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# Mission Hill GAZETTE

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APRIL 2, 2021 — MAY 6, 2021

## Growing for the better

Net-zero, energy-efficient renovations completed at Boston Building Resources' Reuse Center

BY LAUREN BENNETT

Boston Building Resources' Reuse Center recently completed its energy-efficient net-zero carbon renovation, creating a better experience for shoppers—and for the planet, too.

The Gazette spoke with Deb Beatty Mel, Director of Communications at Boston Building Resources, to learn more about the renovations and what they mean for customers of the Reuse Center.

The Reuse Center is a non-profit organization that accepts "donations of used and surplus

building materials," Mel said, including kitchen cabinet sets, doors, hardware, flooring—"pretty much anything you might find in a home improvement store," she said.

If someone has leftover materials from a renovation or an item came in the wrong size or color, they might donate it to the Reuse Center to be purchased by someone else at a cheap price, she added.

Mel said customers of the Reuse Center are "mainly people from our neighborhood who have really tight budgets," and are "able to get these materials for



Mission Hill residents Dan and Toni along with BBR Manager Lindsay. See Page 16 for more photos.

really low prices" at the center.

The Reuse Center has been offering home improvement supplies since 1993, and "over

*Continued on page 3*

## CAMH considers revised Terrace St. condo proposal

BY LAURA PLUMMER

The Community Alliance of Mission Hill (CAMH) met virtually on March 17, where it viewed a presentation by the developers of a property at 154 Terrace St. Around 20 members of the public were in attendance.

The development team includes Nicholas Zozula of McDermott, Quilty and Miller LLP;

Phil Cohen and Drew Colbert from WinnCompanies; and Mike Doherty and Jeff Sargis from The Architectural Team. They previously appeared before CAMH in 2019.

The team presented a slideshow of the proposed development. The project was originally approved in 2008 to contain 100 units in ten stories, with a height of 96 feet and 48 parking spaces.

In 2020, the proposal was scaled down considerably to 64 units in six stories, a height of 69 feet and 27 parking spaces. That proposal had a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 5.4 and a square footage of just over 70,000.

The 2020 design offered only five two-bedroom units, compared to 59 one-bedroom units.

*Continued on page 2*

## CAMH considera nueva propuesta de condominios en Terrace St.

BY LAURA PLUMMER

La Alianza Comunitaria de Mission Hill (CAMH) se reunió virtualmente el 17 de marzo, donde vió una presentación sobre un proyecto en 154 Terrace St. Alrededor de 20 miembros del

público asistieron.

El equipo de desarrollo incluye a Nicholas Zozula de McDermott, Quilty y Miller LLP; Phil Cohen y Drew Colbert de WinnCompanies; y Mike Doherty y Jeff Sargis de The Architectural Team. Previamente presentaron

a CAMH en 2019.

El equipo presentó unas imágenes del desarrollo propuesto, al que llama Oliver Ditson Lofts. El proyecto fue aprobado originalmente en 2008 para contener 100 unidades en diez pisos, con

*Continued on page 7*

## The Miracle in our Backyard

Reggie Lewis mass vaccination site offers community special access to appointments

BY SETH DANIEL

When the Reggie Lewis Center mass vaccination site opened a few months ago, the idea from the get-go was to appeal to the local communities like Mission Hill – and particularly to make it easy for skeptical Black and Brown residents in those communities to access information and the vaccine right in their backyard if they so choose.

To the astonishment of many, when it opened, the community really didn't come.

Initially, most of the appointments were taken by people from other parts of the city, or more likely, from far-flung suburbs where there was a clamor and an ease for grabbing appointments as soon as they appeared online. So it was, the lines for vaccines didn't initially look like the community around it.

Now, the operator of the Center – CIC Health – and its partners in the state, Roxbury Community College, the Black Boston COVID Coalition and Mass General Brigham have debuted a community outreach program for Mission Hill, Roxbury, Jamaica Plain, South End, Dorchester, Mattapan, Chinatown, Roslindale and Hyde Park. Anyone living in those communities, and eligible to be vaccinated, has direct and unimpeded access to 50 percent of the daily vaccine appointments before the general public.

"We know that there are folks still trying to get access and find out where to get it," said Shana Bryant, who is doing outreach on the program for CIC Health. "There are still the wait and see folks too. We now know that by

*Continued on page 15*

# Following Walsh's departure, Kim Janey sworn in as acting mayor

BY LAUREN BENNETT

In a ceremony at City Hall on Wednesday afternoon, Kim Janey was sworn in as the first Black person and first woman to lead the City of Boston, a day after Mayor Marty Walsh left for Washington following his confirmation as US Labor Secretary.

Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley presided over the ceremony, which was attended by Janey's friends and family, while Chief Justice Kimberly Budd administered the oath of office. An invocation was delivered by Reverend Willie Bodrick II, Senior Pastor at the Twelfth Baptist Church.

"It is a great day, another history making day in an unprecedented week in the City of Boston," Pressley said in her remarks.

Pressley called Janey a "fierce advocate on behalf of our children and education equity," and said that "this is a proud day for the City of Boston and all

Bostonians."

Janey was the first woman and first Black person to become the District 7 City Councilor, eventually becoming the City Council president. According to City Councilor Matt O'Malley's office, O'Malley has now become City Council President Pro Tempore as he was previously the vice president.

"She will lead with clear eyes, a fully heart, and a steady hand as we begin with the reconstruction of our city that this city and our country ache for," Pressley said of Janey.

"Today is a new day," Janey said in her speech. "I stand before you as the first woman and first Black mayor of Boston, the city that I love. I come to this day with life experience that is different from the men who came before me."

Janey thanked her family for their support over the years.

"As a girl growing up in Boston I was nurtured by a family who believed in me and surrounded

by good neighbors who knew my name," she said.

She spoke of her experience being bussed to her school in the 1970s as a pre-teen during the effort to desegregate Boston Public Schools.

"I had rocks and racial slurs thrown at my bus, for simply attending school while Black," she said.

She said that she has always been an active supporter of quality public education for all students, especially as a young mother herself who wanted the best public education for her daughter. "This issue is personal to me," she said.

"As I assume the responsibilities of mayor of Boston, I promise to give you bold, courageous leadership," she said, adding that she will be "starting with an unrelenting focus to address the impacts of COVID-19."

Janey said that she will "fight" to ensure that vaccines are accessible for all, "especially in communities hardest hit" by the

virus, as well as work to expand testing across the city.

Additionally, "our recovery must include working together on behalf of our children," she said, by reopening schools in a safe way and ensuring that teachers get vaccinated.

She said she has plans to invest in summer opportunities for students and partner with the superintendent and other groups to "help our children recover academically and emotionally."

Janey said that the pandemic has only made existing inequalities and gaps "worse," and that action needs to be taken.

Janey mentioned the disparity study that was recently published, saying that it "showed the enormous inequality in our city contracts." She said that "as mayor, I will take action to solve this problem with new creative solutions to boost city contracts with minority business enterprises and new strategies to hold ourselves accountable."

She also spoke about racial

justice in the city and the work she plans on doing on that front.

"Dismantling systemic racism also includes reforming how we police our city. As mayor, I will continue to be an advocate and lead the implementation of these reforms. Together, working with our police department, I am determined to bring safety, healing and justice to all of our neighborhoods."

Janey said that there is "more work to do," and "that work starts now." She thanked her transition team and the city staff for their work so far.

"To the people of Boston, I say you have a stake in our city's future," Janey said. "You are the essential part of this recovery. Let's not be afraid to tackle the longer-term challenges that we face together. From racial justice to environmental justice; from affordable housing to our transit system. From our public schools, to public safety. We cannot go back. Our only option is to go better."

## CAMH

Continued from page 1

The team examined this proposal under the lens of COVID, eventually realizing that larger units were in demand due to more

people working from home.

The current proposal is for an 81-foot, seven-story building with 66 units and 24 parking spaces. It would have approximately 74,500 square feet and a FAR of 5.7. The design has increased the number of two-bedroom units to

18 for greater diversity.

Significantly, the distance from the adjoining property was increased from ten feet in 2020 to 30 feet in the current proposal. Presenters called it a "major design change."

"It reduces the canyon effect and makes it two stand-alone buildings and projects," said Cohen.

The project will be composed entirely of condos for homeownership and will impose restrictions on residential use, owner occupancy, and lease and rental occupancy.

"Throughout the community process, we heard that home ownership is the right use for this site," said Cohen, emphasizing that units will be prioritized to people living in the community. "We don't want these to be leased out. These won't be

investor units or Airbnb units."

WinnCompanies plans to manage the condos once finished.

"We've been long-time community partners," said Cohen. "We develop and hold properties for a long time."

A traffic study is being conducted in the area to ensure that the project will not make navigating Terrace St. more difficult. The development team has committed funds to expand the study.

The team hopes to file a Notice of Project Change with the city within a few months. It will then launch a public input process, which will involve circling back to CAMH as well as the Zoning Board of Appeals. Accordingly, it could be several years before the project is complete, but Winn remains committed to working with the community.

This project is only the most

recent on Terrace St. Last month we reported on properties currently being developed at 110-128R Terrace St. as well as Terrace Ave.

Also on the meeting agenda was an appearance by Endis Ventura to add a liquor license to his restaurant, Montecristo Mexican Grill at 748 Huntington Ave. An abutters meeting was held on March 2. However, Ventura failed to appear.

Due to the pandemic, the CAMH board elections that were supposed to have been held last year will now be held this coming May. Three board seats will be up for election, including president, clerk and treasurer.

CAMH meets on the third Wednesday of the month at 7pm. Due to the coronavirus restrictions, all meetings will be held on Zoom for the foreseeable future.


## The Mission Hill / Fenway Neighborhood Trust

requests proposals from organizations seeking funding for projects and programs intended to serve residents of the Mission Hill and Fenway neighborhoods.

Visit [www.missionhillfenwaynt.org](http://www.missionhillfenwaynt.org) to access the on-line application.

Proposals must be submitted no later than midnight on April 30, 2021.

Please email any questions to [hello@missionhillfenwaynt.org](mailto:hello@missionhillfenwaynt.org).

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# DA Rollins announces funding opportunity for nonprofits

As part of her commitment to improving the lives of those living in Suffolk County, District Attorney Rachael Rollins today invited nonprofits serving Suffolk County youth to apply for grant funding.

Community organizations working to prevent youth violence and to provide substance use prevention and treatment to young people in

Boston, Chelsea, Revere and Winthrop are now eligible to apply for grants of up to \$10,000 as part of the 2021 Community Reinvestment Grant program.

"These Community Reinvestment Grants allow my Office to invest in our values and in the futures of the young people who call Suffolk County home," District Attorney

Rollins said. "Over the past year, as the COVID-19 pandemic closed schools and forced service providers to go virtual, our children and youth have experienced unprecedented ground shifts. Community-based organizations are among the heroes of the pandemic. Those organizations that work with young people have adapted in these challenging

times to find innovative ways of meeting the needs of the youth they serve. And they did so as resources became less abundant and as more families began to rely on their services. This year's grant program is perhaps more important than ever as we work to recover, rebuild and reinvest in a brighter future."

The Suffolk County District At-

torney's Office was forced to put the grant program on hold during 2020 amid the economic downturn brought on by the pandemic. District Attorney Rollins is pleased to announce the return of the Community Reinvestment Grant program this year.

Applications are due no later than May 10, 2021.

## Renovations

Continued from page 1

the years, the organization has grown," Mel said. "We're taking in more materials, serving more customers, [and] got more volunteers."

She said that to accommodate the growth, the building needed to be made more efficient, and more space was needed to display materials.

