

SENIOR LIFE SPECIAL SECTION, PGS 4-5

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APRIL 5, 2024 — MAY 2, 2024



Mayor Michelle Wu joined residents and community leaders in the West End on April 2 for a signing of a new ordinance creating a City Planning Department.

Wu marks creation of new city planning department at West End ceremony

BY GAZETTE STAFF

Standing behind the Last Tenement at 42 Lomasney Way – the only historic building from the old West End to survive urban renewal in that neighborhood – Mayor Michelle Wu signed an ordinance on Tuesday, April 2, which will allow for the creation new planning department in the City of Boston for the first time in 70 years.

The ordinance restores planning as a core function of Boston

city government, ensuring its inclusion in the city's budget and allowing for the transfer of current staff from the Boston Planning & Development Agency to the new planning department.

"Today we mark a long-overdue new chapter in Boston's growth—grounded in affordability, resiliency, and equity," said Mayor Wu. "This ordinance is the biggest step Boston has taken in 70 years to finally begin untangling a system of development rooted in an outdated ideology

that left scars in our communities. I look forward to the work ahead with all of our residents to engage with this new Planning Department and shape Boston's future."

Similarly, Arthur Jemison, the city's chief of planning, said, "Today marks an important step in our work to truly transform planning and development in Boston and ensure we are speaking to residents with one voice as

Continued on page 7

Community gets a victory in Benjamin saga

BY MICHAEL COUGHLIN JR.

Over the last week or so, the fight to keep the Edgar P. Benjamin Healthcare Center from shutting down has ramped up, and on Wednesday afternoon, those wanting to see the facility's doors stay open may have gotten a glimmer of hope.

The Benjamin, a non-profit skilled nursing and rehabilitation center located in Mission Hill, which has been serving residents since 1927, has been in danger of shutting down since February when Tony Francis, the facility's Executive Director and Administrator at the time,

filed a Notice of Intent to Close with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

Francis has been under fire recently for reports, most notably from Boston 25 News, about alleged issues at the facility — https://www.boston25news.com/news/local/cryptocurrency-payroll-loans-covid-19-funds-25-investigates-probes-boston-nursing-homes-finances/KF3GYFF-3DJHKLNAX2C7VYPORYM/.

The Notice of Intent to Close document, dated February 13th, cites "persistent financial challenges, which were exacerbated

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CAMH hosts Durkan for moderated discussion

BY MICHAEL COUGHLIN JR.

At its monthly meeting in March, the Community Alliance of Mission Hill (CAMH) had a special guest: City Councilor Sharon Durkan, who participated in a moderated discussion with the group that touched on several important topics in the community.

As part of the discussion, the moderators explained that a list of questions was organized to ask Durkan and some of these topics

included constituent services and development.

To begin the discussion, Durkan introduced her team and said she was honored to attend the meeting. "I think a lot of conversation needs to take place," she said.

Before taking questions, Durkan discussed the decision to pause Mission Hill's Problem Properties Task Force.

Durkan acknowledged the

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Email stephen.quigley@reverejournal.com or patricia@jamaicaplaingazette.com or call 781-485-0588 for your Mission Hill information

Councilor Flynn holds budget listening session

With the new budget season starting in April, Councilor Ed Flynn hosted a virtual listening session earlier this week with leaders of Downtown, Chinatown, Leather District, Bay Village and South End to discuss budget priorities for each neighborhood. Every year, Councilor

Flynn holds these budget listening sessions with civic leaders, and this year's meeting was held in partnership with Councilor Brian Worrell, Chair of the Ways and Means Committee.

During the discussion, civic leaders across different neighborhoods brought up similar

budget priorities, including more resources dedicated to pest control, trash storage and pick up, traffic and construction-related enforcement, sidewalk repair and improvements, and more investments for our parks, open spaces, and trees.

"We had a very productive

budget listening session last night with Councilor Worrell and our respected civic leaders across Downtown, Chinatown, Leather District, and the South End," said Councilor Flynn. "I would like to thank all those who attended and advocated for their neighborhoods. Regardless of the

neighborhood, our residents all share common budget priorities; that is to see more services and resources dedicated to pest control, trash pick up, both traffic and ISD enforcement, sidewalk repairs, and investments in our public spaces and parks."

Benjamin saga

Continued from page 1

during the COVID-19 pandemic," as reasons for the potential closure.

The decision to initiate the closure process has been met with staunch criticism and anger from residents and workers at the facility, those with loved ones living at the center, and elected officials who are doing everything within their power to keep the Benjamin open.

Late last week, a petition was filed in Suffolk Superior Court, "asking for the immediate appointment of a receiver to take over management of the facility, to avoid imminent harm to patients," according to Lawyers for Civil Rights' website, the entity which filed the petition on behalf of families of residents at the Benjamin.

According to the website mentioned above, the petition cites "Critical management failures, staff shortages, inadequate sup-

plies, and patient deterioration" as reasons why the appointment of a receiver was necessary.

Fast forward to Wednesday, and a judge ordered the appointment of a receiver, Attorney Joseph D. Feaster, Jr of Dain, Torpy, Le Ray, Wiest & Garner, P.C.

In response to the decision, State Senator Liz Miranda made a statement on her Facebook page, writing, "While we are still learning what that means and planning for next steps, this is a huge milestone for the preservation of health and safety of our seniors and staff at the Benjamin."

The petition and subsequent ruling come off the heels of a hearing held last week that gave the community and elected officials an opportunity to provide comments to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, who were set to rule on the closure plan initiated by Francis.

Moreover, at this public hearing, Francis was also able to give his perspective on the potential

closure.

Francis began his testimony by providing background information and speaking about how the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services rated the facility four stars.

However, he also spoke about the cost of running a facility like the Benjamin and how devastating COVID was for the facility, saying, "Frankly, things have never been the same since."

Francis went on to call the current economic climate for long-term care the worst he has seen as an Administrator.

Ultimately, he said, "The continued operation of the Benjamin is simply not sustainable," citing the strong competition for hiring staff. Later, he added, "It is with great sadness that we must accept reality that we simply cannot continue to operate our skilled nursing facility."

The Mission Hill Gazette reached out to Francis, requesting comment about the petition filed before the judge's ruling, and received a response Wednes-

day morning from Ball Consulting Group LLC, who is handling the facility's media relations and referred the Gazette to Francis' testimony given at the hearing.

The Gazette contacted Ball Consulting Group LLC again Wednesday evening to inquire about potential comments concerning the judge's ruling on the petition and was told the facility has "not formally received a judgment yet" and had no further comment.

Following Francis' testimony at the hearing, a plethora of elected officials, including Miranda, State Representative Sam Montano, and City Councilors Henry Santana and Ben Weber, made it clear that they stood with their constituents.

"I just want to make sure that folks know that this is one situation in our community that we are all standing in unity," said Miranda, adding that they rejected the closure plan.

Along with the comments from elected officials, residents of the Benjamin, staff, or those who have family members or friends who are residents provided testimony at the hearing detailing how troubling this situation has been for the community.

A resident of the Benjamin who said she was visually impaired questioned why residents would be removed from the facility and said, "The director failed to do his job, and he fired us. Does this make any sense to you?"

Later, adding, "In the name of the founder of the place, in the name of the community, in the name of the residents and workers, we declare Mr. Tony Francis a persona non grata."

Another attendee who said she was speaking on behalf of her niece, who was transferred to the Benjamin, talked about the difficulty of advocating for loved ones when they are far away and her own experience of getting her niece into a facility in Boston, which took years.

"If the Benjamin closes, I don't know where she's going to go," said the attendee. Later, she added that her niece could end up at another facility hours

of Public Health and anyone with the authority to keep the Benjamin open.

Another attendee, who has a son at the Benjamin, had similar concerns. "My son has good communication with mostly everybody at the Benjamin. They know him by name, and he knows them by name, and they're good to him, and they love him, and I am a mother that is going on 80 years old," she said.

"I am concerned not only about my child but I am concerned about everyone's — all of those residents in the Benjamin. They are going to become homeless unless something is done," she added.

Staff members also opposed the closure. One staff member who has worked at the facility for 24 years emphatically stated she stood against Francis, saying that she and other staff members came to work despite pay delays and other issues.

She spoke about how staff members are standing with and advocating for residents, saying, "We are the voice. As a group, we have reached out to every entity to help us."

"The elderly are our most vulnerable population. If anybody has a mother, a father, a brother or sister — this could be you — this could be the predicament that you end up in."

As the hearing progressed, speakers continued to provide testimony for around two hours. At the end of the hearing, a representative from the Department of Public Health indicated that a decision would be made on the closure 14 days after the hearing — April 9th — which was initially confirmed Monday in an email from the department.

