

WHAT'S HAPPENING ON MAIN STREETS, P.6

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2024 MISSION HILL ROAD RACE TO BENEFIT KEVIN W. FITZGERALD PARK



Mayor's Office Photo by Jeremiah Robinson

The annual Mission Hill Road Race was held on Sept. 28. It was a great turnout with many showing up to benefit the neighborhood's Kevin W. Fitzgerald Park. Shown above, volunteers with City officials, and Mayor Michelle Wu. See more photos on Page 5.

CAMH discusses Topsy's Market's proposed license upgrade at meeting

By MICHAEL COUGHLIN JR.

At its monthly meeting in September, the Community Alliance of Mission Hill (CAMH) listened to representatives from Topsy's Market, which is looking to upgrade its existing beer and wine license to include spirits.

Kristen Scanlon, an Attorney who presented the proposal at the CAMH meeting, said, "With the addition of full spirits, they wouldn't be taking away from any of the current offerings; they would just be reducing forward-facing product mostly to make room for spirits."

She also emphasized that the owners have committed to not selling singles under the current license and that if their proposed upgrade were approved, they would be "committed 100%" to not selling nips.

In terms of reaction to the request and the process so far, Scanlon said the Parker Street establishment had conducted an abutters meeting and met with Mission Hill Neighborhood Housing Services (MHNHS).

"The abutters meeting was well-attended with upwards of 40 attendees, most of whom spoke in

strong support," said Scanlon.

"Kind of the overarching theme that we were hearing in comments there was convenience is a factor, a strategic location. While people may have cars, they would rather walk in this instance, and I guess other liquor stores aren't easily walkable — a lot of people were pointing that out."

Regarding the meeting with MHNHS, Scanlon said they received feedback on the ratio of the current offerings in terms of alcohol products to grocery products. Specifically, she noted that the ratio "would be really close to 50:50 should this license be obtained."

As for other reactions to the request, Scanlon said they have received support from more than 20 local businesses and from Fenway High School.

The statement that Topsy's Market received support from a school raised the eyebrows of some attendees, to the point that one resident asked for a copy of the support letter.

It should be noted that Scanlon read the letter of support out

Continued on page 2

Local spider expert weighs in on Joro sighting

By MICHAEL COUGHLIN JR.

Jessica Garb, an Associate Professor at the Uni-

versity of Massachusetts Lowell whose laboratory specializes in spiders, gave the lowdown on the unfamiliar creature that appeared in the Beacon Hill neighborhood recently: the Joro Spider.

While Garb said she does not study this species specifically, she provided information for folks looking to learn more about it. According to Garb, the Joro Spider is native to Eastern Asia and was first introduced to the southern part of

the United States around 2013.

"They're actually quite abundant, is my understanding, in certain areas of Georgia, and maybe, South Carolina," she said.

Moreover, she described some characteristics of the spider, saying they "make very large webs, and they're quite conspicuous." "They are pretty large-sized spiders as spiders go," she added.

Specifically, according to https://jorowatch.org/ — a website that Garb told the Beacon Hill Times takes reports of sightings — just the body of a female adult Joro can be up to 1.25 inches long.

Continued on page 2



Photo by Christina Butler via Wikipedia

A Joro Spider.

Visit MissionHillGazette.com

Email stephen.quigley@reverejournal.com

or patricia@jamaicaplaingazette.com

or call 781-485-0588 for your Mission Hill information

Have more fun with less waste at National Reuse Day, October 19

SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE

Eliminating needless waste through reuse is a straightforward, but often overlooked, way to live more sustainably. Boston Building Resources will celebrate National Reuse Day on Saturday, October 19, with a free community event from 11:00 to 2:00 promoting the craft and creativity of reuse in all its forms.

The celebration will take place at Boston Building Resources, 100 Terrace Street, Roxbury Crossing. Free food will be available, and live music will be provided by the Emily Grogan Band.

Cabinets, windows, doors, appliances, and other building materials comprise 17.9% of the solid waste stream in Massachusetts, according to the Mass Department of Environmental Protection. The Reuse Center at Boston Building Resources

takes in donations of reusable building materials and makes them available to new owners at affordable prices, sparing them from the landfill while offering home improvement resources to people on tight budgets.