Mel said that a "regular renovation" could have been done, but instead, a "super energy efficient renovation" was chosen instead.

The building will run on solar panels that will be installed on the roof of the building at the end of this week, she said, adding that "the building envelope has been beefed up substantially to keep the

air in. We got a super duper coat of insulation."

When people enter or exit the building, an airlock is created so as to not let out any hot or cold air while materials are being removed from the building. The building's interior has also been rearranged for "more efficient workflow," Mel said.

"It will be a much better shopping experience for our customers," she added. The building did not previously have air conditioning, but it will now thanks to the renovation, and she said it "will me much more comfortable" for customers shopping in the summertime.

Construction began on the project in July of last year, and on March 27, the building was reopened to customers.

During the week of April 19, a weeklong celebration of the reopening of the building will take place, beginning with a ribbon cutting on April 19 at 3pm. Mel said that someone has offered to match donations all week long, and Boston Building Resources hopes that many people will come shop at the newly renovated location.

In the few days the center has been reopen, Mel said that customers have expressed that they're "impressed" with the renovations, and happy that air the building is now air conditioned. She also said that people have said they are "glad" that the Reuse Center is "still around and still providing the bargains they look forward to. People are definitely excited about experiencing the new space," she said.

"One of the advantages of having this building be net zero," Mel said, is the fact that people are able to experience what it feels like for themselves. She said that so far, most other net zero buildings are offices or residential homes, which the public cannot freely enter.

"Because we're a store, you can come in and experience it," she

said.

The Reuse Center is open 8:30am-4:30pm on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, 8:30am-7:00pm on Thursdays, and 9:30-3:00 on Saturdays. For more information about Boston Building Resources and the Reuse Center, visit [bostonbuildingresources.com](http://bostonbuildingresources.com).



## found it at the Reuse Center

At our newly renovated, solar-powered store, you will find thousands of one-of-a-kind bargains to fix and improve your home. These items change every day and can save you hundreds or even thousands of dollars off of what you could pay somewhere else. Start your treasure hunt today!



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After careful consideration and an abundance of caution, the City of Boston has decided to cancel the in-person application distribution period. If you cannot complete the application online, please call us at 978-456-7999 to request that we mail you one and to ask us for any guidance you might need to complete the application.

#### HOURS

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Monday, May 3, 2021 (10 AM - 7 PM)

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To have a hard copy of the application mailed to your mailing address, please call 978-456-7999.

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# Boston students and parents call for substantial state funding as schools reopen

By JOHN LYNDIS

With the promised funding from the landmark education bill that was signed into law before the COVID pandemic hit is still up in the air, Boston students and parents called for the state to fully fund the Student Opportunity Act Funding (SOA).

During a virtual press conference hosted by the Massachusetts Education Justice Alliance last week students, parents, and school committee members from cities across Massachusetts discussed their school funding needs, their perspectives on in-person school reopening this spring, and their aspirations

for education this summer and during the upcoming school year.

Boston Public School parents Rafaela Polanco and Suleika Soto testified at the virtual press conference and shared their thoughts.

At the press conference, which was held over Zoom, Polanco and Soto joined students, parents, and school committee members from Revere, Chelsea, Lawrence, Lowell and Randolph to discuss safety measures, social/emotional and educational supports, and other resources they're looking for from their public schools as well as the need for substantial state funding to support those needs.

"I'm a parent of two Boston Public School students and a parent organizer for the Boston Education Alliance" said Soto. "We as parents, students, teachers and community members have asked to be heard about fair and high quality education. Low income communities have been disproportionately affected by COVID so we need fully funded schools that are fair and just in our budget—one where every student has access to what they need, including safe school buildings. Black and brown families continue to be disproportionately affected by COVID and a fully and equitable funded state budget can put us on the right track."

The SOA overhauled the state's education funding formula to ensure equity for all students, especially those in low-income areas.

Because the state has not updated its education funding formula since 1993 to reflect districts' real health insurance and special education costs, the amount of aid being provided to cover those costs had been too small for decades.

In January 2020 Governor Charlie Baker signed S. 2412, An Act Relative to Educational Opportunity for Students, or the SOA, which would have boosted investment in public schools by \$1.5 billion annually when fully

phased in over the next seven years.

However, when COVID hit in March 2019 budget shortfalls pushed SOA spending to the wayside. Boston Public Schools were expected to receive millions in SOA funding.

The state legislature's Ways and Means Committee met last Tuesday to begin reviewing the Governor's proposed FY22 budget.

At the press conference students and parents plan to keep pushing for a true commitment to fully fund public school and call for putting the state's commitment to public education funding back on track.

One demand by the group Tuesday is that the state deliver at least two of the seven years of promised funding increases under the SOA in the next state budget.

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Boston Harbor  
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A woman with blonde hair, wearing a white long-sleeved top and a colorful, patterned skirt, stands on a cobblestone pier. She is smiling and looking towards the camera. In the background, the Boston skyline is visible, including several tall skyscrapers and a bridge. A large chain is visible in the foreground.

# Boston Ready for More

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# Baker tours Hynes Convention Center mass vaccination site

BY LAUREN BENNETT

Governor Charlie Baker toured the mass vaccination site at the Hynes Convention Center on March 30, following the announcement on March 26 of a partnership between FEMA and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to bring more vaccines to the site.

The state currently allocates 1,000 doses of the COVID-19 vaccine to the Hynes Convention Center, but this new partnership will allow for an additional 6,000 doses to be administered daily, bringing the total to 7,000 vaccines per day.

In his remarks, Baker said that this partnership will “significantly increase doses and access for some of the most disproportionately impacted communities here in the Commonwealth.”

Baker said that as of Monday, there were 1464 new cases of COVID-19 in the state, 675 peo-

ple were hospitalized with the virus, and 159 were in the ICU.

“Hospitalizations are down significantly compared to where they were back in the early part of this year,” he said, adding that it is “in some respects” because of a high number of older adults receiving the vaccine.

He did say, however, that there has been an uptick in cases among people under the age of 30. He said that “no one can let their guard down,” and it is “still far too early to declare victory,” so all guidelines must still be followed by everyone.

Baker said that so far, 80 percent of Massachusetts residents age 75 or older have received a first dose in Massachusetts, which “exceeds the national average of about 73 percent,” he said and “helps drive down hospitalizations and cases for this particularly vulnerable group.”

More than 1.3 million people across the state are fully

vaccinated, Baker added, with an additional 2.2 million having received a first dose, including those who got the single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

“We continue to lead the nation in administering vaccines to our residents,” Baker said.

Baker thanked the “strong advocacy of the Massachusetts Congressional delegation in supporting our application” for the FEMA partnership, and was joined by Senator Ed Markey and Congressman Stephen Lynch at the Hynes on Tuesday afternoon.

“The ramped up capacity” began on March 31, Baker said, adding that residents can still pre-register for an appointment and will be notified when it is their turn to book one.

“There will be no disruption to the appointment or booking process during this expansion,” Baker said.

He also said that outreach will be conducted to the com-

munity and the state will “help vulnerable residents sign up for appointments.”

Baker said that “the Hynes is easily accessible by public transportation,” and free parking for two hours is also offered to people receiving their vaccine at the Hynes.

“The Commonwealth will also be using part of these increased doses to set up mobile vaccination units in Boston, Chelsea, and Revere,” Baker added, with more details to be announced shortly.

“We have a lot more work to do to reach vulnerable communities, but we have made progress. Over 20 percent of our Black residents have received a first dose in MA, which is more than double the national average of 9 percent, and 13 percent of our Latinx residents have received a first dose, which is well above the national average of 7.3 percent,” Baker said.

“We’ll continue to build on

the efforts we have underway to make sure that every person in the Commonwealth who wants a vaccine has access to one. This expansion here at the Hynes in the heart of Boston will certainly help us achieve that goal.”

However, Baker said that “COVID is still a serious, highly contagious virus with all sorts of new variants that are making it even more challenging.”

He added that “vaccines are crucial to getting us back to normal, and we’re very much on there way there. In the meantime, everybody has to remain vigilant against the virus.”

Baker thanked everyone who was involved in helping to make the partnership between FEMA and the state a reality, adding that “...we look forward to turning this into a terrific site to serve the people of Greater Boston.”

## Janey holds first press conference; talks about equity in vaccination distribution

BY LAUREN BENNETT

Kim Janey held her first press conference as Boston’s acting mayor on March 26, where she provided updates on COVID-19 and vaccinations in the city, as well as received her first vaccination.

“We know that people of color are more likely to get COVID-19, and if they do, they are more likely to die,” Janey said.

Janey provided a number for the Equity Access Line—617-635-5555—that residents can dial to get help with booking a vaccine appointment. She said that residents should press one if they are a Boston resident 65 years old or older, and press two if they are a resident who is currently eligible to receive the vaccine and is also a person of color.

“Latest data indicate that the Equity in Access Line is making an impact,” Janey said.

She also spoke of the city’s vaccine equity grant initiative, which is providing \$1.5 million “to support nonprofit organizations” that are creating “equitable access” to the vaccine and “breaking down barriers.”

Janey said that “as we begin a new chapter in our city, we are inviting new partners to the table in our fight against COVID-19.”



Acting Mayor Kim Janey.

She said that while there were no new deaths reported in the city, there were 225 new confirmed cases in Boston from data available at the time of the press conference.

“We must remember that COVID is still with us,” she said. “We must continue all the practices that keep us safe.”

Janey said that there were “certainly a few bumps in the road early on,” as the vaccine supply from the federal government was not very high. “Those supplies are increasing every single day,” she said, adding that she is “grateful to partner” with Governor Charlie Baker and others on rolling out the vaccine.

She said that she believes it is “important” to keep up the work that has been proven to work in the city, and to ramp up efforts like the mobile vaccination clinics to bring the vaccine to each and every resident who wants it.

On March 30, Janey held another press conference, where she spoke about the increase in cases seen among people younger than 29 years old. She said that as of Monday, there were 130 new confirmed cases of COVID in the city, and two new deaths.

“More than half of the new cases in the past two weeks have come from Bostonians under the age of 29,” Janey said. “Let’s all work together to keep ourselves and our community safe.”

She added that “more than 30 percent of Boston’s total population have received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine.”

Janey said she would reverse parts of the reopening plan if the public health data shows that it is necessary.

“I continue to be worried about this pandemic and how it is impacting the residents of the city,” Janey said. “I will work closely with our public health chief and the public health commission to ensure that we are looking at the data closely so that if we need to make any adjustments that we will do so. I think it is troubling

any time we see an increase in activity and so we will continue to watch closely so we can adjust if we need to roll back some of the loosening of the restrictions that have already happened at the state level.”

Janey also spoke about the CDC’s announcement that it will extend the eviction moratorium through June 30.

“This protection will be a lifeline for families struggling to recover financially,” Janey said. “I applaud the CDC for extending eviction protections for families in Boston and across the country.”

Janey announced on Tuesday that \$50 million in additional funds will be available through Boston’s Rental Relief Fund.

“This new funding will help renters remain in their homes and help landlords who are struggling,” she said, adding that this is being done with the help of “nonprofit partners.”

She also said that “we are working together to protect public health, promote housing stability, and ensure equitable recovery from this pandemic.”

The funds will also help families pay for things like utilities, including internet service, Janey said. They can also help pay for moving costs like first and last month’s rent as well as a security

deposit.

“The Rental Relief Fund has provided critical support to nearly 1900 households who are at risk of eviction due to COVID-19,” Janey said. “These new funds will do even more.”

Janey also addressed the fraud charges brought against former Boston Police Captain Richard Evans.