Regarding how Wednesday's ruling on the petition affects the Department of Public Health's decision, an emailed statement from the department said, "The Department of Public Health is in the process of reviewing the court order to determine how the appointment of a receiver may impact the closure process."



WIT 2024-2034 IMP Task Force Meeting

APRIL

16

6:00PM - 8:00PM

Zoom Link: bit.ly/3x7HHSU

Toll Free: (833) 568 - 8864

Meeting ID: 161 140 8731



Project Proponent:
Wentworth Institute of Technology

Project Description:

The BPDA is hosting a virtual Public meeting to discuss the recently filed 2024-2034 Wentworth Institute of Technology Institutional Master Plan ("IMP"). The purpose of the meeting is to provide an overview of IMP, the potential projects listed within the IMP, and discuss potential impacts and mitigation. The meeting will include a presentation followed by questions and comments from the Task Force.

Please note that the purpose of this meeting is different from that of a traditional community meeting. As part of the development review process, Task Force members work closely with BPDA staff to identify the impacts of a project and recommend appropriate community benefits to offset those impacts. Task Force meetings prioritize discussion between the project proponent (i.e. the developer) and Task Force members.

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Close of Public Comment Period:
4/30/2024

Website
bit.ly/BPDA-WIT

BostonPlans.org | [@BostonPlans](https://twitter.com/BostonPlans)

Teresa Polhemus, Executive Director/Secretary

Party in the Park luncheon set for May 15

STAFF REPORT

The Emerald Necklace Conservancy announces that the 20th Anniversary of Party in the Park, the city's beloved annual luncheon to raise awareness and funds for the Emerald Necklace parks, will take place on Wednesday, May 15, 2024 at Franklin Park. All proceeds from the fundraiser support the 1,100-acre park system that serves as a backyard for residents and a destination for more than one million park users each year. The Conservancy stewards the Emerald Necklace through advocacy, maintenance and restoration, education, access improvements, public programs and the promotion of park stewardship through youth education and volunteer programs.

Party in the Park will feature the presentation of the Liff Spirit Award to former Massachusetts House of Representative Byron Rushing and activist and community organizer Frieda Garcia. Over the decades, their extensive work organizing communities, speaking up for those in need, and advocating for racial justice make them exemplars of public and civic service. The award is named in honor of the late Boston Parks Commissioner Justine Mee Liff, who served from 1996 until her passing in 2002. Party

in the Park benefits the Emerald Necklace Conservancy and continues Liff's legacy of bringing people together to support and champion these vital urban green spaces.

Founded in 2003, Party in the Park attracts the area's most generous greenspace supporters and civic leaders for a stylish tented luncheon in the Emerald Necklace. Guests don their finest millinery at this "must-attend" fundraiser to herald the coming of spring to Boston. For the upcoming fundraiser, table sponsorships and tickets are now available.

"This will be the 20th Anniversary of Party in the Park, marking a milestone year. We're looking forward to welcoming public park supporters to help raise funds for the vital work the Emerald Necklace Conservancy does to maintain Boston's largest park system," shared Alex Ablon, Caroline Balz, Gabi Crimaldi and Georgia Lee, Co-Chairs of the 2024 Party in the Park.

"Party in the Park is our signature fundraising event which funds essential tree care and capital projects in 1,100 acres of parks," noted Karen Mauney-Brodek, President of the Emerald Necklace Conservancy. "It also supports our education programs, free public programming, resources for park users, advoca-

cy efforts and special initiatives. We are extremely proud of the work the Conservancy has done for the past 25 years to steward and improve the Emerald Neck-

lace, connecting all Bostonians and visitors alike over a dozen neighborhoods stretching from Dorchester to the Back Bay, and to be honouring Byron Rushing

and Frieda Garcia with the Liff Spirit Award this year."

For more information and tickets, visit www.emeraldnecklace.org/party-in-the-park.

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 Pastor, Total Health Christian Ministries

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The Sherrill House continues to make strides for seniors

By MICHAEL COUGHLIN JR.

The Sherrill House, which has supported older adults in the community for over 100 years, is enhancing its care through new and upcoming amenities.

The “not-for-profit skilled nursing and rehabilitation center”—as described by the facility’s website—is located on South Huntington Avenue and cares for about 170 older adults daily through several services.

The facility, which has different floors that provide long-term care, short-term rehabilitation, and memory care, has recently added to its services to better assist its patients and residents.

For example, this past fall, the Sherrill House completed the construction of 16 new pri-

vate rooms and one semi-private room.

Furthermore, a new sensory room in the memory care unit has been built, which anyone in the facility can use. Although the sensory unit has some more equipment slated to come in, it is currently in use and helping patients and residents.

Moreover, back in 2022, Sherrill House launched Longwood Hospice, which provides hospice care through an in-house team.

Longwood Hospice allows those being cared for and their families to be familiar and comfortable with a full on-site staff instead of an outside agency.

In addition to the recently added services mentioned above, Sherrill House is looking to provide more in the future.

Over the next few weeks, the construction of a brand-new dialysis den will be complete, an amenity that will not only make treatment more accessible but also help quell the healthcare crisis induced by the COVID pandemic.

Patients in need of dialysis treatment often need to be transported by ambulance to hospitals multiple times over the course of a day and week.

Due to the impacts of COVID on the healthcare industry, Sherrill House had observed a challenge in that it was becoming increasingly difficult to pre-schedule the ambulance rides.

Essentially, the challenge caused patients to sit around and wait for ambulance rides without drop-off or pick-up times.

The new den will allow patients to avoid spending long periods in lobbies and waiting rooms before and after treatment while escaping the ambulance wait times. It will also increase access to dialysis care, which will, in turn, open up more beds in hospitals.

The dialysis den, which was made possible through fundraising and a partnership with DaVita Kidney Care, is slated to begin taking patients in May.

While the dialysis den is slated to be added to the facility soon, Sherrill House also has other plans for the years ahead.

Specifically, fundraising is underway for the construction of a new rehab gym. While Sherrill House currently has a gym on its ground floor, a new gym on

the fifth floor, which would be larger, have updated state-of-the-art equipment, and feature incredible views of the Emerald Necklace and Jamaica Pond, is in the works.

Also, after the new rehab gym, which is projected to be completed in 2025, plans are to build a new staff cafeteria and wellness center.

For those interested in supporting Sherrill House’s fundraising efforts, email Bethany Allen, Sherrill House’s Director of Development, at ballen@sherrillhouse.org.

Additionally, for those who would like more information about the facility’s admission process or want a tour, call 617-735-1775 or email admissions@sherrillhouse.org.

Six long-term care myths that could impact your retirement

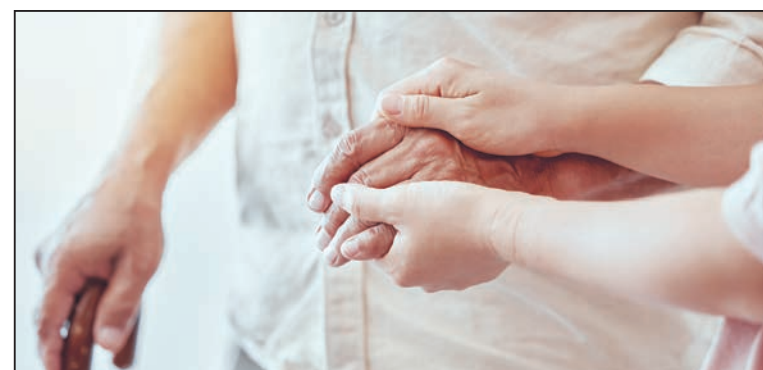
(StatePoint) When it comes to planning their retirement, most people will rely upon their savings, 401(k)s and other forms of income to provide the security they will need for that phase of life.

However, many don’t consider a crucial need for their later years: long-term care insurance.

In fact, a recent Forbes study revealed only about one-quarter of adults nearing retirement have seriously considered getting long-

term care insurance or a savings account dedicated to long-term care expenses.

Further, many consumers mistakenly think their health insurance or Medicaid will cover various aspects of long-term care



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services when that might not be the case. In a LIMRA study, 29% of respondents said they believe they own some form of stand-alone long-term care insurance coverage or combination life/long-term care insurance coverage. The data shows long-term care ownership is closer to 3.1%.

So why are Americans neglect-

ing this aspect of financial planning? For many, common misconceptions are preventing them from being prepared. Here are six myths about long-term care and the truth you might not know from Bankers Life, a national life

Continued on page 5



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Nine ways to support mental wellness

(Statepoint) As people age, maintaining mental health becomes increasingly important. Here are nine ways to support mental wellness:

1) **Nutrition:** Adopt a plant-based diet with plenty of green, leafy vegetables.

2) **Exercise:** Regular physical activity can positively impact cognitive ability.

3) **Hydration:** Drink plenty of water to maintain cognitive performance.