National Reuse Day will explore the possibilities of reuse beyond building materials. The event will include a Fixit Clinic; the public is invited to bring items that need fixing to get help from a Fixit coach. Items can include electronics, clothes that need mending, small appliances, household items, and more.

Activities for kids will include a craft project and a scavenger hunt. A tie-dye station will make it possible to give old clothing a colorful new look. A composting demonstration will include tips on how to transform yard waste and kitchen scraps into “black gold” for next spring’s garden. Tips on saving energy will help people save money as the heating season approaches.

The Reuse Center at Boston Building Resources is a nonprofit organization that operates in Mission Hill’s only zero carbon building, an all-electric structure powered by a rooftop solar array.

For more information about National Reuse Day, visit www.BostonBuildingResources.com.

CAMH

Continued from page 1

loud during the meeting. However, the letter did not explicitly say it supported the request for the license upgrade but that the school supported Topsy’s Market and what it has contributed to the school.

After the letter was read aloud, at least one attendee found Scanlon’s inclusion of the school’s support misleading, and she indicated that they would seek clarification.

While there were some questions about past issues and concerns relating to trash, loitering outside the establishment, and more, there was a ton of support from attendees at the meeting.

“Topsy’s Market is the best market on Mission Hill. It is the

best place to buy alcohol, to buy snacks, to buy anything of convenience,” said one attendee.

Another attendee who said they lived right down the road from Topsy’s mentioned that they would love to be able to buy spirits from there.

“I think the issues of the past are really non-existent,” said one resident, referring to some of the questions about trash and loitering near the property.

That same resident added, “Obviously, we have a stacked room of supporters, but if I’m being honest about it, I have to agree with most of what they’re saying. I don’t see a real issue with the upgrade here; I don’t see a big concern that would affect the neighborhood negatively.”

As previously stated, attendees strongly supported the proposal; however, it should be

noted that some of those who commented wanted to ensure that the other products sold at the store would not slowly be taken away for spirits.

Harshad Patel, one of the owners of Topsy’s Market, emphasized that the items they sell now, like bread, snacks, cleaning supplies, and more, will still be at the store.

“All kinds of basic grocery stuff — we’re going to keep it [the] same...Whatever, right now we have, we’re going to keep it the same,” said Patel.

Since this was the first presentation to CAMH, a vote was not held. It is customary for CAMH to vote on a proposal after the second presentation. According to the group’s website, the next CAMH meeting is scheduled for October 16th.

Joro Spider

Continued from page 1

Moreover, media outlets have previously used headlines indicating that this spider can fly; however, Garb pumped the brakes on that assessment.

She noted this idea of flying is tied to the phenomenon called ballooning, in which spiders in their infancy release silk and are carried in the air by the wind. Further, Garb indicated this occurs with many spiders and that they are often at their smallest size when it happens.

Naturally, one would wonder if the Joro is a cause for concern, especially for folks who might encounter it. However, Garb eased those concerns.

While Garb noted that almost all spiders, including the Joro, are venomous — meaning they make venom — she did not think there was any documentation of this species’ venom being harmful to people.

“So there’s a lot of species for which even though they’re making venom — because it’s not necessarily targeted toward

human nervous systems, it’s not toxic to us,” she said.

“Then their behavior might be such that they’re just so shy that they’re not inclined to be biting people.”

Although this spider is seemingly not dangerous to people, Garb did express some concerns relating to the critter.

First, she noted some concern if the spiders became numerous in the state and displaced local species, especially those that have adapted to the area and cannot survive elsewhere. She also thought it could be concerning if the spiders found their way to more natural habitats. Still, she stopped short of forecasting how it might impact those habitats and generally suggested it could lead to homogenization.

Additionally, Garb mentioned that she was concerned about false reports of seeing the Joro Spider. For example, she said that she received an image through another news outlet from a resident of Cape Cod and another image directly from a resident of Western Massachusetts, both of whom thought they spotted the Joro, but they were

actually a native species that looked similar.

“We do have at least one native species here, which is kind of similar enough looking that for people who are not really thinking a lot about different kinds of spiders and how to distinguish them, could be easily mistaken,” said Garb.

“When they sent me the picture, I’m like, oh no, this is the native spider, and so I’m just worried people will start killing this thing, which I don’t think they should.”

For those interested in learning more about the spider or reporting a sighting, visit the aforementioned link to the Joro Watch website. For those who remain concerned about the Joro Spider’s appearance in the neighborhood, at least one city official sympathizes with you.