“The allegations of fraud announced today against retired police captain Richard Evans are disturbing,” she said, adding that “any fraud is unacceptable. It breaks public trust. It dishonors the thousands of officers who serve our communities every day with honesty, integrity, and bravery.”

She continued, “I am committed to uncovering and rooting out behavior among officers that is inconsistent with our community values. We will continue to work collaboratively to implement community driven police reforms and I am committed to ensuring the people of Boston can have full confidence in their police force. This includes our work to establish the new Office of Police accountability and transparency for the City of Boston. Working together, we will increase accountability and transparency in all of our work.”



# Hill Happenings

BY MOSSY MARTIN

I stopped in to the newly named Wood Fired Love (previously called "The Squealing Pig") to say hello on St. Patrick's Day for their reopening after being closed for a few months.

Later I had a scrumptious traditional, boiled dinner at The Mission.

Flann O'Briens has been closed since the impending sale of the bar. I miss Flann's and their personable bartenders, Paul, Sampson and Drew.

I was pleasantly surprised upon visiting Brendan Behan's in J.P. on a Saturday night and seeing my favorite bartender, pretty Maraid Murphy, behind the bar.

The Tavern of Tales, Mission Hill's newest alehouse, will reopen April 8.

I was saddened to hear of the unexpected death of Rich Singleton last week. Rich graduated from Mission High School in 1971, and he later attended Northeastern University. Rich

had been living in Bellingham, Mass., and he previously lived in Cumberland, R.I., where he served as a State Rep. He was extremely bright, being the proprietor of Singleton Financial Group.

Rich was also a gifted musician, proficient on the drums, and he also sang. Rich played in a band and his musical group often performed at Twin Rivers Casino in Rhode Island. I was a regular poker player at that casino, and on a few occasions, I would check out the music and chat with Rich.

In our last conversation in 2019, Richie reminisced about Mission Hill and his great Mission High classmates. He was a great guy, and Rich will be missed.

Red Sox old time baseball guru Jim Holland disagreed with several local sportswriters who stated that recently traded Jackie Bradley Jr. was the best ever Boston centerfielder. Jim says, "Nobody was better than Jimmy Piersall," who roamed centerfield

for the Red Sox in the '50s.

Jim Holland is a longtime Mission Hill resident, and in his youth, he was known for hitting long homeruns at Marcella Park in Roxbury.

Meanwhile, in the sports realm, it's perplexing that Massachusetts still hasn't implemented sports gambling, missing out on revenue for the state and convenience for its citizens.

Gov. Charlie Baker has filed bills for legal sports betting the last few years, but the Legislature has stalled, as gamblers jaunt to place their legal bets in Rhode Island and New Hampshire.

Fifty years ago when Francis Sargent was the governor, Massachusetts launched the state lottery, and it has been highly successful. A while back when I was the night manager of Mission Hill Liquors, our gross lottery sales exceeded \$1 million, year after year.

In the early '50s, Lt. Gov. Francis E. Kelly suggested start-

ing a state lottery. Kelly, a man ahead of his time, was ridiculed about what was then considered a whimsical idea. Kelly, who died in 1982, incessantly exhorted his numbers game plan and was given the moniker: "Sweepstakes Kelly."

People are going to gamble whether it's sanctioned or illegal. Before the Massachusetts lottery, one could bet on "the numbers game" and play the horses in virtually every Mission Hill tavern.

Gamblers would wager on picking three numbers in exact order and the payout was 600 to 1. The winning numbers were the total amount of money bet on the Parimutuel races and those three numbers were conveniently posted on the back page of the "Record American" (currently the Boston Herald).

My friend, Jim, who was my neighbor in the Mission Hill project, is 82, and his dad, Victor, was a beloved bookie at the Harbor Cafe on Station Street in the '50s.

Jim tells me: "The numbers

game was extremely popular, you could bet as little as 5 cents, which paid \$30, a nice payday in those days."

High-rollers would get a hunch and bet a bunch, and occasionally, you would hear of someone hitting on a \$5 bet and the \$3,000 winnings was, of course, tax free.

Bill Mullin grew up on Torpie Street, two blocks from McCarthy's Tavern (currently The Puddingstone) and Bill's father, also Bill Mullin (Mission High School, Class of '43), often played his numbers at that gin mill. As a youngster Bill Mullin would read the winning numbers from the "Record" to his father.

"When my father hit for \$60, he'd take me to McCarthy's to collect his winnings and he'd give me a few bucks," said Mullin, who is an alumnus of Mission High, Class of '67, and a 1971 graduate of Harvard University.

## CAMH

Continued from page 1

una altura de 30 metros y 48 espacios de estacionamiento.

En 2020, la propuesta se redujo bastante a 64 unidades en seis pisos, una altura de 21 metros y 27 plazas de aparcamiento. Esa propuesta tenía una relación de área de piso (FAR) de 5,4 y un poco más de 6.532 metros cuadrados.

El diseño de 2020 ofreció solo cinco unidades de dos habitaciones, en comparación con 59 unidades de una habitación. El equipo examinó su propuesta bajo la lente de COVID, y finalmente se dio cuenta de que había una demanda de unidades más grandes debido a que más personas trabajaban desde casa.

La propuesta actual es para un edificio de siete pisos de 24,7 metros de altura con 66 unidades y 24 estacionamientos. Tendría 6.920 metros cuadrados y un FAR de 5,7. El diseño ha aumentado la cantidad de unidades de dos dormitorios a 18 para una mayor diversidad.

De manera significativa, la distancia desde la propiedad contigua se incrementó de tres metros en 2020 a nueve metros en la propuesta actual. Los presentadores lo llamaron un

"cambio de diseño importante".

"Reduce el efecto cañón y lo convierte en dos edificios y proyectos independientes", dijo Cohen.

Oliver Ditson Lofts estará compuesto en su totalidad por condominios para la propiedad de viviendas e impondrá restricciones en el uso residencial, la ocupación del propietario, y la ocupación del arrendamiento y de alquiler.

"A lo largo del proceso comunitario, escuchamos que la propiedad de viviendas es el uso correcto para este sitio", dijo Cohen, enfatizando que las unidades serán priorizadas para las personas que viven en la comunidad. "No queremos que estos se arriendan. No serán unidades de inversores ni unidades de Airbnb".

WinnCompanies planea administrar los condominios una vez que estén terminados.

"Hemos sido socios comunitarios desde hace mucho tiempo", dijo Cohen. "Desarrollamos y mantenemos propiedades durante mucho tiempo".

Se está realizando un estudio de tráfico en la zona para asegurar de que el proyecto no dificulte la navegación por Terrace St. El equipo de desarrollo ha comprometido fondos para ampliar el estudio.

El equipo espera presentar un

aviso de cambio de proyecto a la ciudad dentro de unos meses. Luego, lanzará un proceso de alcance público, que implica regresar a CAMH, así como a la Junta de Apelaciones de Zonificación. En consecuencia, podrían pasar varios años antes de que el proyecto esté completo, pero Winn sigue comprometido a trabajar con la comunidad.

Este proyecto es solo el más reciente en Terrace St. El mes pasado informamos sobre las propiedades que se están desarrollando actualmente en 110-128R Terrace St. y en Terrace Ave.

También en la agenda de la reunión estaba una petición de Endis Ventura de agregar una licencia de licor a su restaurante, Montecristo Mexican Grill en 748 Huntington Ave. El 2 de marzo se llevó a cabo una reunión de vecinos. Sin embargo, Ventura no se presentó.

Debido a la pandemia, las elecciones de la junta de CAMH que se iban a celebrar el año pasado ahora se llevarán a cabo en mayo. Se elegirán tres puestos en la junta, incluidos presidente, secretario y tesorero.

CAMH se reúne el tercer miércoles del mes a las 7 pm. Debido a las restricciones del coronavirus, todas las reuniones se llevarán a cabo en Zoom en el futuro previsible.



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# Jamaica Plain's Seed adult cannabis dispensary opens

By JOHN LYNDS

On Saturday March 13 Jamaica Plain's first adult-use cannabis dispensary and the nation's first Social Justice Cannabis Museum opened just down the road from Mission Hill in Hyde Square.

Core Cannabis's Seed Dispensary and attached Social Justice Cannabis Museum opened at 401 Centre St. in Jamaica Plain with a ribbon cutting that included the dispensary and museums founders, staff and the now Acting-Mayor of Boston Kim Janey.

The unique dispensary has already gained national recognition for being the first dispensary in the US with a social justice museum attached to the project.

One of the first exhibits will feature Boston native Niambe McIntosh, daughter of legendary Jamaican Reggae Musician, former Wailer and cannabis activist, Peter Tosh.



Acting-Boston Mayor Kim Janey at Core Cannabis's Seed Dispensary and attached Social Justice Cannabis Museum's grand opening on March 13.

McIntosh is a member of the dispensary's Social Justice Cannabis Museum's Curating Council and will tell the story of how her brother Jawara Tosh lost his life to the drug war.



CEO of Core/Seed April Arrasate and Melody McIntosh cut the ribbon on the new dispensary in Hyde Square. McIntosh is the widow of the legendary Jamaican Reggae Musician, former Wailer and cannabis activist, Peter Tosh.

On February 21, 2017 Jawara, also a musician and marijuana

na activist like his father, was beaten into a coma by a fellow inmate while he was serving a one-year sentence for marijuana possession in New Jersey.

Jawara, 37 at the time, was later transported to a Boston hospital and died in 2020 after spending three years in a coma.

"He would call me from the jail and say hey Niambe, can you read this scripture?" his sister told Rolling Stone after her brother's death. She said his nightly routine with his children included reading the Bible together, and he kept it up while incarcerated, with his sister's help.

The museum includes a space that features a six by eight replica jail cell where McIntosh will narrate her brother's story.

Guests are able to sit in the jail cell and listen to McIntosh's story, as well as the story of others, of the injustices of the war on drugs.

"The Social Justice Cannabis Museum is a very unique aspect of this cannabis shop," said Core's CEO April Arrasate. "Core is trying to give people an understanding of what incarceration is like in this country."

Eighty-two percent of Core is owned by locals, 72 percent women owned and the owners of the company have spent collectively over 10 years incarcerated by the war on drugs.

Aside from the museum, Core has over 6,000 square feet of space that houses all the adult-use cannabis products that are for sale to consumers.



▲ Guests line up to enter Core Cannabis's Seed Dispensary and attached Social Justice Cannabis Museum. The dispensary opened on March 13 at 401 Centre St. in Jamaica Plain.

◀ Seed investors and local business owners Nivia Piña, Cindy Villada, and Liseth Velez at the ribbon cutting.

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# Janey, transit supporters speak out against MBTA service cuts; call for restoration of service

BY LAUREN BENNETT

A press conference led by the Transit is Essential Coalition was held on March 29, ahead of a vote by the MBTA Fiscal and Management Control Board (FMCB) regarding service cuts that have been recently implemented on the subway, bus lines, and commuter rail. The Transit is Essential Coalition is made up of over 60 organizations.

"I can say with certainty that everyone here today wants one simple thing: a fully functioning T that supports bringing us bringing back our economy; bringing back Massachusetts, and we're not there yet," said Stacy Thompson, Executive Director of the LivableStreets Alliance.

Olivia Nichols of GreenRoots, an environmental justice organization, said she is a rider of the Green Line and the 111 bus.

"Public transit is a key component of environmental justice," Nichols said. "The residents of Chelsea and East Boston are majority immigrant, low income residents, and communities of color."

She said that GreenRoots has "been actively opposing" the service cuts since the fall.

"It is extremely concerning to see buses passing by that are full beyond capacity because the majority of people riding buses and trains have no other option," she said.

She said solutions include a low income fare and the restoration of full service on the MBTA.