4) **Sunshine:** Get sunlight to boost vitamin D levels and com-

bat Seasonal Affective Disorder.

5) **Rest:** Aim for seven to nine hours of sleep per night to reduce dementia risk.

6) **Avoid Harmful Substances:** Stay away from drugs and alcohol, as they can worsen mental health.

7) **Hobbies:** Engage in activities like gardening and puzzles to improve memory and mental health.

8) **Socialize:** Stay connected with friends and family to avoid isolation and depression.

9) **Seek Help:** Don't hesitate to

reach out to medical professionals or mental health services if needed.

By incorporating these practices into your daily routine, you can enhance your overall well-being and reduce the risk of depression and dementia.

Retirement

Continued from page 4

and health insurance brand.

Myth #1: I won't need long-term care.

Reality: Needing help with such daily activities as eating, bathing, dressing, toileting and continence, among others, may seem like an unlikely scenario. However, about 70% of people aged 65 and older will need some type of long-term care during their lifetime, according to the Department of Health and Human Services.

Myth #2: My family will take

care of me.

Reality: Physical, financial and geographical limitations prevent many people from caring for their aging relatives, even if they intended to. That's why it's important to be prepared to pay for the long-term care you may need some day.

Myth #3: Medicare will cover my long-term care.

Reality: Medicare is designed to cover acute care, or the care you need when you're sick and will eventually recover from an illness. It doesn't cover ongoing Activities of Daily Living services when those are the only care you need.

Long-term care insurance is designed to help cover ongoing custodial care services, which includes assistance with dressing, bathing, eating or other Activities of Daily Living.

Myth #4: I'll use my Social Security benefits to pay for long-term care.

Reality: Long-term care is expensive, with homemaker services costing \$163 per day on average and a semi-private room in a nursing home costing \$260 per day on average, according to SeniorLiving.org. Even the maximum monthly Social Security benefit of \$3,6275 won't cover these amounts.

Myth #5: Nursing homes are the only option.

Reality: When you hear "long-term care," you may immediately think "nursing home," but today there are a wide variety of services available that you may receive at a facility, in the community or in the comfort of your own home.

Owning long-term care insurance can help ensure you receive the care you need on your terms—where and how you want it.

Myth #6: I will get long-term care insurance later, when I need it.

Reality: Qualifying for long-term care insurance coverage af-

ter you're diagnosed with an illness is difficult. Applying for long-term care insurance at a younger age helps you qualify for coverage and lock in lower premiums. For this reason, many people purchase long-term care insurance in their 50s when they're still in good health.

For more information on long-term care insurance, reach out to a Bankers Life agent, or visit bankerslife.com.

By incorporating long-term care insurance into your retirement plans, you can help prepare yourself for a comfortable future, come what may.

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"I've been to other facilities and Sherrill House is the best. I've been here three times and will only come here when I need it. The rooms are big and clean, the food is great, and the staff truly care."
- Clare, Rehab Patient



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LOVE YOUR BLOCK

Boston gears up for neighborhood cleanups this weekend

SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE

Neighborhood cleanups are planned for this weekend in April in several neighborhoods.

“Love your Block cleanups are a perfect way to enjoy the upcoming spring weather while helping your local community look vibrant and clean,” said Mayor Michelle Wu. “The City is proud to help supply the tools to host group cleanups and assist individuals in finding a Love Your Block volunteer opportunity near them.”

Cleanups will take place in every neighborhood of Boston over the course of three weekends.

Saturday, April 6: Allston/Brighton, Back Bay/Beacon Hill, Fenway/Kenmore, Mission Hill, South Boston, West Roxbury.

The Love Your Block program was first created in 2015 with

a three-year grant awarded to the City of Boston by Cities of Service. After the grant's expiration in 2018, Love Your Block became a permanent City program under the Mayor's Office of Civic Organizing (within the Community Engagement Cabinet). This year, OCO will partner with Boston Public Library and Boston Centers for Youth & Families who will serve as host sites for community members to pick up and drop off cleanup tools. All sites are listed on the Love Your Block sign up form. Tool collection is scheduled from 9:00-10:00 a.m., with returns to the same location between 12-2 p.m.

“Having served as East Boston's liaison, I've seen the transformative power of this initiative firsthand,” said Director of Civic Organizing Nathalia Benitez-Perez. “Love Your Block empowers residents to take charge of their community's well-being through collective action and beautification efforts. I'm thrilled to carry forward this tradition of fostering empowerment and unity.”

In past Love Your Block cleanups, neighborhood groups have picked up litter from streets and sidewalks, beautified local parks, cleaned up vacant lots, urban wilds, and more. For tips on how to plan and host a cleanup

in your neighborhood, OCO has created a helpful guide.

“In 2022, fourteen volunteers from Prospect Hill and Mt. Hope neighborhoods of Roslindale turned out to clean up the pedestrian walkways of the Blakemore Street Bridge,” said Friends of Blakemore Bridge Co-Founder Meri Bond. “By the end of the day not only had they removed the leaves, litter, bottles and nips that had been accumulating along the Bridge for years, they had enjoyed meeting one another and working together for a common purpose.”

The Office of Civic Organizing will provide volunteers with cleanup tools including trash bags, gloves, brooms, rakes, trash pickers, and a Love Your Block t-shirt. Hosts leading a cleanup can request tools until Friday, March 22 at 5:00 p.m.

“Love Your Block is an event that I look forward to the Mayor's Office of Civic Organizing leading every year,” said Brianna Millor, Chief of the Community Engagement Cabinet. “This is an effort for our Cabinet alongside Boston residents, community leaders, and volunteers to beautify every Boston neighborhood together. I look forward to seeing everyone in April to keep our neighborhoods clean.”



This year, we'll allow Poppy to enjoy the security of her little den on wheels and bring her on more adventures.

CITY PAWS

Dog Dates

BY PENNY CHERUBINO

April is an excellent time to make plans for the warm season ahead. We suggest you pull out your calendar and add the note “Dog Day!” to a few of your upcoming days off. Consider these as commitments to give your pals adventures that will make them quiver with excitement from nose to tail.

For time off from work that includes travel, list what you must do to take your pal with you or arrange for care while you're away.

Finally, if you have a sociable group of dog-walking friends, ask if anyone would like to share your adventure. Our anxious little Poppy is often happier outside if she has dogs she knows nearby.

Some adventures could be serendipitous. We all routinely plan average days around our dog's needs, routines, likes, and dislikes. We ask ourselves, “Where am I going today? Can the dog come with me?” Occasionally, on a beautiful day, ask yourself, “Do I have time today for a longer walk to a dog park or a day trip to a favorite spot?”

Local Adventures

If time off allows for a day trip, create a doggie bucket list of what you might do, weather permitting.

The state has a webpage covering places and times to enjoy

state facilities with your dog. An internet search for “Dogs in DCR Parks” will find that information. Unfortunately, state beaches begin dog restrictions on April 1st. However, you'll find other places along the shore open to families with dogs.

Another fantastic resource for places to take your dog is the Trustees of Reservations. Visit their website (<https://thetrustees.org/>) and search for “dogs allowed.” Our results included 77 properties where you could bring your dog. Each place's “rules and regulations” tell you if dogs are allowed on or off leashes.

We plan to visit the Trustees deCordova Sculpture Park with friends this year. While the museum's interior is closed for renovations, the grounds welcome visitors with dogs. You may have to make a timed reservation; you can do that on the park's website.

Wagons and Strollers Expand Possibilities

If your dog is older, unable to walk as far as you want, or has a medical issue that could curtail your plans, consider a pet stroller or wagon.

Wagons are suitable for larger dogs. Today, you can choose collapsible ones that are easy to store. You can also use these for shopping, picnics, concerts, or other times when you need to



Brendan Behan Pub
378A Centre Street
Jamaica Plain



WIT 2024-2034 IMP Public Meeting

APRIL

24

6:00PM - 8:00PM

Zoom Link: bit.ly/3vomgMU

Toll Free: (833) 568 - 8864

Meeting ID: 161 064 6619



Project Proponent:

Wentworth Institute of Technology

Project Description:

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mail to: **Nick Carter**
Boston Planning & Development Agency
One City Hall Square, 9th Floor
Boston, MA 02201
phone: 617.918.5303
email: nick.carter@boston.gov

Close of Public Comment Period:
4/30/2024
Website
bit.ly/BPDA-WIT

BostonPlans.org | @BostonPlans

Teresa Polhemus, Executive Director/Secretary

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What's Happening on Main Streets

BY COURTNEY WRIGHT
SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE

Happy April, Mission Hill! There is a lot happening this month in the neighborhood and many exciting opportunities to come together in community as the weather (hopefully) gets nicer this spring. It's hard to believe the Boston Marathon is already less than two weeks away! If you get a chance, wish luck to Mission Grammar School's Mr. Morris who will be running "Miles for Mission" this year to support the school. Good luck!