“I feel for my fellow residents of Beacon Hill as I am not a fan of spiders. Especially the flying variety! Happy to lead the Boston Arachnid Mitigation Plan,” wrote City Councilor Sharon Durkan in an email commenting on the sighting.



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Hill Happenings

By MAURICE 'MOSSY' MARTIN

Mission Hill golfers were oblivious to the rain as they enthusiastically recently teed off at Norwood Country Club to raise funds for the Mission Hill Veterans Post 327. It was a terrific event, organized by Commander, Col. George Rollins and culminated by a powerful speech by M.H. Post member and World War II veteran, Brig. General Enoch "Woody" Woodhouse. The team of Peter Scott and his son Steve Scott displayed their golf skills, winning top prize. Peter is a VietNam veteran and a retired Brookline Police Captain. Thanks to our generous sponsors of the Golf fundraiser including Michel Soltani, proprietor of Brendan Behan's in J.P., Harry Walsh, owner of the Mission Bar & Grill, Boston City Councilor Sharon Durkan, Clifford Jewelers, the Corrib Restaurant, Mooo SteakHouse, 99 Restaurant, Alba Restaurant, The West in West Roxbury, Legal SeaFood, Capitol Grill, Gallway House in J.P., Mr. and Mrs. Rollins, The A.L. Post 76 in J.P. and Victo-

ry Point Restaurant in Quincy. and to Stephen Quigley of the Independent Newspaper Group for sponsoring an ad in this fine newspaper.

Woody Woodhouse owns a vintage Mercury Marquis which sat in the garage for years and is now restored and running. The car, dubbed the "Woodymobile", will be used as a medical escort vehicle for doctors appointments, etc., particularly for veterans and seniors. This great idea is the brainchild of Barry Twomey, who will be one of the drivers, along with Jim Lennox and is sponsored by Mission Hill Health Movement. JD Auto Center in Brookline owner John Douros and his son, Kosta Douros reconstructed the Woodymobile engine and in an epic display of benevolence, the Douros's skilled labor was done complementarity. To keep the Woodymobile operating smoothly, donations can be made to Mission Hill Health Movement c/o Barry Twomey-President 1534 Tremont St. Boston, Ma. 02120. .

Condolences to the family of Brian Collins who passed away

Sept. 11. Brian was a great guy who grew up in Mission Hill, part of the large and wonderful Collins family. Brian enjoyed going to concerts and he loved attending music festivities with his charming daughter Brianna Collins. Donations in Brian's honor can be made to Mission Church.

Two prominent Mission Hillers celebrated their 80th birthday last month. Former Mission High basketball great, Bob Walsh had a joyous birthday celebration at his daughter Amanda's house in Canton. Bob is a good guy and a great storyteller. He and I were among the partners of Mission Hill Liquors, which we sold in 2004. My big brother Dan

Martin turned 80 on Sept.19 and Dan stays in great shape playing handball. A few decades ago he won the World Handball Championship (50 and over division) in County Clare, Ireland. Dan had a quiet birthday celebration at Brendan Behan's, surrounded by a few pretty women and me and several pints of Guineas.

Bob Ryan, a talented painter at Mass College of Art will celebrate his 66th birthday Oct.6..

Thanks to the members of the King Hill Church for their help moving residents in and out of our neighborhood last month at the start of the college year. The church members, who have residence on the Hill, also set up

a stand serving complimentary cold drinks.

Students from Northeastern University also lent a hand moving students on that busy and sometimes chaotic first week of school.

Penguin Pizza commemorated 20 years in business Oct.24. I stopped in that evening for a Coors light and a slice of pizza amid the large celebration crowd. Pamela Carthy, a hard worker and wonderful woman, has worked at the Penguin since its beginning and she bought the popular restaurant a few years ago.. Maurice can be reached at mossymartin2@gmail.com.

ZONING HEARING

The Zoning Commission of the City of Boston hereby gives notice, in accordance with Chapter 665 of the Acts of 1956, as amended, that a virtual public hearing will be held on October 9, 2024, at 9:15 A.M., in connection with the First Amendment to the Development Plan for Planned Development Area No. 93, 500 Huntington Avenue, Mission Hill, filed by the City of Boston Planning Department.