"We're urging the FMCB to support the MBTA's plan to get back to 100 percent bus and subway service and we will keep fighting for the the public transit system that our communities deserve until that is achieved."

Lee Matsueda, Executive Director of Community Labor United, thanked the Congressional delegation for their work on this issue.

"They released federal dollars to our communities during this time of really great need and it's been clear that this funding... nearly a billion in this most recent round to the T has to be used to get back to full service and keep our workers in their jobs, jobs which are critical to their families and the maintenance operation of our system."

Restaurant owner Brian Moy, who owns Shojo, Ruckus, Normai, and China Pearl restaura-



*Acting Mayor Kim Janey speaks to reporters at the press conference on Monday supporting the restoration of service cuts on the MBTA.*

rants, said he is "proud to be a Boston small business owner and a leader in the Massachusetts Restaurant United, a grassroots advocacy group formed to help independent restaurants and our workers during the pandemic."

He said that "we literally cannot reopen if our employees cannot come to us," and "if our customers cannot come to us during our normal business hours, we will not be able to survive."

Dwain Tyndal, Executive Director of Alternatives for Com-

munity and Environment (ACE), said that there is a "problem, solution, and consequences to these cuts."

He said that the "problem is the negative impact of cut services on Black and Brown communities, the communities that suffer the harshest during this COVID pandemic..."

He said solutions include that any more service cuts "should be done under a racial equity lens."

He also said that ACE will continue to advocate for the services to return, as well as "aggressively pursue the legality of community impact cuts."

Acting mayor Kim Janey is an avid T rider and supporter of public transit for all.

"Now, more than ever, Boston needs a transit system that works for everyone," she said. "MBTA service cuts shortchange the needs of Boston's workers and ignore the sacrifices they make each day to keep our city running. Service cuts make buses and trains more crowded and undermine our efforts to stop the spread of COVID-19."

Janey continued, "cuts to transit service only deepen the inequalities of our public transit system."

She said that in Boston, Black bus riders spend 64 more hours per year riding buses "as they

*Continued on page 13*



*Front from left to right: Stacy Thompson of the LivableStreets Alliance, Acting Mayor Kim Janey, Lee Matsueda of Community Labor United, and Olivia Nichols of GreenRoots. Back from left to right: Chris Dempsey of the Transportation for Massachusetts Coalition, Dwain Tyndal of ACE, and restaurant owner Brian Moy.*

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# Ethos helps navigate seniors through troubling pandemic times

BY LAUREN BENNETT

JP-based nonprofit Ethos has been helping seniors stay independent since 1974 with various programs and services.

The Gazette spoke with Raymond Santos, Ethos' Development Chief and Community Relations Officer, to learn more about how Ethos assists seniors in the community, especially during the public health crisis.

"We are what's called an aging services access point," Santos said, which is a "state designation for agencies that provide home and community-based programming and services for older adults and the younger disabled."

Ethos provides home care and nutrition services, as well as Meals on Wheels straight to the homes of seniors, along with Medicare counseling and other services and programs.

"The goal is to keep seniors healthy, active, and living independently in the community," Santos said.

When it comes to COVID-19, Santos said that "obviously, the

COVID-19 pandemic has affected older adults disproportionately," as well as "exacerbated a number of different issues" for them. "Social isolation was also a major crisis for older adults before the pandemic."

He said that to help out with these issues, Ethos has "more than doubled our Meals on Wheels program," delivering about 12,000 meals to seniors each day.

Additionally, all of Ethos' programming that would have otherwise been provided in person has been moved online so seniors can still participate virtually. He said things like fall prevention classes, exercise classes, and others are "all available to seniors free of charge online."

Ethos also offers "telephone reassurance programs," Santos said, that allow a connection "with those most isolated and at risk."

Santos said that "most importantly and most recently," Ethos has been "assisting with vaccine rollout" through partnering with places and organizations like Boston Medical Center, the

Boston Public Health Commission, and the City's Age Strong Commission to "help provide access to vaccination opportunities for seniors."

He said that to help overcome the "challenges" faced by seniors across the city and state in accessing the online appointment finder, "Ethos is acting as a bridge between the seniors and technology tools" by "providing them with assistance in helping them schedule those appointments for them and their trusted companions."

Santos said they work with these partners "to create exclusive opportunities to get our clients and our seniors scheduled for their vaccine. "That's really important," he said, as is bringing available appointments "as close to seniors as possible."

Ethos also offers several health and wellness programs throughout the year; that help with things like balance, preventing falls, managing chronic conditions, providing caregiver support, improving memory fitness, and more.

"We've taken those classes

and re-tooled them so they can be taken through Zoom," Santos said. This way, seniors can still socialize with each other and their neighbors while still remaining "active in their homes," he said.

"Ethos continually works to identify seniors who are at greatest risk for social isolation, and when possible, we're able to help bridge that digital divide" by "assisting them with a device or modest stipend to assist them with purchasing internet access" for the lowest income seniors, Santos said, as many seniors face challenges when it comes to technology.

"The environment we're operating under is extremely expensive," Santos said, between

"outfitting staff and Meals on Wheels drivers" with personal protection equipment and hand sanitizer, as well as "maintain extremely high levels of cleanliness."

He thanked the "generous donors" who have helped to make this possible, adding that Ethos "continually needs support in order to continue to deliver these programs." To make a donation, residents can visit <https://www.ethocare.org> or call (617) 522-6700.

"We continue to encourage folks to maintain their social distance," Santos said, as well as "encourage folks to get vaccinated when those opportunities come up, and stay healthy and safe."

## AARP Massachusetts monthly fraud watch update for March

STAFF REPORT

Did you know that someone's identity gets stolen every two seconds? The AARP Fraud Watch Network can provide the tips and resources to help spot and avoid identity theft and fraud so you can protect the family. This watchdog alerts will keep one up to date on con artists' latest tricks. It's free of charge for everyone: AARP members, non-members, and people of all ages. Be a fraud fighter! If you can spot a scam, you can stop a scam. Report scams to local law enforcement. Contact the AARP Fraud Watch Network at [www.aarp.org/fraudwatchnetwork](http://www.aarp.org/fraudwatchnetwork) for more information on fraud prevention.

The AARP Fraud Watch Network is:

• An Educator: Get real-time alerts about the latest scams, tips on how to spot them, and the inside scoop on how con artists think so you can outsmart them before they strike.

• A Watchdog: Our nationwide scam-tracking map gives you access to a network of people who've spotted scams and the opportunity to pass along your own experiences, so together we can beat con artists at their own

game.

• A Resource: Get connected to a real live person trained in how to avoid fraud and advise you if you or a loved one has been scammed by calling our fraud hotline or attending a forum in your community.

• Free for Everyone: Anyone, of any age, can access our resources at no cost.

### SCAM ALERT #1: NATIONAL CONSUMER PROTECTION WEEK

It's National Consumer Protection Week—and while AARP is focused on protecting consumers year-round – this is a good time to highlight key tips to keep you safe.

Never give out personal or financial information over the phone or internet – especially if you don't know the person on the other end. Be careful of what links you click on or what numbers you call back. If something seems to be good to be true it is. Lastly, be your own detective by using trusted resources to determine if something is a scam before responding.

One great resource is the Federal Trade Commission and

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Continued on page 11



## Fraud

Continued from page 10

its website, [www.consumer.ftc.gov](http://www.consumer.ftc.gov). It has resources to help protect yourself from scams and fraud and ID theft as well as tips on how to maximize your security online.

### SCAM ALERT #2: SORTING FACT FROM FICTION WITH VACCINES

At the start of the pandemic, scammers hawked fake cures, treatments and vaccines. Now

that vaccines are available, scammers are making bogus offers to move you to the front of the line for getting your vaccine – for a fee. Some are even setting up fake vaccine distribution sites. Unfortunately, this means that consumers looking for a vaccine appointment have to sort through fake and legitimate information in search for a shot – a process that can be confusing and dangerous.

With thousands of localities taking their own approach to vaccine distribution, it's important

to follow guidance provided by local public health officials and trusted healthcare providers. When signing up for your vaccine, find out how you will be contacted for any follow-up information or guidance.

### SCAM ALERT #3: DEBT RELIEF SCAMS

COVID-19 and the economic downturn have put millions of Americans in financial peril. For most people, one of the first steps to getting back on their feet is getting rid of debt. Enter the con artist.

Shady companies will claim they can remove bankruptcies, liens and bad loans from your record, or even erase a bad credit history completely, helping you start over with a new credit identity. All you have to do is pay an up-front fee.

To avoid falling victim to these scams it's important to remember that no one can remove bad information from your credit report if it is correct and timely. Things like bankruptcy or significant debt can stay on your credit record for up to 10 years. When looking for legitimate help with managing debt, avoid anyone who promises they can erase

your debt history, increase your credit score or asks for an advance payment.

### SCAM ALERT #4: CONSUMER SENTINEL REPORT

The numbers are in. The Federal Trade Commission released its report of fraud complaints from last year, and it was historically high, due in large part to COVID and the economic downturn. Criminals thrive in times of confusion and 2020 was the perfect storm. Staying on top of COVID related scams was a never-ending game of whack-a-mole for consumers, and the problem hasn't gone away.

Reported losses topped \$3.3 billion – an increase of around

\$1.5 billion over the previous year. The top scams were identity theft, impostor scams and online shopping scams. Most of these same scams are still active in 2021, which is why it's important to avoid answering calls from unknown phone numbers or clicking on links from texts or emails from suspicious or unknown senders. And as long as COVID remains a challenge, beware of offers for miracle cure or a shortcut to a vaccine.

Be a fraud fighter! If one can spot a scam, one can stop a scam.

Report scams to local law enforcement. For help from AARP, call 1-877-908-3360 or visit the AARP Fraud Watch Network at [www.aarp.org/fraudwatchnetwork](http://www.aarp.org/fraudwatchnetwork).

## Rogerson House sets a standard in memory-care assisted living

Graciously situated across from Jamaica Pond on three acres of lawn, trees, and gardens and just minutes from Boston's world-class hospitals, Rogerson House offers an assisted-living residence, a day program, and respite care in a warm, home environment.

Rogerson House sets the standard in dementia care with a special building design incorporating lighting, color-coding, and environmental cues that help people with memory loss thrive in a secure setting. A diverse

array of programming, including expressive therapies and fitness programs, ensures a stimulating and caring environment for residents.

"Rogerson House is a welcoming community that promotes an inclusive culture celebrating the individuality of our residents, team members, family, friends, neighbors, and partners," said Michele Stephenson, Director of Outreach and Resident Services at Rogerson House.

Rogerson House is located at 434 Jamaicaaway.

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# How the pandemic is impacting children and families

More than 2.7 million American children are growing up in grandfamilies -- families in which grandparents, other adult family members, or close family friends are raising children. A new report highlights how the pandemic has amplified their unique challenges, and offers solutions to better serve them.

The report, "Facing a Pandemic: Families Living Together During COVID-19 and Thriving Beyond" authored by the non-profit Generations United and funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and Casey Family Programs, points out that at a time when older adults are being cautioned to keep their distance from children because of the heightened risk of infection and death from COVID-19, for grandfamilies, that distance is impossible. Advocates point out that these caregivers are the first line of defense for children during

the pandemic, having stepped in when parents cannot raise them for many reasons, including cases where children's parents have died from COVID-19. At the same time, 30 percent of kin caregivers lack an alternative caregiving plan if they should die or become disabled, a troubling statistic in the face of the pandemic, which disproportionately affects older adults.

While grandfamilies are diverse in geography, income and race, the report finds that caregivers in grandfamilies are disproportionately Black or Native American; nearly half of grandparent caregivers are over age 60; and one in four grandparent caregivers has a disability. These are the same populations that are more likely to be impacted by the pandemic and die as a result.