This Sunday, April 7th, Mission Hill Main Streets is partnering with Northeastern University's office of Off campus engagement and support to do street and sidewalk cleaning along the business corridor from Roxbury Crossing on Tremont St down to South Huntington. The City's Love Your Block neighborhood cleanup is scheduled for Saturday but due to weather concerns, we pushed it back a day to take advantage of better weather. We anticipate that this will be one of many days of service of this variety in the coming months.

In other Main Streets news, to increase the ways that we are able help to promote our local businesses and their programming/specials/events, we have added a feature to our website, missionhillmainstreet.com. The addition of the "PROMOTE" button, allows businesses to send us information and graphics/flyers that they would like to be promoted out through social media, newsletters and other ways we engage with our constituencies, including this monthly gazette

piece. It is our hope that this will create a steady flow of useful information for those coming to Mission Hill to enjoy our business and commercial district and for those who live here to keep a pulse on what's new and exciting.

While on the topic- there are some new and exciting updates to share regarding our wonderful establishments rolling out this month. On Saturday, April 20th, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. (rain or shine) Celebrate Earth Day with Boston Building Resources at their 100 Terrace St location! The free, family-friendly event will include the following:

- A plant exchange organized by The Trustees of Reservations. Seeds, seedlings, bulbs, and rhizomes can be donated and/or taken for free.
- Food fresh from the grill
- Live music from the Mighty Silverbacks starting at 12:00 noon.
- Meet with EnergySage and Homeworks to learn more about efficiency in your home.

Also happening on April 20th, is the return of "Tulips and Tequila" at Yellow Door Taqueria. Come for brunch and stay for class! Learn the art of floral arranging with beautiful tulips and spring flowers while sipping on a complimentary YDT Signature Margarita. Jennifer, owner of McCabe Gardens & Floral Design will guide you through creating your own stunning floral masterpiece. No experience necessary, just bring your creativity! Vase, flowers, tools, and 1 margarita are included in the cost of the ticket. I personally attended the first "Tulips and Tequila" event and loved it. Tickets avail-

able at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/tulips-tequila-floral-arranging-class-with-mc-cabe-gardens-ydt-mission-tickets-870539546217>. Yellow Door has also released a new spring menu! Come check out their newest cocktails and menu options-including their new "Shuck it Sundays" with \$1 oysters every Sunday from 4 p.m.-close, while supplies last.



In case you missed it in March, Cilantro Latin Kitchen has rebranded and is now Merengue Express! Their new menu features their most popular items such as mofongo, mangu, chicharrones, steak merengue, plantains, and more from their immensely popular original Merengue location in Roxbury. Go check them out at 1415 Tremont street.

More restaurant specials this month:

Penguin Pizza: \$5 lunch specials, Mon-Fri 11-3 pm; ½ priced apps, Mon-Thurs 3-5 pm; 50 cent wings on Mondays; \$2 tacos on Tuesdays and Trivia on Wednesdays beginning at 6 pm

Mission Bar and Grill: check out their weekly lunch and din-

ner specials- created weekly by the chef; new spring cocktails are now on the menu as well!

Lilly's Gourmet Pasta: in addition to their daily pasta specials, they've added a cold case to the store that allows for more grab and go options- thanks Matt!

As our restaurants get ready for May and outdoor dining season, others are gearing up for baseball season. Mission Hill Little League is chartered for their 71st season and will be holding their Opening Day event again this year at McLaughlin Field at 11 a.m. on Saturday, April 27th. Mission Hill Little League is FREE this season and looking for youth to join their ranks! Registration for the 2024 season is now live on the website: missionhill-littleleague.org. Come out and support our youth and their fearless leader Dan Weldon, who has been working hard this offseason to grow the league (and their supply shed). After the Opening Day celebration, there will be space reserved from 4-5:30 p.m. at the Puddingstone Tavern for everyone



to come together and celebrate the kick-off. Dan would also like to use the opportunity to thank all of those who have contributed gloves, bats, balls, cleats, etc. to their community equipment shed. The outpouring of donations received this year was beyond what was expected, and they'd like to provide a place to share their gratitude. Stop by if you can! If you have any questions about registration or the league in general, please contact Dan Weldon at missionhill.littleleague@gmail.com

Finally, please save Save the Date for the third annual MHMS/MFA/Mission Hill Artists Collective Juneteenth event at the MFA. On Wednesday, June 19th, the Mission Hill Artists Collective will, for the third year in a row, be celebrating local Mission Hill artists at the Museum of Fine Arts free community celebration with the support of Mission Hill Main Streets. This year, the MHArtists Collective has been asked to participate in "Juneteenth!" Please join us in the Atrium between 10:00am and 3:00pm to view the artwork of LeShonda Zene, Aminata Dakowa, Zahira Nurtruth, and Michelle Zene. Enjoy an array of paintings, fabric creations, fluid art of handcrafted paper items, resin and more. More details to follow! If you want me to feature your specials or any business news, please use the "Promote" form on missionhillmainstreet.com and I will be in touch. I look forward to seeing you all out and about this month.

City Planning

Continued from page 1

the City of Boston. Under Mayor Wu's leadership, I'm looking forward to establishing a Planning Department that can tackle Boston's greatest challenges and plan for a City that is more resilient, affordable, and equitable."

Besides creating the new department, as well as a pathway for the transfer of staff, the ordinance codifies the purpose of the department as "creating comprehensive plans for Boston's built environment, a predictable zoning code and development



Mayor's Office Photos by Jeremiah Robinson
District 8 City Councilor
Sharon Durkun.



Arthur Jemison, the city's
chief of planning.

process, urban design standards, and planning for the best use of publicly owned land," according to a press release from the city.

The ordinance also formalizes the financial transfer between the City and BPDA so that the

move will be cost-neutral to the city's taxpayers. The ordinance, which was filed by Mayor Wu in January, was formally approved by the City Council on Wednesday, March 27.

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@JamaicaPlainGazette.com.

Please include address and telephone number for verification purposes. Anonymous letters will not be published. More information: 617-524-7662

FRESH AND LOCAL

Switch it up!

BY PENNY & ED CHERUBINO

Wikipedia divides the lettuce world into six cultivars: Leaf, Romaine/Cos, Iceberg/Crisphead, Butterhead, Celtuce/Stem, Red Leaf, and Oilseed, grown for its seed and made into cooking oil. Of these, Iceberg remains the most popular.

History

There is general agreement that W. Atlee Burpee & Company developed this lettuce in 1894 for growing in northern states.

There are two stories about why it's called Iceberg lettuce. The most often cited one attributes the name to the railcars full of ice that moved the crop across the country in the 1920s. The second is from an 1895 newspaper clipping. This version says the name comes from the look of the lettuce and the many small indentations that collect dew drops and give the heads a crystalline appearance when the sun shines

on the field.

Caesar Chavez's call for a boycott to protest the working conditions of California lettuce pickers in the 1970s was a blow to this crop's popularity. Some consumers who participated discovered new salad options they enjoyed more and have yet to return to regular Iceberg use.

Versatility in Meal Prep

Kristina Billan of the website Savory Suitcase wrote, "In addition to its use in salads, iceberg lettuce has also found its way into numerous recipes, adding a refreshing element to sandwiches, wraps, and tacos. Its ability to provide a satisfying crunch without overpowering other ingredients has made it a favorite choice for enhancing the texture and visual appeal of various dishes."

Iceberg Tips

Take your time when choosing a head of Iceberg. We opt

for a large, heavy head. Look for signs of damage from drops and bumps on the leafy part and the core end. Buy one with the least browning and no slime in the package.

You can remove the core with one quick tap when you need a whole head of Iceberg for a large salad or shredded for a tray of taco toppings. Hold the lettuce by the top in one hand and give the core a firm tap with the heel of your other hand. The core will free itself and come out in one piece. Penny has also tapped it on her cutting board.

If she's not using the whole head but shredding off some for our favorite Vietnamese noodle salad (Bun Thit Nuong), she'll select the best outer leaves she removed and trim off brown spots. She wraps those leaves over the cut end before she returns the head to a clean bag for storage. We find it protects the cut end and keeps it fresher.



Our love of tacos brought Iceberg Lettuce back into our kitchen.

Nutrition

The medically reviewed Healthline website addressed the question of the nutritional value of Iceberg lettuce. "Despite its reputation for being a complete zero on the nutritional scale, iceberg lettuce provides significant amounts of vitamins A and K. It also has small amounts of many other healthy nutrients. Although it's low in fiber, it has a high water content, making it a refreshing choice during hot weather. It also provides calcium, potassium, vitamin C, and folate."

