invested in ways that help both urban and rural residents, including improving and expanding public transportation; zero-emission buses, cars, and trucks; electric vehicle charging infrastructure; development of interstate electric vehicle charging corridors; improving high speed wireless internet in rural and low-income areas to allow for teleworking; repairing existing roads and bridges; and providing safer bike lanes and sidewalks.

TCI-P was developed with extensive outreach and input from thousands of residents, stakeholders, businesses, and organizations, as part of the Transportation and Climate Initiative (TCI), a multi-jurisdictional collaboration of Northeast, Mid-Atlantic, and Southeast states and the District of Columbia. With the signing of the TCI-P MOU, there will be many additional opportunities for the public to provide feedback during the subsequent development of a model rule, and program implementation.

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