"While we're all impacted by COVID-19, grandfamilies, especially, have had tough realities,



(c) monkeybusinessimages / iStock via Getty Images Plus

with limited support systems," says Donna Butts, executive director of Generations United, a non-profit with the mission of improving the lives of children, youth and older people. "State and local child welfare and other agencies must better support them during COVID-19 recovery and beyond."

Federal, state and local governments recognize foster families and provide them with access to resources, but there is little available for grandfamilies raising children outside of foster

care. While Congress included support for grandfamilies in the December 2020 COVID-19 relief package, including better access to kinship navigator programs, which help connect families to information and community support as well as provide some direct help to families to meet emergency needs, advocates say this is just a start.

"With so many families continuing to struggle with impacts from COVID-19, it's critical that state and local child welfare agencies distribute the funds

in this package," says Butts. "Congress also needs to ensure families have ongoing financial support so that caregivers can meet the basic needs of children as they live with the long-term impacts of COVID-19."

The report also finds that about 19 percent of grandparents responsible for grandchildren live in poverty and 38 percent of grandfamilies are unable to pay or are worried about paying mortgage or rent. Among the solutions to these figures, Generations United is calling for grandfamilies to be specifically named in the next COVID-relief package as an eligible population for financial relief such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).

To access the report, visit [www.gu.org](http://www.gu.org). To hear grandfamilies discuss the pandemic's impacts, visit [everyfamilyforward.org](http://everyfamilyforward.org).

While the pandemic has heightened the inequities different types of families face, advocates say that sufficient support can help grandfamilies recover and thrive.

(StatePoint)

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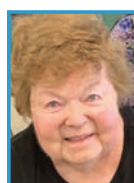
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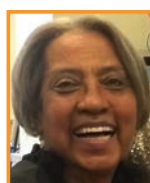


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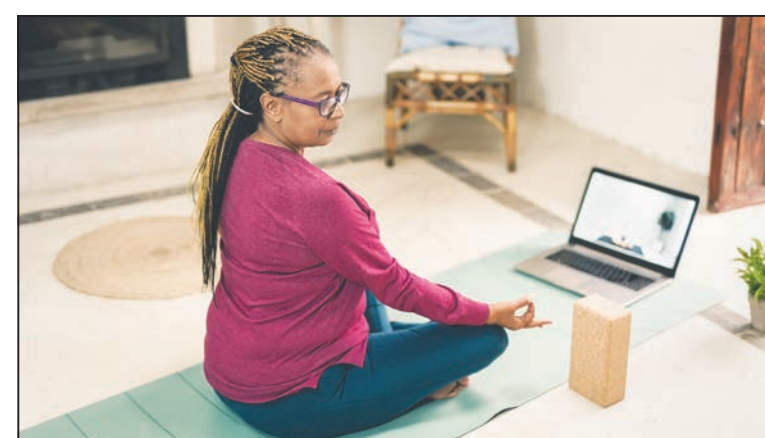
Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, City of Boston Credit Union, Dana Farber Cancer Center, Mission Hill American Legion Post 327, Needham Bank, New England Baptist Hospital, Northeastern University and Wentworth Institute of Technology.

## 4 easy tips to help older adults stay active at home

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, many older adults are following the advice of public health experts and remaining at home to limit risk of exposure. Bad weather conditions can also keep people inside for days at a time. But a strong body and mind are as important as ever, and the good news is being indoors doesn't mean having to give up on exercising.

There are many great health benefits to staying active, such as improving mobility and balance, developing muscle and bone strength, increasing energy and managing weight. Exercise can also reduce blood pressure and lower the risk of heart disease, stroke and diabetes.

According to Dr. Gina Conflitti, chief medical officer for Medicare at Cigna, the advantages aren't just physical: "Keeping active has a positive impact on mental health, too," she said. "With regular exercise, many older adults enjoy better sleep, clearer thinking, lower stress



(c) Sabrina Bracher / iStock via Getty Images Plus

and improved mood."

According to Cigna, which serves many older adults through its Medicare Advantage plans, here are four simple tips for exercising in the comfort of home:

1. Make a plan. What is your long-term goal? Having something to work toward is great motivation to keep up daily activity and set yourself up for success. Before you begin any physical activity, talk to your doctor about your health goals. Your doctor can provide guidance on exercises that are safe and attainable as

you begin a new chapter of your wellness journey.

2. Take it slow. You don't have to run a marathon or even lift weights to keep fit -- the most important thing is to just move. Start by walking around your house a few times a day or doing some gentle stretching. Just adding five minutes of activity to your day can make a difference in your overall health and mood. As your body gets used to daily movement, you can enhance

Continued on page 13



# Mayoral Candidate Michelle Wu responds to Atlanta shooting, violence against Asian America

By JOHN LYNDIS

Here in Mission Hill 14 percent of our neighbors are Asian Americans and while they make up a small minority of our overall population they contribute greatly to the fabric of the community as business owners, parents, students, and activists.

The recent trend of violence against Asian Americans has been shocking and the shooting in Atlanta that killed six Asian Americans at three spas last week has shaken us all to our core.

City Councilor Michelle Wu, who is vying to become Boston's first Asian American Mayor of Boston, responded to the recent uptick in violence towards the Asian American community across the US as well as the Atlanta shooting.

"I join our Asian American community in mourning and solidarity following the senseless shootings in the Atlanta area," said Wu in a statement. "It's heartbreaking and appalling to see the anti-Asian harassment, violence, and now mass murder that has accelerated over the past year — part of a long history of racism in America that we all must fight to end. And all too often, the most silenced members of our community — Asian American elders and women working in invisible industries — have borne the brunt of these attacks."

Wu said the unconscionable blaming of Asian American

communities for the devastation from the COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced the sense of invisibility and perpetual foreigner status that so many have known their entire lives.

"Growing up as the daughter of immigrants from Taiwan, some of my most vivid childhood memories involve racist encounters with strangers," she continued. "People who knew nothing about me except for my appearance feeling empowered to pull eyes into slits or chant ching chong sounds. That constant feeling of needing to be aware, ready, on guard whenever out in public. Since before COVID-19 was spreading in the United States, Asian American communities have been on edge, reeling from the impacts."

Wu said Boston has not been immune to these incidents and in every city across the country, we must build community to protect and celebrate intersectional identities.

"We will stop Asian hate and combat racism by meeting this moment, by building a city for everyone, by transforming our systems to see and value every life," she said.

Wu also encouraged residents to support the Asian Community Emergency Relief Fund.

"Today, we're asking for you to make a donation to support the Greater Boston area's Asian Community Emergency Relief Fund to help provide direct financial support to Asian and

Asian American Boston residents who are having trouble meeting their basic needs," said Wu. "If you can, please chip in to the Asian Community Emergency Relief Fund. Your donation will go towards providing aid to those in our city's Asian American community who need it most."

The fund can be found at <https://donorbox.org/covid19-relief-fund?>

Asian Americans account for 6 percent of all the COVID 19 cases and 8 percent of all the deaths in Boston. While countless communities are severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Asian American community in Greater Boston is being hit harder than most. Many are immigrants who work in food, hospitality, home care, and child care sectors that have been closed. Consequently, these workers have lost their incomes. Because of language barriers and



City Councilor and Mayoral Candidate Michelle Wu.

immigration status, not everyone can access public benefits like unemployment and the new stimulus dollars. These families are in jeopardy of not having enough money to buy basic necessities and pay for housing.

So far the fund has raised and distributed over \$350,000 and

helped 327 families, totaling 946 individuals and 55.5 percent of the fund went to families with undocumented members, and the remaining fund helped families that were ineligible for other public benefits because of their immigrant status.

## MBTA

*Continued from page 9*

navigate routes with large access gaps in communities of color. These kinds of disparities have persisted for too long. We all benefit when transit is fair and accessible to everyone, from reduced traffic and cleaner air. Boston deserves better."

The MBTA recently received \$435 million in additional operating support, Janey said, and "in light of this new funding, I am calling for action." She said MBTA services should be restored "as fast as possible," and should return first in places that have been impacted most by the pandemic and where the service cuts were the deepest.

Janey also announced the launching of a public transportation pilot that will support employees in five main streets districts: Nubian Squares, Three Squares Main Street, Mission Hill, East Boston, and Fields Corner.

"For the period of March 29 through April 19, we will provide nearly 1000 workers with free CharlieCards pre-loaded with \$60 each," Janey said. "We will also provide these workers with free two month BlueBike passes."

Employees in these districts can sign up for the passes at [boston.gov/freeride](https://boston.gov/freeride), or by texting "freeride" to 8663960122.

"This transit pilot and other

new approaches will play a key role in Boston's recovery, reopening, and renewal," Janey said.

"It is very important in terms of a recovery that is inequitable," she said of the program. "We have to lift up workers and make sure that they have access to reliable transportation."

Chris Dempsey, Director of the Transportation for Massachusetts Advocacy Coalition, said that "transit is essential" and that the funds are available to immediately restore service on the MBTA.

"We need to see clarity from the MBTA's control board that this service is coming back as soon as possible," he said.

He also said, "the Massachusetts economy only works when our transit system works. That ridership is going to come back. We want it to come back."

Dempsey also thanked everyone involved in advocating for the reversal of the service cuts, "especially to Mayor Janey. Great to have her here today and great to have an MBTA rider working in City Hall."

At the March 29 joint meeting of the MassDOT Board and the FMCB, when talking about the proposed FY22 budget, it was announced that "we will increase service levels as quickly as possible on the bus and subway, while running the Spring schedule and accelerating hiring and training," according to a slide presented at the meeting, but no official date

was provided for when it will happen.

The slide also says that the FY22 budget "includes full funding for pre-pandemic service levels on bus and subway."

On April 5, services will be increased by approximately 88 percent versus present levels on the commuter rail with a new "Regional Rail schedule," and there is a proposal to resume weekend service on commuter rail lines that have been suspended "as soon as possible (likely mid-May)" but a board vote will be required, a slide read. Additionally, there is a proposal to resume ferry service in Charlestown and "increase frequency on Hingham/Hull service as needed," it said.

"The budget previewed today offers encouragement that the MBTA and FMCB are listening to riders, advocates, our Congressional delegation, Mayor Janey, and other local elected officials. Fully funding bus and subway service for the next fiscal year, as well as beginning to restore ferry and Commuter Rail weekend service this spring, are steps in the right direction," the Transit is Essential Coalition said in a statement.

"We urge the MBTA and FMCB to formalize these steps in the FY22 budget that will be approved in April. The service cuts have set back our region -- the need to restore service and build back better is now more urgent than ever."

## Tips

*Continued from page 12*

your physical activities as recommended by your health care provider.

3. Use what you have. You don't need a gym to get a healthy workout. In fact, there are plenty of exercises you can do using items found around the house. For example, "chair dips" are an effective arm and shoulder workout — just place both feet on the ground, face away from a chair and support your body by putting your hands on the seat behind you with straight arms. Next, raise and lower yourself by bending and unbending your arms.

You can even exercise while seated. Hold your leg out in front of you and trace each letter of the alphabet. Work your feet and leg

muscles by laying a kitchen towel on the floor, then use your toes to grab, release and push the fabric.

4. Check your health care plan benefits. If you have a Medicare Advantage plan, you might be eligible for extra benefits such as at-home fitness programs, including free on-demand workouts accessible from your computer, smart device or phone, as well as gear, such as resistance bands.

Find more healthy aging and exercise tips at [cigna.com/medicare/healthy-aging/physical-activity](https://cigna.com/medicare/healthy-aging/physical-activity).