Crunch was a significant factor in putting Iceberg back on our shopping list. This lettuce is excellent for Ed's favorite "Salad Nonna" (the simple tossed salad his Italian grandmother and mother always made), toasted sandwiches, and wedge salads. Consider trying this long-time favorite on your next trip to a produce counter. It might win a place in your meal rotation.

Do you have a question or topic for Fresh & Local? Email Penny@BostonZest.com with your suggestion.

ATTENTION BOSTON WATER AND SEWER COMMISSION CUSTOMERS

You may have noticed some changes in your most recent bill from Boston Water and Sewer Commission. As of April 1, 2024 BWSC customers will now see three separate line-item charges on their bill, for water, sewer, and stormwater. Now, paying for stormwater separately will lower the sewer rate while showing the charges attributed to stormwater activities for the property. This is a more equitable way to fund improvements for the stormwater system because everyone pays for the service they use. Here are key highlights of the bill:

- Stormwater charge will be \$8.98 per month for each Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU) attributed to the property.
- All property owners with more than 400 square feet of impervious area will be billed.
- 60% of residential households will see a reduction in their overall bill.
- The 30% discount extended to seniors and disabled residents will automatically apply to the new stormwater fee.
- Credits and grants are available for customers who implement green infrastructure measures on their property.



Small Residential Properties

1-6 unit Residential - 1 ERU



Non-Small Residential Properties

7+ unit Residential
Charged by # of ERU



Commercial
and Industrial
Charged by #
of ERU



Institutional
Charged by # of ERU

stormwaterinfo@bwsc.org; website: bwsc.org/stormwater; or 617-989-7899

BLUE FROG BAKERY CELEBRATES 20TH ANNIVERSARY

Derek Kouyoumjian photos

The Blue Frog Bakery celebrated its 20th year of serving Jamaica Plain its tasty, unique baked goods. Chef Brad Brown wanted to thank the community

by offering free slices of opera cake as local dignitaries came out to help celebrate this milestone.



Boston City Councilor Benjamin Weber with Griselda Polanco and Melissa Beltran.



Michael Penn enjoys some complimentary opera cake with his usual coffee.



Visitors help celebrate Blue Frog Bakery's 20th Anniversary.



Office Of Neighborhood Services Caroline Peters with Office Of Neighborhood Services spends some time with Riley Brown, daughter of chef Brad Brown.



Blue Frog Bakery employee Will Thompson (left) with his dad Nick.



Blue Frog Bakery owner Chef Brad Brown thanks everyone for their patronage and support. "Every morning I wake up, I only know how to do one thing, I go to work. I am here."



Duncan and Erik Goulding.

Mission Hill Little League

7 1st Season of Baseball!!

2024 Spring In-Person Registration
 Saturday, April 6, 2024, 10am-12pm
 Tuesday, April 9, 2024, 5pm-7pm
 All at Killilea Field at
 269 Parker Hill Ave

Boys and Girls, Ages 4-12
 All players ages 9-12 are eligible to play on the Majors.

Opening Day
Saturday, April 27
 11am-2pm

LEAGUE IS FREE THIS YEAR!
 All children that register will be placed in a team & get to play!

REGISTER ONLINE AT
www.missionhill-littleleague.org

For more information, call 617-939-1766



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Mayor Wu backs Avangrid's offshore wind proposal, pioneering city's contract for clean energy

SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE

Mayor Michelle Wu announced her support of Avangrid's New England Wind 1 offshore wind proposal in response to the multi-state procurement for offshore wind power by Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island. If Avangrid's bid is selected by the state, this

transaction would be a first for a US city to contract for offshore wind. This endorsement reflects Boston's commitment to decarbonizing the city by investing in clean energy and creating sustainable economic opportunities for its residents. If awarded, part of the energy generated through the project will be used to power Boston's municipal buildings and

residences enrolled in our municipal energy aggregation program, Boston Community Choice Electricity.

"Boston must lead the way in building a sustainable future, and we're proud to set a new standard with a direct stake in innovation to create clean energy and good jobs for our residents and communities," said Mayor

Michelle Wu. "This partnership advances our climate goals while bringing thousands of green jobs to our region, creating a pathway for generations to come."

The City of Boston and Avangrid have agreed upon a non-binding Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in which the City of Boston could purchase up to 15 megawatts of energy as

part of a future agreement, the equivalent of one wind turbine, from the New England Wind 1 offshore project, if the Commonwealth selects Avangrid as one of their awardees. Avangrid's New England Wind 1 project has the potential to deliver up to 800 megawatts of renewable energy

Continued on page 13

CAMH

Continued from page 1

group has not met in months and said, "We felt like it was just a check off of a box, like institutions were attending a meeting, and we didn't feel like the community, or our office, or the institutions were getting much out of that meeting."

In the Task force's place,

Durkan says they have met with or are scheduled to meet with institutions with students living on Mission Hill. Further, she revealed that from the meetings that have already occurred, it has been determined that the ride-along system has not worked for a while.

She continued, saying that the ride-along process and how it has been tracked changed when

civilians were removed from ride-alongs in recent years, which Durkan theorized was for liability reasons.

Durkan continued, saying she advocates for four-hour type one details on Friday and Saturday nights and Sunday and that they should start earlier at night.

While one of the moderators wanted to keep the discussion on track and proceed with the pre-developed questions, Durkan said she wanted to explain why the task force was paused.

The first question posed to Durkan concerned what the neighborhood means to her and her vision for the future.

"Mission Hill is incredibly important to me," said Durkan, who then talked about her time getting to know the local businesses and neighbors through her personal life and running campaigns in the area.

Further, she spoke about the difficulties residents have faced with the institutional growth in the neighborhood, the challenge of staying in the area, and how that should be combatted legislatively.

"I understand the needs of a lot of Mission Hill residents because I am living by myself and trying to hang on in the city just like a lot of the folks who are living here," said Durkan.

Durkan was then asked to follow up about how the community can contact her and what she thinks are realistic community requests.

In response, Durkan said, in part, "I think what you can expect is that when you reach out, I read your concern, we respond to your concerns in a timely manner. Our office is dedicated to constituent services."

The discussion then turned to a more broad topic — development — in which Durkan was asked about her office's role concerning development in the neighborhood.

Durkan indicated that as a

City Councilor, it is her job to keep track of projects in the districts she serves. She also described what she looks for in projects: affordability since it was a platform she ran on.

She also spoke about general jobs she can do in her role, like requesting comment periods be extended.

Durkan was also asked specifically about what impacts she looks at for projects. She gave an example, such as a project situated close to a park, but said, "It's so individual to the project and to the community."

Institutional Master Plans were also discussed. Durkan spoke about how she testified in favor of developing a Northeastern dorm in Roxbury as a way she thought she could support the neighborhood. She also talked about ensuring the community benefits from the master plans are delivered.

A moderator also asked if Durkan could communicate her positions on things like development proposals to residents ahead of time so they have time to digest and respond to them. There was a larger discussion of Durkan potentially operationalizing that.

She was also asked if she would support her constituents over the city or other entities in situations of disagreement.

In response, Durkan spoke about the vast diversity of the five neighborhoods she serves and said, "Just know that if I'm taking a position, I have heard from some people that agree with me, and then also that sometimes there are internal values."

Constituent services and how Durkan can help deliver these services to residents were also discussed.

Specifically, she talked about doing things like a walk-along with community members to identify potholes in the area, get them filled, and more.

Durkan's responses to constituent service inquiries were also

requested to be more substantive. While she acknowledged the feedback, she also mentioned that she is reaching out to the proper channels to resolve the issues when responding to these requests.

"If someone feels unheard by my response, that is enough to change the way that something is done because the whole point of city government is for people to feel heard or respected and for something to be done," said Durkan.

Eventually, the constituent service discussion evolved into a conversation about the neighborhood's quality of life and how residents suffer from noise, problem properties, and more.

Durkan spoke about sending out a survey and holding a community forum to help gather some of the issues Mission Hill residents face.

Moreover, she acknowledged the issues Mission Hill residents have endured and talked about the importance of creating an environment where these issues are addressed before they happen, not while they do.

As the discussion wound down, the Problem Properties Task Force was addressed again, along with Squares + Streets, the Boston Planning & Development Agency zoning reform plan.

Regarding Squares + Streets, Durkan indicated she has spoken in support of the initiative and generally favors zoning reform.

However, she did emphasize, "If this comes to Tremont Street, there will be a very robust and long conversation about what people want to see."

When the conversation wrapped up, an attendee commented that there should be a continued dialogue between CAMH and Durkan.

Ultimately, Durkan thanked CAMH for having her and said, "It will not be the last time you see me. This is the first of many conversations that we'll have."

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WHERE TO FIND THE GAZETTE?