Said First Amendment would allow to refine the design and scope of the Project to improve its overall feasibility. Notably, the Proposed Project is consistent with the height, density, and parking limitations set forth in the previously approved PDA No. 93. The Proposed Project consists of a total of up to 640,000 square feet of gross floor area, comprised of life sciences/office/research and development space and other commercial or activated uses, first floor retail/restaurant/commercial/activated space; and up to 381 parking spaces in a below-grade garage.

This meeting will only be held virtually and not in person. You can participate in this meeting by going to <https://bit.ly/BZCOct92024>. A copy of the petition, the First Amendment and a map of the area involved, may be obtained from the Zoning Commission electronically, and you may also submit written comments or questions to zoningcommission@boston.gov.

Interpreting services are available to communicate information at this hearing. If you require interpreting services, please contact the following: zoningcommission@boston.gov or 617-918-4308. The meeting is scheduled for October 9, 2024. Please request interpreting services no later than October 5, 2024.

For the Commission
Jeffrey M. Hampton
Executive Secretary



boston planning & development agency

Boston Planning & Development Agency (BPDA)
One City Hall Square | Boston, MA 02201
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BPDA Board approves 500 Huntington Avenue Project

By MICHAEL COUGHLIN JR.

During the Boston Planning & Development Agency's (BPDA) September Board meeting, the proposed project at 500 Huntington Avenue, which would bring open space, connection improvements, two mixed-use buildings, life science, and retail space to a site that currently holds Wentworth Institute of Technology's Sweeney Field and other structures, was approved.

At the BPDA's August Board meeting, Board members had intended to vote on the proposal; however, the item was tabled at the request of an attorney representing the Museum of Fine Arts (MFA) and its trustees, who mentioned concerns about "air intake, groundwater, vibration, traffic, and other matters."

ber Board meeting, and Stephen Harvey, a Senior Project Manager with the city's Planning Department, provided an update on the situation.

"Since the August Board meeting, staff has worked closely with the development team to address all of the concerns, especially the concerns of the Museum of Fine Arts," he said.

Moreover, Harvey indicated that the development team had provided staff and the MFA with all the information requested and stated that the MFA was grateful for the collaboration and supported the project.

"Having now addressed concerns, our confidence in the proposal has only grown, and we bring it before you once again for consideration," said Harvey.

Continued on page 4

Fast-forward to the Septem-

Mayor Wu announces 2024-2025 SPARK Council

SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE

Mayor Michelle Wu announced the newly selected 2024-2025 SPARK Boston Council. The 38-member group will spend the next year working to connect young adults to leaders in local government, City services, and one another. The SPARK Boston Council advises Mayor Wu on City policies and programs affecting 20-to-35-year-olds in the City of Boston.

“The only way we can understand our residents’ needs is to work alongside them,” said Mayor Michelle Wu. “Our SPARK Council is the key to connecting our young adults to our work here in City Hall, and I am so excited to see how this new edition of the council will reach our young people and enrich their experience as Boston residents.”

SPARK Boston is housed in the Mayor’s Community Engagement Cabinet. This office is responsible for advising Mayor Wu on issues affecting millennial and gen-z residents and working with City departments and community stakeholders to create innovative solutions. The Council meets monthly with City Hall leaders and creates free programming for their peers including voter resources, events highlighting the City’s initia-

tives, and professional and social networking opportunities across Boston’s neighborhoods. This year’s Council members come from diverse cultural and professional backgrounds including public service, higher education, and scientific research. Sixteen SPARK Boston council members are multilingual and the Council represents almost all of Boston’s neighborhoods.

SPARK Boston’s new Director, Aidan McDounough, is a former council member. He plans to use his experience to create space and empower more council members to become advocates in their neighborhoods, especially those that have been historically underrepresented and overlooked.

“Since stepping into my role as the Director of SPARK Boston, I have been really looking forward to having the opportunity to recruit my first council,” said SPARK Boston Director Aidan McDonough. “One of the bedrocks for the SPARK Boston Council is to be diverse, including in neighborhoods council members call home. We had over 150 applicants to fill out the 40 person council and I feel that, with the help of the volunteers who managed the interview process, we’ve done just that.”