"As you start, remember to be flexible and stay positive," Dr. Conflitti suggests. "Changing habits can take time, but every step is progress. If you haven't reached a goal, don't be hard on yourself — it's most important to continue at your own pace." (StatePoint)



# Mission Hill/Roxbury COVID-19 update posted

By JOHN LYNDIS

The weekly COVID-19 positive test rate in Mission Hill/Roxbury increased throughout March as did the neighborhood's overall positive test rate.

According to the latest data released by the Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC) 1,508 residents were tested last week and 4.6 percent were positive. This was a 26 percent increase from the 4.6 percent that had tested positive during the last week of February.

Of the 40,280 Mission Hill/Roxbury residents tested for COVID-19 since the start of the pandemic, 11.6 percent are COVID positive. This was a 3.5 percent increase from the 11.2 percent that were found to be positive overall at the end of February.

Positive test rates were also on the rise citywide. According to the BPHC 25,845 residents were tested and 4.2 percent were COVID positive--this was a 16.6 percent increase from the 3.6 percent positive test rate reported by the BPHC two weeks ago.

Acting Mayor Kim Janey, the Boston Public Health Commission and the Office of Health and Human Services announced the Vaccine Equity Grant Initiative last week that will target communities hit hard by the pandemic like Mission Hill and Roxbury.

Janey said the program provides funding to non-profit organizations working to increase vaccine access and awareness for communities disproportionately

impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The grant applications will open Wednesday, March 31, 2021 and the deadline to apply is April 9, 2021. With a total of \$1.5 million in available funding, grant awards will range from \$100,000 to \$250,000 to be used by organizations over four months.

"Since the beginning of the pandemic, we've known that certain neighborhoods and communities have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19," said Janey. "Creating this grant initiative will fund organizations closest to the individuals most affected, helping the City respond on a local, community-based level. I look forward to working with the grantees to further our efforts in vaccinating our more vulnerable communities."

Applicants will develop strategies to target equitable vaccine access in specific ethnic communities, Boston neighborhoods, and other groups experiencing higher rates of COVID-19 positivity. Applications should also target outreach for communities facing barriers in obtaining the vaccine. These include Black/African American, Latinx, Asian, Indigenous, and immigrant communities; persons with disabilities; individuals over the age of 65; and the neighborhoods of East Boston, Roxbury, Dorchester, Mattapan, Hyde Park, Roslindale and Chinatown, where positivity rates have consistently been higher and vaccination rates have been lower than the citywide average.

"In Boston, we are committed to continuing to prioritize local access and equitable planning when developing strategies to bring the COVID-19 vaccine to all of our residents," said Chief of Health and Human Services Marty Martinez. "The grant program will build on our community partnerships and help ensure every Bostonian who is eligible has the necessary support needed to get vaccinated."

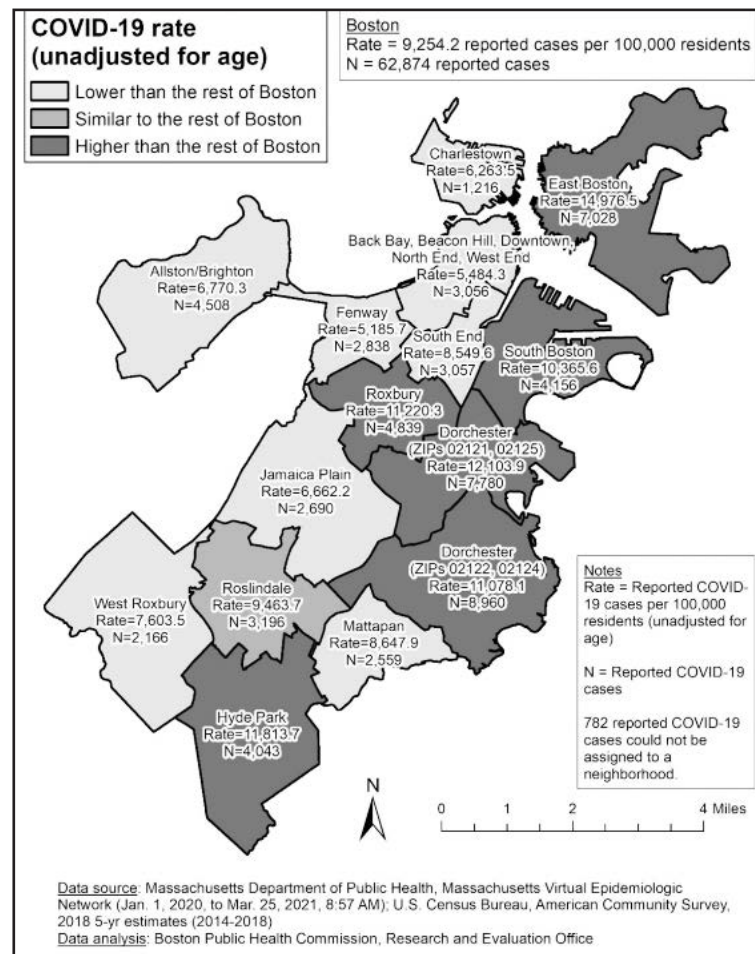
The Mission Hill/Roxbury COVID-19 infection rate increased 7.8 percent throughout the month of March.

According to data released last Friday by the Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC) the COVID-19 infection rate went from 1,040 cases per 10,000 residents to an infection rate of 1,122 cases per 10,000 residents during the month.

An additional 353 Mission Hill/Roxbury residents became infected with the virus throughout March and the number of cases increased from 4,486 to 4,839.

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

Citywide positive cases of coronavirus increased 3.5 percent last week and went from 62,170 cases to 64,321 confirmed cases in a week. Eighteen additional Boston residents died from the virus last week and there are now 1,341 total deaths in the city from COVID.



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.

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# Mission Hill Main Streets employees will benefit from new MBTA and Bluebike pilot program

By JOHN LYNDIS

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic many inquesties have been exposed. From the virus disproportionately affecting people of color to essential workers not having the luxury of working from home thus jeopardizing their health and safety.

Many essential workers who have been on the frontlines throughout the pandemic have relied heavily on public transportation.

Now a new pilot program in Mission Hill and other Boston neighborhoods heavily impacted by the COVID-19 crisis will make public transportation more equitable for essential workers.

Acting Boston Mayor Kim Janey announced this week that the City of Boston is piloting a new program to offer up to a

\$60 credit for MBTA and Bluebikes passes for 1,000 employees who work in Mission Hill's Main Streets District, as well as employees in four other Main Streets Districts.

The city has begun registering employees in Main Streets Districts in Mission Hill, Jamaica Plain, Mission Hill, Nubian Square, East Boston, and Fields Corner for the pilot program and registration will end on April 19.

These five Main Street districts are all served by MBTA subway and Bluebikes stations.

"Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, many essential workers have continued to utilize public transportation because they have been unable to work from home," said Janey. "I'm proud to launch this pilot program with the MBTA and Blue-

bikes to learn more about the impacts on commuter patterns when the cost of public transit is covered. And as more workers begin in return to workplaces, making transit more accessible is critical to our equitable recovery from the pandemic."

Janey said the goal of the program is to incentivize employees returning to work and workers who currently drive to work to use public transit. With an expected increase in post-COVID-19 traffic, the City of Boston is piloting this incentive program to help alleviate small business districts of congestion and free up curb space for local neighborhood customers. The pilot program also seeks to lessen vehicular traffic to help reduce its environmental impact.

"We are excited to partner

with our local Main Street Districts to pilot free public transit options for those working in Boston's neighborhoods," said Transportation Commissioner Greg Rooney. "Creating incentives to use public transit or bike to work options helps our economy, our environment and our local businesses. As more workers plan on restarting their commute, the Boston Transportation Department is committed to exploring creative ways to reduce traffic, carbon emissions and support Boston's workers."

The city managed pilot program is aimed at measuring how financial incentives for public transit impact commuting behavior and will be phased over the next two months.

Of the 1,000 qualified workers, some individuals will be random-

ly selected to get an MBTA pass with the full \$60 credit loaded, and the remainder of the individuals will receive smaller stipends over time, which will end up totaling \$60.

Bluebikes pass-holders will be able to take unlimited trips during the two-month period. Bluebikes trips must be completed within 45 minutes to avoid usage charges. There is no obligation to continue paying for the Bluebikes pass once the two months are over.

Data from the pilot program will be used to inform the city's long-term transportation demand management strategy.

To learn more about the pilot or to sign up for the program, please visit: [boston.gov/FREEride](https://boston.gov/FREEride) or text FREEride to 866-396-0122.

## Reggie Lewis

*Continued from page 1*

the end of April everyone will be eligible, so wait times could increase dramatically. The turn-over with this program is very quick – a callback within two or three days and getting them booked within the week. We want to encourage those who have a positive experience to communicate that to friends and family. We have very unique access here and the ability to vaccinate many people in the community. That will allow us to experience the joys of being around friends and family and doing the things we enjoy again."

The allocation in the program is no small number.

At this point, the Reggie is distributing about 2,000 vaccinations per day, so residents of Mission Hill have a special deal on at last 1,000 appointments per day at the Center. Those reserved appointments stay in the system until a day before, and then any that aren't claimed are dumped back into the pool for the general public. While it's not just available to people of color – but rather to any qualified resident living in Mission Hill or the other mentioned neighborhoods – one focus group is people of color, as

statistics are showing they are getting vaccinated at a lower rate than other groups.

Jeff Rogers, who lives near the Reggie, said he was open to getting the vaccine and did his research on the science behind it. He was convinced that all three were safe, but had questions about the rollout and operations pieces. Last Friday, he was able to get his second dose of the vaccine at the Reggie, and said the vaccine is a "miracle" and it couldn't have been easier to get it in his own backyard.

"I feel very relieved now," he said, just about an hour after getting his second dose last Friday. "We've been immersed in COVID-19 for a year now. If you think back to March 2020 and there's this phantom disease and they want folks to go on lockdown...At that time, like everyone else, I was spraying my groceries with bleach. My mother is a senior citizen. I was doing everything to protect her. To think they came out with a vaccine so quickly and it's 100 percent effective against death... That's a miracle. To think that miracle is now available to me in my neighborhood from people I know is amazing...I don't think it's hyperbole to say it saved lives and saved Black lives to do it

this way."

Prior to hearing about the Reggie Lewis program, he said his faith in the vaccine was faltering because the roll out seemed so skewed towards people not in the neighborhood and people who were not Black or brown.

"It looked like a big cluster to me," he said. "Then when the Reggie Lewis people called and set up the date, it felt real. I could tell also the people calling me back were Black people, and as a Black man, that gave me more confidence."

Rogers qualified after calling the number for the community program, and was quickly booked into one of the special community appointments. He got a call-back within two days and was booked for his appointment a few days later. His experience was very smooth and quick, he said. There was no anxiety and he said he was impressed with how he was treated and catered to.

For Karleen Porcella, who lives only a few blocks from the Reggie Lewis, the experience was one of skepticism. From the get-go, she wasn't sure about the vaccine, but after giving the program at Reggie Lewis a shot, she has changed her mind and is looking to do the same for everyone she knows.

"There was a lot of anxiety around COVID and the vaccine and how it rolled out," she said. "I didn't know what to expect... There were so many hesitations in our community to take this vaccine. The history we've had with health care cannot be taken for granted. I saw people waiting for hours to get appointments and waiting for hours in line to get vaccinated. I literally walked in with no wait and came in and out in 20 minutes. Having it there with people that I recognized made all the difference. Also, having it right down from my house was convenient because I didn't have to take a day off of work and travel outside of the city to find a location. It was right here."

Now, Porcella said she's been telling friends and family all about the experience, the professionalism and the ease for using the special community appointments.