Name.....	Address	
7-Eleven Store	415 Center / Huntingtin Ave	Puddingston Tavenen
Levinson Bldg	835 Huntington Avenue	Tremont House Of Pizza.....
Neville Building.....	Huntington Avenue	Subway Sandwiches
Rob.ther.parks Comm.bldg.....	Mission Park Drive	Mini Mart.....
Flynn House.....	805 Huntington Ave	Boston Property
Huntington Market.....	818 Huntington Ave	Elen Real State
Huntntgton Pizza	784 Huntington Ave	Spinney Auto Insurance
Carman' S Beauty Salon.....	764 Huntington Ave	Mikes Donut.....
Green Coffe Shop	750 Huntington Ave	Lillys Gourmet.....
Davos Wine& Spirits	754 Huntington Ave	Grispy Dough Pizza
Flames.....	746 Huntington Ave	Wan Convenience
Hollywood Dry Cleaners.....	742 Huntington Ave	Discount Auto Part.....
Udb Uq.....	738 Huntington Ave	Laundromat
Halal Indian Cuisine	766 Huntington Ave	Dunkin Donut
Brigham Liquors.....	732 Huntington Ave	Solstice Café.....
Brighman Circle Chines	728 Huntington Ave	Mission Hill Liquors
The Mission Pub	724 Huntington Ave	Flann O'brien 'S.....
Stop & Shop	Tremont And Huntington	Mn American Legion
Walgreens	Tremont And Huntington	Mission Hill Properties
J P L Ick's	Tremonte And Huntington	Mission Hill Post Office.....
Bank Of America	Tremonte And Huntington	1575 Longwood Street Apts.....
Citizens Bank	Tremonte And Huntington	Needham Bank
		Bruggels Bakery

Jamaica Plain/Mission Hill Gazette 2024 Publishing Calendar

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JANUARY

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Mission Hill Gazette Jamaica Plain Gazette



Hill Happenings

BY MAURICE 'MOSSY' MARTIN
SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE

At Mike's Donuts, I often hear interesting tales, and I was all ears when my friend, Jim McGonagle, a former Mission Hill boxing great, reminisced about meeting Jim Thorpe in 1950 at Mechanics Hall.

Mechanics Hall was a large auditorium at 111 Huntington Ave. that hosted many events, including sportsmen's shows - boat-and-auto shows - and it was utilized as a convention center. Mechanics Hall was razed in 1959.

McGonagle is 85 but looks like he could still spar a few rounds. As a youngster he was thrilled

to meet the famous Thorpe, who McGonagle said was a nice man wearing a large feather perched atop his soft hat.

In 1919, Thorpe batted .327 for the Boston Braves. 1919 must have been a great year for Boston baseball fans, one could watch Thorpe play in the outfield at Braves Field or a few miles away see Babe Ruth perform at Fenway Park.

The Yellow Door Taqueria was packed with cordial well-wishers for a 'meet and greet' with our newly elected Boston City Councilor Henry Santana, who grew up in Mission Hill.

I enjoyed chatting with Chris Dwyer, Laura Adams, and my former Tobin Court neighbor,

Tricia MacDougall, who looks gorgeous. Tricia's son, City Councilor John Fitzgerald, also attended the event.

Other faces in the Yellow Door crowd who help make Mission Hill a wonderful place include Pat Flaherty, Mitch Hilton, Jim Burke, Courtney Wright, Dermot Doyne, Toni Ann Komst, Michel Soltani, Adam Sarbaugh, and Mary Ann Nelson .

I had a nice time at the Tobin Gym being among the 'Senior Celtics' last month. The event was sponsored by the New England Baptist Hospital. My eyes lit up when on the big screen appeared black-and-white video of the Bill Russell and the Cousy Celtics from the '50s. There was also an exercise session in rhythm to lively music that I avoided, and thanks to the Solid Ground Cafe for preparing the fine lunches.

The Mission Hill Post 327 held a meeting last month at Victory Point Restaurant in Quincy, our first gathering since winter.

The Mission Hill Post advocates for all veterans and the Mission Hill community. Anyone interested in joining the M.H. Post may contact our Commander, Col. George Rollins, 703 209 2124.

I stopped by J.P. Licks at Brigham Circle last month to say hello to our District 8 City Councilor Sharon Durkan. Sharon, as she often does, was conversing with her Mission Hill constituents.

Good luck to charming Nora O'Keefe who is training hard for the upcoming Boston Marathon. Nora is running to raise funds for youths at Camp Shriver at UMass at Amherst. Nora has the Mission Hill lineage, being the granddaughter of our beloved and famed Donnie "Yogi"



Mary Ann Nelson, of Mission Hill Health Movement, with Maurice Martin and City Councilor Sharon Durkan.

O'Keefe.

Boston Police Officer Mike O'Rourke, our Mission Hill police liaison, visited the Charlesbank Cooperative at 650 Huntington Ave. for a helpful question-and-answer segment with a roomful of senior citizens. Boston Police Officer Carina Shepard and Community Service Officer Nadeia Faustin also participated in the discussion, which included street-crime prevention and the rising number of telephone scams.

Also at Charlesbank Apartments, where I reside, I joined my neighbors having a cup of tea in the Community Room last week. Thanks to Barry Twomey for arranging the event in conjunction with N.N.N. (Neighbor to Neighbor Network).

Barry coordinates the N.N.N.,

which provides numerous benefits to Charlesbank residents, including transportation to medical appointments.

There will be a fish dinner at the Mission Church Parish Hall on Saturday, April 27, hosted by Father Dabney and Father Yvon. This is a fundraiser for needy families and the price is \$12 and \$7 for kids. April 20 is the deadline for tickets.

Mission Hill Little League President Dan Weldon is enthused about the upcoming season. This is the 71st year of the league.

To register click mission-hill-littleleague.org. Registration is free, and as the glove said to the ball, 'catch you later.'

Maurice can be reached at mossymartin2@gmail.com

AGE STRONG RESOURCE FAIR!

Connecting Boston's older adults to information, resources, benefits, savings, programs, & more!



Free & open to the public!

Light refreshments & raffles

Wednesday, April 24

11 AM - 2:00 PM (Drop in any time)

Dewitt Center

122 Dewitt Drive, Roxbury

To RSVP, visit

bit.ly/AgeStrongResourceFair

or call Age Strong at 617-635-4366

Scan here to RSVP



City Paws

Continued from page 6

tote stuff.

There are dozens of pet strollers available for smaller dogs. As we planned our seasonal adventures, we realized that sometimes we left Poppy behind because part of the route would cause her anxiety and make her unhappy.

We discovered a great compromise with a stroller that, like a wagon, doubles as a shopping cart. Strolee is a company that sells a transformer frame with available accessories that we can use for a dog and storage, for two dogs, or for shopping alone.

Over the years, we've come to appreciate the advantages of having a canine ambassador at the end of a leash. You meet many more people and become

more engaged in the local community. Students and visitors to Boston often visit with Poppy. We've enjoyed interesting conversations with people we might never have met without our little ambassador.

Do you have a question or topic for City Paws? Send an email to Penny@BostonZest.com with your request.

J.P. Licks celebrates 25 years of coffee with an all-new birthday cake ice cream

J.P. Licks, Boston's favorite ice cream shop is excited to announce its 25th anniversary year of roasting coffee. Fair Trade and Organic Certified coffee have been freshly micro-roasted from the Jamaica Plains headquarters since 1999, and J.P. Licks will be commemorating the milestone with the perfect celebratory new ice cream flavor, Birthday Cake Ice Cream. The new flavor, sweet ice cream with pieces of yellow cake, rainbow sprinkles, and a buttercream frosting ripple, is available now in all 17 J.P. Licks store locations.

"Everyone knows us for our ice cream, but over the last 25 years we also have been roasting our own coffee," says J.P. Licks founder and owner Vincent Pet-

ryk. "We roast down the middle . . . dark enough for a hearty brew but not so dark that every bean tastes burnt. And honestly, what is a better pairing than to celebrate with our latest and greatest flavor, Birthday Cake Ice Cream. My son has been asking for a birthday cake flavor for years and helped to inspire the sweet and buttery flavor. If you think about it, birthday cake is almost always accompanied by ice cream so it's really a no brainer, here at J.P. Licks your birthday cake is now served with a spoon!"

Fresh micro-roasted, fair trade, and organic certified coffee is available by the cup or pound, whole bean or ground, at all locations. Coffee is roasted



The inaugural Birthday Cake flavored ice cream for the local chain's 25th anniversary is now available.

in a Dedrick 25 lb. roaster, producing about 20 different types of coffee, both single origin and blends. J.P. Licks has a few direct buyer relationships with farms, including farms in Guatemala and Nicaragua. These farms help the community earn fairer wages and build schools, houses, and other things needed to sustain their communities. The team at J.P. Licks has visited some of these communities, including the family owned farm, El Recreo Estate Farm, in Jinotega, Nicaragua.