“I applied to SPARK because I wanted to become engaged

in the city that has profoundly shaped me as a young adult. During my time on the council, I learned about city resources, connected with representatives and councilors, and collaborated with other passionate residents across the city,” said SPARK Boston Council alum Amanda Miner. “This experience deepened my understanding of the city’s inner workings and broadened my perspective into how others experience and navigate life in Boston.”

Last year, SPARK Boston Council members had the opportunity to host Neighborhood Socials inviting residents, community leaders, and elected officials to network with Boston’s 20-35 year old constituency. SPARK Boston held multiple Chief Chats, informal speaking engagements with members of Mayor Wu’s cabinet, to learn more about the work being done to uplift Boston residents. The council held a Credit Building Workshop in partnership with the Mayor’s Center for Working Families to help give residents better access to financial literacy resources.

“Boston residents ages 20-34 years old make up 35% of our city’s population. SPARK Boston council members bring such a fresh perspective to their roles as leaders in neighborhoods, an eagerness to learn from experienced City leaders and commitment to serving constituents,” said Chief of Community Engagement Brianna Millor. “I look forward to partnering with our

newest cohort of council members to ensure our city is the best place for young adults to live, work and enjoy all that Boston has to offer.”

The 2024-2025 Council includes:

Mission Hill

- Colin McAndrew
- Rebecca Manley

Allston

- Jose Mendoza

Back Bay

- David P. Litwin

Brighton

- Beza Zenebe
- Alexandra Daukaus

Charlestown

- Olivia Steinke

Chinatown/Downtown

- Faaiz Masood

Dorchester

- Kristina Melendez
- Monet Eugene
- Paul Buchanan
- Sayyida Jean-Charles
- Annie Jean-Baptiste

East Boston

- Aileen Gabriel
- Elizabeth Auguste

Fenway

- Marine Nimblette

Hyde Park

- Zoë Petty

Jamaica Plain

- Montell Khaldi

- Eva Scapicchio

Kenmore

- Naomi Knight

Mattapan

- Kyle Alexander Saunders

North End

- Chelsea Lauder

Roxbury

- Arantxa Melendez
- Olivia Grant
- Tanesha Beckford

Roslindale

- Samuel Brenner
- Ramya Ravel
- Ronn Newsome
- Elvira K Mora
- James Glenister

South Boston

- Lia Valdez
- Allie Ross
- Richard Chapman

South End

- Peter Heller
- Ritika Iyer
- John Ferraro
- Karim Addetia

West End

- Shinhui Cai

West Roxbury

- Conor Bond

For more information on SPARK Boston programming and initiatives, please visit boston.gov/sparkboston.



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Huntington Avenue

Continued from page 3

While there were no comments from the public during this brief portion of the Board meeting, City Councilor Sharon Durkan read a letter signed by both her and At-Large City Councilor Henry Santana earlier in the meeting.

Specifically, the letter

urged the BPDA Board to vote in support of the proposal, praised the proponents for being responsive to community input and what the project would bring to the area, and communicated hopes that the developer would be responsive during the building process.

Before the proposal went to a vote, Priscilla Rojas, the Board’s Chair, commented on the proposal. “I just want to make a comment and thank the development

team and Stephen and our team internally for the additional time and care that you took to resolve these items and the time and care that I know you will provide going forward during construction as we make improvements to that area of the city.”

The project was ultimately approved. To learn more about it, visit its webpage at <https://www.bostonplans.org/projects/development-projects/wentworth-500-huntington-avenue>.



PLEASE RECYCLE THIS NEWSPAPER

SCENES FROM 2024 MISSION HILL ROAD RACE

The annual Mission Hill Road Race drew perfect weather and a fantastic turnout, bringing the community together to support the Kevin W. Fitzgerald Park, a cherished landmark in the neighborhood. A heartfelt thank you

goes out to the dedicated sponsors, volunteers, and organizers who make this event possible each year, as well as to all the participants and spectators who came out to enjoy the race. Volunteers had an amazing time

at this year's Mission Hill 5K, with special thanks to Mission Hill Main Streets for organizing the event and to Mike's Donuts for providing pre-race refreshments.