"We have this opportunity in the community and we're not taking full advantage of it," she said. "We have to step up and think about taking the vaccine. Once I got the appointment and saw how easy it was, I was telling everyone they needed to do it too."

In addition to reserving 50 percent of the appointments, the

program has also engaged in a robust campaign to flier the neighborhoods using information in eight different languages. There has also been a door-to-door neighborhood awareness campaign that seeks to get information from residents interested in getting vaccinated – allowing the CIC's phone bank to pro-actively call and set up appointments. The phone system is also easy to use and provides translation in 240 different languages. There are also weekly town hall meetings online with trusted community groups, community health centers and elected officials.

The community partners assisting in the CIC Health community program include: Black Boston COVID-19 Coalition; The Urban League; MassVote; Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers; Chinese Progressive Association; Massachusetts Immigration & Refugee Advocacy Coalition; and City of Boston's Office of Immigration Advancement.

To access the community preference appointments, call (617) 675-0005 and start the process of finding out qualification and appointment booking. To access the appointments online, go to [www.cichealth.com/reggielewis/outreach](https://www.cichealth.com/reggielewis/outreach).

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# What's Happening on Main Streets

By ELLEN WALKER  
SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE

Along with almost everyone in Boston, MHMS celebrated St. Patrick's Day on March 17th. In Ireland, St. Patrick's Day is a religious holiday while here in the United States it is seen as the one day a year when everyone can be Irish and have fun. Laura Adams, Director of Senior Services at Roxbury Tenants of Harvard (RTH) invited MHMS to participate in her remote Zoom celebration of the day with many seniors and members of the community. Since this year's annual event was remote, she faced different challenges in organizing the event and coordinating the video and still managed to open the event with a warm, touching welcome to all. Very nicely done Laura! She made sure everyone had lots of fun seeing each other in their Irish hats and sweaters, sharing lots of good humor, stories and listening to Irish songs. Laura is hoping next year's event will be live. From the Mission Hill Main Streets office guests included Richard Rouse the former Executive Director of MHMS and a much beloved member of the community, Dermot Doyne who is a well-known fixture around neighborhood and Toni Komst a life-long Mission Hill resident. Both Dermot and Toni and are

long-standing members of the MHMS Board and whose efforts in the community are greatly appreciated. Dermot led a warm and caring toast to honor Theresa Parks and wished her well and a quick recovery. Then everyone was treated to several Irish songs by Richie including a serenade of Danny Boy to Mrs. Adams. The event was rounded out with stories by Dermot of his years as an immigrant in both England and in Boston along with his love for the Mission Hill community. You can listen to the songs and stories on You Tube by searching for Mission Hill Main Streets.

MHMS is preparing for Spring Clean Up Days (dates to be announced shortly) and installation of our light pole banners. Some people call them "the flying colors of our neighborhood that arrive in the Spring!" The City of Boston began recognizing the importance of small, long-term businesses and referred to them as Legacy businesses, which means they have been in operation for over 20 years. As you can see on our MHMS banners, or the "flying colors of our neighborhood", we have 17 Legacy business operating here in Mission Hill that range from 20 to 102 years of continuous business (Hillside Market is our oldest Legacy business). MHMS welcomes our two newest members of the Legacy



BBR Resource Center.

group: Liz Rose at Liz's Hair Care, 1605 Tremont Street and Diablo Glass School, 123 Terrace Street. Did you know that Diablo Glass School offers classes for adults and youth? You can learn about glass blowing and other glass techniques in a warm and inviting atmosphere. For a unique and unforgettable outing, take a class with friends or co-workers! If you are in the area, stop in and congratulate them both.

Mission Hill residents have always been known as people with a strong work ethic and leaders in many areas including community organizations. Those organizations created local heroes like Miss Ida Graves, Dr. John J. Sheehy and State Senator

Kevin W. Fitzgerald, to name just a few. Mission Hill business owners are among those leaders and we can see that theme continue today as Deb Beatty Mel of Boston Builders Resources and her team are on the verge of being the first commercial Net Zero building in Mission Hill, which is no small feat. Net Zero, or NZ, means a building with no energy consumption through traditional means and all the energy they use is renewable energy created on site. Recently, I stopped in to look at the new addition on the Boston Reuse Center at 88 Terrace Street and spoke with Lindsay, BBR Resource Center Manager, at length about the changes. She stated the biggest upside is the energy gain. The site is now



BBR Donation Center Door.

temperature controlled with consistent heat and cooling effective once the solar is installed on the roof next month. As far the physical plant is concerned, they gained the entire front of the building and added windows that provide a huge amount of natural light. A benefit for customers too is the dedicated donation area allowing for better inventory management. Lindsay wanted to remind everyone that the value of reprocessing items from your home – like old cabinets, doors, windows, etc. – has grown. Whether you have a small property, are renovating your home or a garden house, giving new life to gently used items and keeping them out of the ground is better for the environment and for all of

## Gazette Pet of the Week

by Sarah Carroll



### ECHO & ANNIE

Four-year-old Echo and one-year-old Annie are mom and daughter looking for a home together! Weighing less than five pounds each, these little ladies are Polish rabbits. They are a bit shy at first, but sweet and playful once they feel safe. They would do best in a home without dogs or young kids but may be able to live with other rabbits. Since these cuties are



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so small, they would do well in an x-pen enclosure or free-roaming. They're working on litter box training and are sure to put a smile on your face with their love for each other. If you're interested in this adorable pair of bunnies, inquire today!

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# Op-Ed

## Goodbye and thank you, Boston

By FORMER MAYOR MARTIN J. WALSH

I left Boston City Hall for the final time as mayor. I packed up the last of the photos on my desk, say goodnight to the security guards as I've done a thousand times before, and head home to Dorchester.

It's been almost three months since I got the call from President Biden asking me to serve as secretary of labor, and the truth is I haven't had much time to reflect. My team and I have continued working around the clock on the response to COVID-19 and coordinating with the incoming administration to make sure city operations continue seamlessly. But now the Senate has confirmed my nomination, and a new team of leaders, both new and familiar faces, will take the reins at City Hall. All that's left to do now is to say goodbye and thank you.

I've been thinking about my mother, Mary, and my late father, John, who met in Boston after each immigrated from Ireland. They worked their entire adult lives to make a good life for my brother, Johnny, and me. They found friendship and solidarity among our neighbors in Dorchester, at St. Margaret's Church, in the immigrant community, and in the labor community. And it was community that helped me survive childhood cancer and get into recovery for alcoholism as a young adult.

Boston taught me at a young age that a supportive community is the greatest blessing, and serving that community is both a responsibility and a privilege. That's why I decided to run for mayor in 2013. After representing Dorchester for 16 years in the State House, and winning victories for marriage equality, LGBTQ rights, women's rights, disability rights, and immigrant rights, I knew that change was possible. I wanted to play a bigger role in making the American Dream a reality for more of my fellow Bostonians.

That's what we've done, together, as a city.

We created 140,000 new, good-paying jobs, fought for workers' rights, and built more pathways into the middle class. We invested more in public education than at any time in Boston's history. We built record numbers of affordable homes.



We fought the stigma around substance use disorder and got more people into treatment. We invested millions of dollars in arts and culture. We've risen as a national leader in environmental justice and women's pay equity.

Over the last four years, especially, Boston has shown what we stand for. As the Trump administration launched attacks on immigrants, Muslims, and women, Boston made it clear that we reject racism, xenophobia, sexism, and bigotry. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Boston has rallied to support people in need and put public health first. And responding to calls for racial justice, Boston took action through powerful community investments, police reform, and cultural change. For all of this, I am tremendously proud and grateful.

If the last four years have taught us anything, it's that we cannot be passive observers of history. We must never take for granted public health, human rights, and our very democracy. Unless we fight for these principles, we could lose them.

Now is the time to invest in community health and well-being. We must address the inequities that made some people more vulnerable to the health risks and the economic devastation of COVID-19. This is the only way to emerge from this crisis stronger than we were before.

We also need to increase civic engagement in all levels of government and decision-making. This past November, we saw record voter turnout, but those numbers should be higher. We need to end voter suppression and show people why their votes matter. And voting is only one piece of the puzzle.

Now is the time for every-

one to consider how they can best serve their community and their nation, all year round. That doesn't have to mean running for office necessarily; you can make just as much of an impact on your community by reaching out to your neighbor when they need it most, attending a community meeting to offer a fresh perspective, or becoming a positive influence on a young person's life. Our nation needs more people from more backgrounds to share their ideas and their creativity as we work to build back better.

This is a commitment I will carry with me as secretary of labor. As I fight for the rights, protections, and dignity that all working people deserve, I will seek input from people of all backgrounds. I will continually work to become a better and more collaborative leader. I will also bring Boston's values with me. I'll fight for immigrants, for people struggling with addiction, and for young Americans who dream of a better future.

I may be heading to Washington, D.C., but Boston will always be my home, and my heart. I'll be back often, but for now, I'll just share some advice.

To all of Boston's emerging leaders: In every decision you make, think about the impact it will have on the next generation, 10, 20, and 30 years from now. Always put the needs of the most vulnerable people first. Always ask yourself and other people in power, "Does this help everyone, or just the few?" And fight until the answer is everyone. Lifting up working people, and creating better opportunities for those who have the least, is the best way to create positive change. It will be hard; you'll have to make very difficult decisions, and own the outcome, good or bad. A



As Mayor, Martin J. Walsh was known for spending as much time as possible in the Boston communities. Pictured are a few times he was in the Mission Hill area at various events.



true leader learns, grows, and becomes more connected to the community they represent as time goes on.

To the young people of Boston: I honestly believe there is no

limit to what your generation can achieve. I have learned so much from conversations I've had with young students about

*Continued on page 19*



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# EDITORIAL

## The Markey-Warren-AOC Build Green Act is needed

The recent catastrophic winter-weather event in Texas has highlighted the degree to which our national infrastructure (among other things) has fallen victim to the penny-wise and pound-foolish thinking that has dominated our national politics for the past 40 years.

The winter hurricane, as some have labeled it, reportedly will prove to be the most-costly natural disaster in the history of the United States. Both the public utilities and the private companies in Texas did not invest in the types of infrastructure improvements to their plants and facilities that would have allowed them to withstand a weather event that really should not have been all that catastrophic.

Much was made of the wind farms that were knocked out of service, but wind turbines all across the globe exist in far harsher conditions than what occurred in Texas and they do not experience the catastrophic failure that was seen in Texas. Texas simply had not spent the money necessary for the winterization of those turbines.

The damage to the state's infrastructure left millions of Texans and residents of other states without power and clean water, causing billions in damage to individual homes (when their pipes froze), as well as the tragic loss of life that now numbers 111 persons.

In addition, the shutdown of oil refineries and petrochemical plants that were damaged by the storm has created shortages across the country that will drive prices needlessly higher for everybody.

And here's the thing: The winter storm would not have been a big deal in most of the rest of the U.S., where governments and business are prepared for such weather events.

But in Texas, keeping energy costs as low as possible was a priority for state regulators. The end result of not spending a few billion dollars upfront to weatherize the state's power grid resulted in tens of billions of dollars in post-catastrophe costs.

This sort of shortsighted thinking is not confined to Texas, however. The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the vulnerability of our nation to public health emergencies because we have become entirely dependent on foreign manufacturers for all sorts of critical medical supplies, from drugs to masks to mechanical equipment -- all in the name of "efficiency" and "cost-cutting."

Similarly, we have under-invested to such an extent in our roads, bridges, airports, dams, water supplies, and power grids -- everything -- that we have plummeted to the level of a Third World country. We no longer are a world leader --we're a world loser.