J.P. Licks also recently announced the addition of Dr. Aisha Densmore-Bey, the new visiting artist at the Coolidge Corner store. The ice cream shop has been showcasing local artists in-

store for over 20 years. Artists display their work at J.P. Licks for a minimum of three months and their artwork is often available for purchase— J.P. Licks does not take any commissions on any artwork sales. J.P. Licks seeks artists local to each store's neighborhood via arts councils alumni groups, artist studio spaces, and word of mouth. The full list of artists currently showing at J.P. Licks can be found here, along with a list of every artist who has shown since the beginning of 2019.

Dr. Densmore-Bey received her Doctorate of Design from the Harvard Graduate School of Design and teaches design at various colleges in Massachusetts

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Clean energy

Continued from page 10

to the New England grid, enough to power up to 400,000 homes and businesses in the region. The project is estimated to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by up to 1.5 million US tons of carbon dioxide per year, equivalent to taking over 280,000 cars off the road. The amount of electricity that the City of Boston may purchase under the terms of a potential agreement is equal to nearly a third of all the electricity used annually by Boston Public Schools in addition to nearly 5,000 homes. Avangrid has also offered to implement vocational training for Boston Public School students, meaning that this collaboration would not only advance Boston's climate goals but create an investment in the green jobs pipeline, an important part of Boston's Green New Deal.

"The City of Boston is thrilled by the chance to participate in the offshore wind revolution" said Reverend Mariama White-Hammond, Chief of Environment, Energy and Open Space. "I would particularly like to thank David Musselman, Boston's Director of Municipal Energy, who has spearheaded innovative energy projects like this in Boston and will be retiring next month."

Offshore wind is an industry on the frontlines of the climate crisis, building energy cost resilience in a market that has been increasingly destabilized by its reliance on fossil fuels. The City of Boston believes Avangrid

could potentially deliver a transformational project to Massachusetts that would help the state meet its critical energy needs and secure new economic opportunities for its residents.

"Mayor Wu and the City of Boston are among the country's foremost climate champions, so we saw a natural opportunity with our New England Wind bid and the City's leadership to form this exciting partnership," said Avangrid CEO Pedro Azagra. "Our goal with New England Wind is to bring the region's

historic communities into the very blueprints of our project, and we're thrilled to establish this partnership with the City to ensure that Boston benefits from the clean power and economic opportunity that offshore wind offers."

The City of Boston recognizes the significance of this opportunity to advance its renewable energy goals and support the growth of the green economy. By collaborating with Avangrid, Boston aims to lead the way in sustainable energy development

and contribute to a cleaner, greener future for all.

This opportunity is one example of the innovative energy projects that the City has implemented to achieve its carbon neutrality goals. Renew Boston Trust's energy performance contracting reduces energy use and emissions from the City's buildings and exterior lights. Renew Boston Trust projects are expected to save the City \$2.3 million and reduce carbon emissions by 3,600 mtCO_{2e} annually. The

City of Boston has also secured a \$250,000 grant from the Barr Foundation to pilot the City's Equitable Electrification Initiative in one of our environmental justice neighborhoods and previously supported the state in the creation of the Massachusetts Community Climate Bank. Through collaborative efforts like these, the City of Boston continues to pave the way for a more sustainable and equitable future, driving positive change for generations to come.

Gazette Pet of the Week

by Sarah Carroll



BANDIT

Bandit is a handsome 8 year old who is house trained, crate trained, and knows tricks like sit and paw. This easy going guy will make an easy transition into a new home, where he will be ready to shower you with love!

"Gazette Pet of the Week" is sponsored by

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EDITORIAL

Watch the eclipse safely

With our area in the path of the solar eclipse this coming Monday (and with clear skies forecast), we urge any of our readers who are intent on watching the event to be sure to wear proper eyewear and to ensure that their children do as well.

A person can cause permanent damage to their eyes -- and even go blind (a condition known as solar retinopathy) -- if they do not use proper eye protection, such as eclipse glasses or a special solar filter. Regular sunglasses don't offer any protection and viewing the eclipse through your I-phone camera offers no protection for you and will damage your phone. (Photography experts say just pointing your smartphone camera at the eclipse could cause catastrophic damage to the phone if you don't have proper equipment.)

Individuals also have to be certain that the eyewear they are using is certified. There are reports that knock-offs that are being sold on-line are not legitimate.

One eye doctor, who was quoted in the New York Times, offered this advice: Don't look at the eclipse at all, even with proper eyewear.

But for those who are intent on watching this event, please do so safely.

Russia is our real enemy

Sunday's special report on the CBS news show 60 Minutes revealed that Russia has been the culprit in the hundreds of cases of debilitating neurological injuries that have struck American intelligence and law enforcement operatives around the world in the past few years.

The phenomenon has been dubbed "Havana Syndrome" because the problems first became apparent among a cluster of employees at the U.S. Embassy in Havana, Cuba. However, as the 60 Minutes report showed, these attacks on U.S. personnel (and their families), all of whom have worked with the CIA, the FBI, the military, the State Department, and the White House -- almost all of whom were working on areas of national security related to Russia -- have been occurring all over the world and even in our own country.

The "weapon" being used by the Russians is thought to be directed energy or microwaves fired from hidden devices that inflict serious and permanent injury on those who are targeted.

The 60 Minutes report makes it clear that Vladimir Putin is a monster who is using any means necessary to undermine our national interests. Our political leaders, especially the Republicans in Congress, must recognize the threat he poses and do whatever it takes to thwart him.

Bird flu is not just for the birds

The second confirmed case of the bird flu infecting a human in this country (a Texas dairy farm worker who worked among infected cows) raises a red flag about the possibility of another pandemic ripping across the world.

The current bird flu outbreak not only has killed millions of wild and domesticated birds world-wide, but it also has killed many mammals across the globe, including the well-publicized devastation of an elephant seal population in Argentina.

Although the bird flu is not as fatal in cows as seals, it has sickened cows in states across the country, an indication that cows are infecting each other as they move around farms from state-to-state. The virus has been detected in the unpasteurized milk of these cows. More ominously, the detection of the virus in the dairy worker suggests that the bird flu can jump from one mammal species to others -- including ourselves.

The bird flu -- also known as H5N1 -- wreaked havoc in many parts of the world, especially in Asia, in 2006. The U.S. largely was spared the ill-effects of the outbreak thanks to efforts by our national health authorities who worked in these foreign countries to contain its spread.

However, this new variant of H5N1 is being brought to this country by wild bird populations, which obviously is something we cannot control. If cows have been infected, it stands to reason that other animals, including our house pets, could become infected and spread the virus.

COVID-19 killed more than one million Americans. But as bad as the pandemic had been at its height, it was only killing about one percent of those who were infected, with substantially higher death rates among the elderly and those with prior-existing health conditions, including obesity.

However, the bird flu in humans is far deadlier, with death rates having been estimated at 50% during the 2006 pandemic in some countries. Even if the chances of a bird flu pandemic among humans are slim, the high mortality rate should be enough to raise the alarm bells among our public health officials.

Flynn to hold hearing on ordinance to create an Office of Pest Control

SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE

Councilor Ed Flynn will be holding a hearing on his ordinance to create an Office of Pest Control in the City of Boston on Tuesday, April 9th, at 10am. This hearing will be the first step in the process towards establishing a standalone office dedicated to pest control, and will bring together City Councilors, city officials, and residents to discuss this proposal. The hearing will be chaired by Councilor Coletta in the Committee on Government Operations.

In a key effort to tackle the persisting issue of rats in the City of Boston, Councilor Flynn filed an ordinance in January to create an Office of Pest Control to lead rodent mitiga-

tion operations. This follows a number of hearings last year in which Councilor Flynn and his colleagues discussed the City's multi-pronged approach towards tackling pest control with officials at the Inspectional Services Department, Public Works, and Code Enforcement.

Last year, Councilor Flynn had the opportunity to speak with Kathleen Corradi, New York City's first new Rat Czar, to get her insights and to learn about her operations. He has also spoken with Mayor Wu about the creation of a pest control office.

Pest control has become a major quality of life issue for residents for many years, and was exacerbated by the pandemic when food sources moved away

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

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Wu proposes legislation to protect residential property owners

SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE

Mayor Michelle Wu announced that she will file a home rule petition that would protect residential property owners from a potentially dramatic increase in their property taxes due to declining commercial property values. The proposal would allow the City to lessen increases in residential property tax bills caused by declining commercial values by temporarily shifting more of the property tax levy onto owners of commercial and industrial properties. Under the present statutory system, a significant decline in commercial property assessments will result in residential property owners paying higher taxes through a higher tax rate in order to maintain funding for critical City services, rather than an overall revenue decline. The proposal is revenue-neutral and does not increase the total amount of revenue the City is able to collect through property taxes.