Mayor's Office Photos by Jeremiah Robinson





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What's Happening on Main Streets

BY COURTNEY WRIGHT
SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE

"Life starts all over again when it gets crisp in the fall."
— F. Scott Fitzgerald,
The Great Gatsby

Thank you to everyone who came out to support Mission Hill Main Streets at our Annual Meeting/Awards last Tuesday evening. It was so nice to see so many residents, business owners+staff, institutional partners, and organizational neighbors come together to honor our long-standing businesses and community builders. In addition, we were joined by Mayor Michelle Wu, Rep. Chynah Tyler, Councilors Sharon Durkan and Ben Weber, and staff from Councilor Santana's office. A special thank you to our guest MC's: Chris Freiss, Aliece Dutson, and Fa-



Event emcees, Ali and Father Dabney.

ther Dabney. We had a great time celebrating our community and sincerely appreciated the opportunity to do so with so many neighbors and friends. Despite the event being held outside on one of our first chilly evenings, there was plenty of warmth felt as we honored this year's



Mike's Donuts is the recipient of the 2024 Legacy Business Award. Owners, Bruce and Maria Weinograd, are also celebrating 50 years of ownership this year.

awardees:

Business of the year: Mike's Donuts, 2024 Legacy Business Awardee (and celebrating 50 years of ownership under Bruce and Maria Weinograd this year)

Exceptional MH Neighbor: Penguin Pizza (opened 20 years ago- Sept 24, 2004)

Volunteer of the year: Lydia Pena

Cherished Neighborhood Asset: Tobin Community Center and staff

Kevin W. Fitzgerald Award: Brigadier General Enoch "Woody" Woodhouse II

Thanks again to the Tobin Community Center for hosting the meeting in their beautiful back yard space, and to John Jackson, Andrew Angus and Hector Galarza who helped with logistics and set-up.

Before we look forward to October, it wouldn't feel like the end of September without the annual Mission Hill Road Race. Last Saturday, hundreds of people returned to the Kevin W. Fitzgerald Park for the grueling 5k up and down the hills of the neighborhood. The weather was perfect for the event and the turnout was one of the biggest in recent years. There were activities and live music up in the Park for those not walking or running

and plenty of people along the route cheering on the participants. Congratulations to MH Neighborhood Housing Services on another successful race!

On Saturday, October 19th, Boston Building Resources will be celebrating National Reuse Day with a free community event. There will be live music, free food, and lots of fun activities. Please check out the event page for more info: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/national-reuse-day-celebration-tickets-1002509070617?aff=oddtcreator>

Additionally, Boston Building Resources (BBR) is seeking volunteers to help in the nonprofit Reuse Center in Roxbury Crossing. Lending a hand will advance work located at the intersection of affordable housing and environmental sustainability.

The Reuse Center at BBR takes in donations of new and gently used building materials and makes them available at affordable prices. The environment is spared from tons of needless

Continued on page 7

MISSION HILL MAIN STREETS

Happy Fall Mission Hill!

Mission Hill Main Streets
1542 Tremont Street
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(617) 232 0182
missionhillmainstreetsboston@gmail.com
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Penguin Pizza, which opened 20 years ago in September, received the "Exceptional Mission Hill Neighbor" award.

Main Streets

Continued from page 6

waste, and local residents on very limited budgets can afford to repair and improve their homes.

“Boston Building Resources is a great place to volunteer if you love to learn,” said Cynthia Walat, BBR’s volunteer coordinator. “It is dynamic and thriving environment where you can expect opportunities for creative thinking, problem solving, and collaboration. Our staff organize the work to make it a great experience for everyone.”

“We are seeking volunteers who can offer at least four hours per week,” said Walat. “This is a great opportunity for a retiree who wants to remain active, a person who works from home who wants to connect with the community, or anyone who wants experience working in an organization that is focused on sustainability.”

Boston Building Resources is

located at 100 Terrace Street, a short walk from the MBTA Orange Line’s Roxbury Crossing stop and near the Southwest Corridor bike path. For more information, email volunteers@bostonbuildingresources.com.

On October 22 from 9-10:30 a.m. Mission Grammar School is hosting their annual A Morning at Mission! This is a wonderful way for friends new and old to get to know the school and see their scholars and champions in action. Please RSVP and direct any questions to Cara Blanchette, Director of Advancement & Communications, at cblanchette@missiongrammar.org. I have been taken on a tour before by some of the Mission Grammar Scholars and can confidently say it is a great way to start your day!