Our refusal to acknowledge and address the impending impacts of climate change have set us up for even more catastrophic weather-related events in the near-future. The proverbial "100-year" flood, wildfire, or storm has become commonplace.

The Build Green Act sponsored by our U.S. Senators, Ed Markey and Elizabeth Warren, and House member Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez seeks to remedy the twin problems of our crumbling infrastructure and the looming climate crisis.

The time to take action is running short. Hopefully, elements of the Build Green Act will be included in President Biden's forthcoming national infrastructure plan, which needs to get going as soon as possible.

## PLEASE WRITE...

The Gazette welcomes letters to the editor. Word limit: 500. Deadline: Friday at 5 p.m. one week before publication. Letters may be emailed to [letters@JamaicaPlain-Gazette.com](mailto:letters@JamaicaPlain-Gazette.com). Please include address and telephone number for verification purposes. Anonymous letters will not be published. More information: 617-524-2626



HAPPY EASTER

## Op-Ed

### A renewed vision for Boston Public Schools

By SUPT. BRENDA CASSELLIUS

We've learned a lot since closing our doors in 2020. We've learned that we are stronger and more resilient than we could have imagined. The pandemic spurred a remarkable collective response to support our community and reminded us of the value of our relationships with our students, families, and each other.

The pandemic also forced us to reckon with the deep and systemic challenges that have kept too many of our children from fully realizing their potential. The devastating impact of this year-long crisis, particularly on communities of color, highlighted what we've always known: the Boston Public Schools (BPS) experience is not equitable for all students.

There has never been a stronger economic, moral, and collective imperative to address long-standing and fundamental inequities in BPS. Doing so will require strategy, persistence, and a continuation of the resolve we have shown throughout this past year.

It also requires us return our attention to the roadmap we charted before the onset of the pandemic, when we were on the cusp of deploying a new five-

year Strategic Plan and realizing the \$100 million investment from Mayor Walsh. Now, with additional City investments and new federal stimulus funding, we have the resources to shift our focus to the promises we made to the communities that helped us craft the strategic plan.

We start with better access to high quality early childhood education. Research shows that high quality early education leads to improved outcomes for children, especially children of color and those who come from economic disadvantage. We will expand our high quality early education programming this year

and bring the successful model to more students. We will also expand partnerships through the Universal Pre-Kindergarten Connector program.

A well-rounded education for children in every grade requires whole child support. We have added family liaisons and social workers to every school and are expanding our Hub Schools model to bring additional services to students and families. And every student should have art, music, physical education, civics, science, and outdoor play spaces: fundamental pieces of an excellent education parents

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

## Mission Hill GAZETTE

Circulation 7,000

Published 12 times a year in Jamaica Plain by Independent Newspaper Group

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# Op-Ed

## Pandemic highlights the contributions of immigrants to Massachusetts

By MARCELO M. SUÁREZ-OROZCO

In Massachusetts, immigration is both history and destiny. Immigrants have been shaping the state's economy, politics and culture since the 1700s. The COVID-19 pandemic is illuminating how their contributions will shape the Commonwealth well into the future.

Although they are often invisible, immigrants today represent more than 17 percent of the state's population. In some communities, the number is more than double that. In Revere, immigrants account for 38.7 percent of the population.

At a time when birth rates are declining and our overall population is aging, immigrants are our first line of defense against the deep demographic winter facing the Commonwealth. Over the next 15 years, immigrants

and their U.S.-born children will represent all net labor growth, according to new research from the Migration Policy Institute (MPI).

One area where immigrants play an important role is the state's economy. They account for one in five Massachusetts workers and one in four entrepreneurs, and they contribute \$36.4 billion in consumer spending and \$4.5 billion in state and local taxes every year, according to the American Immigration Council.

Another is the state's higher education system, which is deeply connected to our innovation-based economy. The aforementioned demographic patterns are hurting enrollment and creating an existential crisis for many colleges and universities. The pandemic and its wake of economic destruction is expected to drive down enrollment even

further.

Again, immigrants are providing welcome news. The number of US-born adults with immigrant parents is projected to more than double between 2015 and 2035, and now accounts for 28 percent of all college students. (UMass Boston, home to thousands of immigrant-origin students, plays a unique role in the Commonwealth: most of our students will stay, live and work in Massachusetts after graduation, becoming an integral part of our labor force.)

The pandemic has revealed the extent to which immigrants form the backbone of our health care system. If you are being treated for COVID-19 in the U.S., there is a nearly one in three chance that you will be seen by

an immigrant physician, according to MPI. If you or a loved one needs a home health aide, there is a 40 percent chance that person will be an immigrant. One in six nurses working on the front lines is an immigrant, according to the Brookings Institution.

Even before the pandemic, immigrants were filling essential jobs that support every facet of our existence. They care for the sick, people with disabilities, older adults, children and babies. They deliver our food and work in our factories and warehouses and throughout the supply chain. They teach our children and make our higher education system the envy of the world: since 2000 they have been awarded nearly 40 percent of the Nobel Prizes won by Amer-

icans in Chemistry, Medicine and Physics.

And they are doing all of this despite numerous obstacles, from disproportionately high rates of COVID-19 infections and deaths to xenophobic and racist rhetoric coming from some quarters of society.

The data shows that when given the chance, immigrants take up an American identity, gravitate toward cultural norms and embrace the English language – and improve the levels of education, occupational diversity and income in their communities.

That's good for them – and everyone else. After all, their future is our future.

*Marcelo M. Suárez-Orozco is Chancellor of UMass Boston and an immigrant from Argentina.*

## Op-Ed

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have been asking for years. We will tap our federal funding to invest in access.

Every student also deserves a great teacher in every classroom; teachers who receive the right mix of support and resources that allows them to address the unique needs of each of their students. Our plan includes continued efforts to recruit and retain more educators of color and investments in curriculum and continuing education for our educators.

Students and families deserve predictable educational pathways that start in K0 and continue through high school. We are reviewing grade configurations to limit transitions for students and investing in all of Boston's comprehensive high schools to offer opportunities in rigorous academics, athletics, arts, and co-curricular programming. We are focused on preparing students for the challenges of higher education and a competitive workforce by partnering with local businesses. By connecting them with internships, apprenticeships, and industry experience, students can see their own potential and build a path to a brighter future.

In order to successfully realize this vision, we first need to

do big things in the immediate future: launch enriching summer programming, bring students safely back to full-time in-person learning in September, and welcome them joyfully as they walk through our doors. We will partner with students to recover what might have been lost by helping them rediscover their innate love of learning, fostering steady and supportive relationships, and focusing on academic recovery.

Dealing with the toll of the last year beckons us to reimagine the possibilities we created while developing our community-informed strategic plan: a school district where every child has the opportunity to achieve their dreams. A district where every school, in every neighborhood, in every part of the city is equipped to help every student unlock their unlimited potential.

The pandemic disrupted almost everything we know and hold dear. It lifted up with new clarity the disparities that have persisted in our schools and our communities for far too long. But it also reminded us all what is the best of Boston: our shared faith and determination that working together, we can do big things. That together, we will always rise.

*Brenda Cassellius is the Boston Public Schools Superintendent.*

## Main Streets

*Continued from page 16*

us. The official Grand Opening is on Monday, April 19th at 2:00pm – stop by and check out the “new” building.

Strolling through the neighborhood, you probably noticed several benches at various locations in Mission Hill that we installed two years ago. Many had individual plaques that were

dedicated to those who made a positive impact on our neighborhood like the one in front Mission Church honoring Father Dabney. In May, friends of Janice Dungee will be honoring her memory with a small ceremony and a plaque that reads “Always In Our Hearts.” MHMS will be dedicating another bench later this summer and we hope to do more of these in the future. If you are interested in more information, please email me at mainstreet-

sellenwalker@gmail.com.

Until next month, please be safe, practice social distancing and wash your hands.

*“You are never really playing an opponent. You are playing yourself, your own highest standards, and when you reach your limits, that is real joy.”*

~Arthur Ashe, U.S. Tennis Champion and the first African-American to win the singles title at Wimbledon, US Open and Australian Open.

## Walsh

*Continued from page 17*

racial justice, climate action, LGBTQ rights, workers' rights, and more. You have helped me grow as a leader and as a member of the community. You are the most passionate generation I've ever seen, and you're challenging old notions of identity and societal roles. You have the power to change the world for the better. Focus on your education; trust your ability to make a difference; and be kind to yourself if you make mistakes or if life doesn't go according to plan. I'm proof that there are many paths to success. Don't let anyone tell you different.

Despite how difficult the past year has been, it also showed us how fast things can change, for better or for worse. Right now, we have an opportunity to enact swift, powerful, and positive

change. The more people who are empowered to contribute, the more successful our recovery from COVID-19 will be. So this is my call to all Bostonians to consider how you will get involved in your community. Just as important, think about how you will encourage and empower others to get involved too. You can make a difference, so don't hesitate. Just take it one day at

a time.

The challenges before us at a national level are enormous. But Boston has taught me that nothing is impossible if we work together and open the door for more people to get involved.

From the bottom of my heart, Boston, thank you.

*Martin J. Walsh is the former Mayor of Boston and the new U.S. Secretary of Labor.*

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# Former Mayor Walsh sworn in as Labor Secretary by Vice President Harris

BY SETH DANIEL

Last Thursday, former Mayor Martin Walsh was sworn in as the 29th U.S. Secretary of Labor – and the first secretary that is also a member of a trade union – with Vice President Kamala Harris administering the Oath.

Walsh gave a short speech following the swearing in and told of his personal story and how it would shape his priorities going forward as the new Labor Secretary.

“I thought about my mother and father, who emigrated from Ireland in the 1950s,” he said. “They both worked hard, but our American Dream did not take shape until my father joined the Laborers Union Local 223 in Boston. The union was our way into the middle class. It meant a fair wage, so we could have a home and give back to our community. It meant safety on the job, so we didn’t have to live in fear of an accident derailing our lives. It



Former Mayor Martin Walsh was sworn in as the 29th U.S. Secretary of Labor on March 25 by Vice President Kamala Harris, as his partner Lorri Higgins looks on. He outlined five areas he will focus on that were shaped by his time in Boston.

meant a pension, so my parents could retire with dignity. And it meant health insurance, so our family had access to quality

care.”

Walsh said he followed his father into the trade unions, joined the same union and worked on job sites all over Boston. He not-

ed that it was this union that provided him his first job, but it was also that union that provided health insurance so he could be treated for cancer as a child, and for alcoholism recovery as a young adult.

“In my 20s, because of the same benefits that enabled my cancer treatment as a child, I was able to seek treatment for my alcoholism,” he said. “I am a proud member of the recovery community.”

Those personal details were something that Walsh indicated would shape his policy objectives as he moves into his new role. His five objectives laid out in the speech include:

- Ensuring all workers have fair pay, health care, unemployment benefits, safe workplaces and a secure retirement.
- Ensuring equal access to good jobs.
- Ensuring workers have a seat at the table in shaping workplace conditions and policies.

• Bolstering career education and job training.

• Increasing access to mental health and substance use treatment.

“These are not just policies to me — these are real, tangible needs for millions of Americans and I will continue fighting for them as I begin this new role,” he said, noting that record numbers of Americans are seeking unemployment benefits, vaccine rollout is still underway and so many continue to suffer from the pandemic.

“I believe we must act with urgency to meet this moment, to strengthen and empower our workforce as we rebuild,” he said. As secretary, I pledge to work in partnership with workers and businesses; states, cities and tribal territories; employees in every agency of the Department of Labor; and President Biden and Vice President Harris to help working families build back better.”

## Northeastern Seeking Nominations for the Neighbors Uplifting Neighbors Award



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