“As Boston invests in revitalizing our Downtown and commercial corridors in response to shifting market trends, we are working with all stakeholders to protect residents and homeowners against sudden and dramatic tax increases,” said Mayor Michelle Wu. “For our seniors on fixed incomes, for families with children, for frontline workers and all our community members, we must have the tools to address rising housing costs and keep residents in their homes.”

“The City has been closely monitoring and planning for the impacts of declining commercial real estate values on the City’s tax base,” said Chief Financial Officer Ashley Groffenberger. “By taking this proactive step, we are ensuring that we have the tools necessary to safeguard basic City services and create

stability for all taxpayers.”

“The pandemic changed the way we work, and that has had a rather sudden and significant impact on commercial tax bases,” said Adam Chapdelaine, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Municipal Association. “In affected communities, one potential outcome is crushing property tax increases for homeowners, while commercial properties see a reduction. Already tightly constrained by the limits of Proposition 2½, affected cities and towns may want to pursue thoughtful, measured approaches like Mayor Wu’s proposal to avoid making the region’s housing cost crisis even worse.”

State law allows the City, in conjunction with the City Council, to create two separate property tax rates, and by doing so, shift a portion of the property tax levy to commercial property. The present maximum shift allowed is up to 175 percent of what the commercial share would have otherwise been.

The current proposal gives the City the option to modify these parameters in a thoughtful and controlled manner. For the first year of implementation, the City would have the ability to increase the classification shift to 200 percent, at the discretion of the Mayor and the City Council, if a significant drop in commercial assessments occurs. During the subsequent three years the allowable classification shift would gradually decrease and return to the currently allowed 175 percent in year five.

Initial implementation of the current proposal, if passed, could occur during any of the next three fiscal years, at the City’s election. This flexibility would allow the City the ability to initiate the alternative rate schedules only when absolutely needed.

“This is a measured proposal that will deliver relief as the City adapts to the unprecedented changes to its existing tax base,” said WinnCompanies CEO Gilbert Winn. “Ensuring that Boston is on stable, financial footing is vital for the thousands who live and work in the City, and rely on critical services like housing, education, public safety and health care. Preserving these vital services will allow Boston to continue its growth as a hub for culture, innovation, and education; a City that is welcoming to all.”

“We are working with all stakeholders to protect residents and homeowners against sudden and dramatic tax increases.”

“As a resident of Boston and a member of the business community, I support the City of Boston’s tax classification proposal,” said Tom O’Brien, managing partner and CEO of HYM Investment Group. “I applaud the Mayor for using all the tools in her toolbox to alleviate the financial pressures of homeowners. It is my continued hope that this proposal might soon be paired with initiatives that will encourage new growth in our city.”

“Boston is experiencing a significant housing crisis, driven by both a lack of sufficient affordable housing to meet our need and rising costs to build and operate this housing,” said Emilio Dorcelly, CEO of Urban Edge. “Because continuing to increase the supply of affordable housing supported by city services is critical to the region’s overall economic success, it is

imperative that Boston maintain steady revenue streams. The Wu administration’s proposal presents the opportunity to maintain a level of revenue needed to support such important work while not overburdening homeowners, affordable housing projects, and other residential buildings.”

The proposal would help stabilize housing costs for Boston residents over this period of five years. An increase in residential property taxes would impact all residential property: single family homes, multi family homes, apartment buildings, and residential condominium units. Left alone, the dramatic tax increase would lead to higher costs for residents through higher tax bills for homeowners or a rent increase for renters should their landlords pass the increased costs onto them.

“The mission of Massachusetts Affordable Housing Alliance (MAHA) is to help low and moderate-income households to buy and maintain the dream of homeownership,” said Symone Crawford, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Affordable Housing Alliance. “Given the high home prices, interest rates, insurance premiums, and general housing costs, it is especially important that we act quickly to stabilize real estate taxes for our families. Homeownership provides a sense of permanence and pride, laying down a solid foundation upon which individuals and families can build their lives with certainty and confidence.”

The proposal is similar to one enacted in 2004, when Boston faced a comparable dynamic. According to a 2003 report from the

Boston Municipal Research Bureau, the average single-family tax bill would have increased by over 35 percent while the tax for a commercial property could decrease by 15-20 percent. Boston successfully sought similar legislation that allowed municipalities to temporarily increase the classification shift to 200 percent and step down over four years, before returning to the original maximum of 175 percent. At this level, the average residential tax bill still increased by 15 to 18 percent, with commercial taxes decreasing by five to eight percent. The legislation the City is pursuing today builds on this precedent.

“As a senior with a fixed income, a large increase in my property taxes would be devastating,” said Shirley Jones, president of the Meetinghouse Hill Civic Association. “I am so grateful that the mayor is being proactive and taking action to protect residents like me across the city from these potential increases.”

“It’s difficult to keep residents in Boston because of the high cost of living,” said Tom Cunha, Chair of the Charlestown Neighborhood Council. “I don’t want my neighbors to have to move out because of an increase in their property taxes. This temporary measure is fair and allows us to evaluate over the next 60 months.”

The home rule petition will be filed with the City Council, where it must be approved before being signed by the Mayor and then sent to the Massachusetts Legislature and the Governor for approval.

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Pest Control

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from restaurants to residential areas. There has been an uptick of rodent sightings across all neighborhoods in Boston and the issue of pest control has become a top constituent complaint.

“Pest control is a serious public health issue and a top quality of life complaint I get when I talk

to my constituents. I believe that an Office of Pest Control can help us better address this issue,” said Councilor Flynn. “We should have a centralized point person in the City that has overall authority and responsibility on all matters relating to rats and rodent mitigation, and an Office of Pest Control would provide that attention and oversight. I look forward to this Council hearing

and working with my colleagues on this issue.”

To watch the hearing, you can go to boston.gov/city-council-tv. To submit written testimony or request to testify at the hearing, please reach out to Meghan Kavanagh at Meghan.Kavanagh@Boston.gov. For more information, please visit <https://www.boston.gov/public-notices/16107511>.

ROXBURY TENANTS OF HARVARD ASSOC. CELEBRATES SAINT PATRICK'S DAY



Over 100 residents celebrated the holiday with a delicious, corned beef and cabbage dinner with all the fixings catered by the Mission Bar and Grill, Irish bread, and cupcakes.

Everyone enjoyed listening to Irish songs by Chuck Whelan and listening to Irish stories and singing Irish songs along with Peter O'Malley.

RTH's very own, Mark Coyle, sang Danny Boy, which is always a highlight of the party.

RTH residents were really in the St. Patrick's Day spirit dancing in their festive hats, bow ties and other themed clothing.

Perhaps the three leprechuans at the party helped in making sure everyone had a grand ole time. The event ended with "A Luck of the Irish" raffle drawing.

Thank you to Laughing Monk, Mike's Donut shop, The Mission Bar and Grill, New England Baptist Hospital, Penguin, Solid Ground and Trinity Management for their prize donations. Several residents left the party with their eyes smiling! Erin Go Bragh!

JP Licks

Continued from page 13

and runs a creative office specializing in architecture, interiors, graphic design, design strategy, film, and art. She is the founder and past chair of the Museum and Exhibit Design Committee at the Boston Society of Architects, the creator of Future Prep 101™, a two time recipient of the BSA Foundation grant. Aisha also wrote and illustrated the children's book "Who Made My Stuff?" which is included in the National Museum of African American History and Culture, part of the Smithsonian Institution. The artwork Aisha has on display at J.P. Licks is acrylic paint on canvas, incorporating portraiture, lighting, and desert.

Please join J.P. Licks on May 14, at 6 p.m. ET at a reception at the Coolidge Corner store located at 311 Harvard Street in Brookline to celebrate Dr. Densmore-Bey's art and 25 years of coffee roasting. Dr. Densmore-Bey plans to hold an Instagram contest around coordinating her paintings and ice cream flavors into t-shirt de-

signs. @aishabdesigner <https://lnk.bio/aishadbdesigner>

Locally owned and operated by Vincent Petryk, J.P. Licks now boasts 17 store locations through-out Massachusetts and has remained homemade and locally owned and operated. The company employs up to 453 employees in the summer months and ships coffee (which is roasted in-house at the Jamaica Plain store) and merchandise anywhere in the continental USA. All ice cream and ice cream cakes are made in house in the Jamaica Plain headquarters.

Since opening its doors, J.P. Licks has been committed to supporting each store's community by donating in-kind donations to small, local organizations.

J.P. Licks has won many awards over the years for their intensely flavored homemade ice cream and frozen yogurt, most recently Best of Boston 2021 from Boston Magazine. J.P. Licks has received over 300 "Best of" awards over the last 40 years. Known for their high quality, scrumptious treats J.P. Licks was named Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce's 2006 "Small Business of the Year".

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City and Community Engagement

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