Coming up at the end of the month is Halloween on the Hill! The annual event will be happening on the Thursday of Halloween from 4 p.m.-8 p.m. beginning at the Tobin Community Center at 1481 Tremont St. Families can

pick up their trick or treat bags and maps of local businesses that will be handing out candy throughout the neighborhood. If you are brave enough, the Tobin youth and staff always put together an awesome haunted house in the basement of the community center. Each year, Halloween on the Hill brings out hundreds of youth and families

to Mission Hill and our business district to celebrate and enjoy Halloween safely and with lots of fun activities. Look out for flyers with more information.

New England Baptist Hospital and BILH are in the process of conducting their community needs assessment and need your help! For all that they do in the community, it’d be nice to assist

them in this endeavor by taking a couple of minutes to fill out their survey about health needs in the community at: boston.gov/bphc-bostonchna. Please take a couple of minutes to fill out the survey. Also, please feel free to share with family and friends that live in Boston. Thank you!

Happy Fall everybody!



Representatives of the Tobin Community Center, which was named a Cherished Neighborhood Asset.



Mayor Michelle Wu and officials with recipient of the Kevin W. Fitzgerald Award, Brigadier General Enoch ‘Woody’ Woodhouse II.



“When I own a home, I’ll invite the entire family over.”

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Experience the Wizarding World of Harry Potter at the Galleria

STORY BY MARIANNE SALZA

Indulge on a sweet glass of draft butterbeer and tangibly explore the rich world and castle in Harry Potter: The Exhibition, on display now in Boston at the CambridgeSide through January 5, 2025. Created and developed by Warner Bros. Discovery Global Entertainment, in partnership with Imagine Exhibitions and Eventim Live, the enchanting show celebrates the iconic characters, creatures, and scenes from the beloved books and films, dazzling millions of people around the world, from Brazil, to France, and Austria. “I really like when you come in from page to screen into the castle. There is the Marauder’s

Map, and your name comes up. It’s so fun,” said Tom Zaller, Imagine Exhibitions CEO/President, who encourages guests to tour in costume. “I didn’t realize how impactful it was for people. The whole idea is to personalize it, and also for the magic to be behind the scenes.”

Featured are mesmerizing, immersive environments that offer interactive elements, and authentic wardrobes and props, such as the Sword of Gryffindor. Encased memorabilia includes a first edition of the 1998 novel, “Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone,” by JK Rowling -- protected in a Gringotts bank safe -- the leather, sorting hat, costumes, and a student trunk and luggage trolley from Platform 9 ¾.



Photos provided by Harry Potter: The Exhibition
A family exploring the various Hogwarts houses.



The Great Hall offering the illusion of depth.

The journey begins by receiving a Golden Snitch bracelet that can be tapped to track progress and earned points for one’s chosen Hogwarts house, be it Gryffindor, Slytherin, Hufflepuff, or Ravenclaw. Guests select their wands and patronus for defense before embarking on their magical travels.

Visitors will be introduced to Harry, Hermione, and Ron, and view movie clips of their first meeting before heading to Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, where one can meander through the Grand Staircase and portraits.

Guests wander beneath the twinkling, levitating candles in the Great Hall, which, in the movies, boasts a ceiling of 70-foot-high, sometimes opening to the sky.

“On the drawing board, this was what I was most excited about. It’s layered with projection screens. I love it,” revealed Zaller, about the depth illusions. “It’s hard to capture in pictures. It’s better to be here.”

Practice spell casting and follow an ingredients list to brew a potion. Visitors can also have their prophecies revealed while peering into a globe in Professor Trelawney’s Divination Classroom.

“What makes our job fun and interesting is that we’re three-dimensional, so when you walk through, it’s not like you’re watching a screen – you’re in it,” emphasized Zaller, sitting at a table in the Great Hall while wearing a Gryffindor robe and t-shirt. “You have to be able to

feel it.”

Sit on a massive armchair in Hagrid’s hut, or pot a crying Mandrake seedling in Professor Sprout’s herbology greenhouse.

“One of the things that we wanted to do is reconnect you to moments and remind you what

happened 20 years ago,” Zaller explained. “The Harry Potter stories are great, and you could relate to being there. The adaptations from page to screen are well done.”

Continued on page 9

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Amie Rui of Eon Dance Troupe performing at Opening Our Doors 2023
Photo credit: Annielly Camargo

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Gazette Pet of the Week

by Sarah Carroll

SKYLAR

Skylar is a beautiful 7 year old gal who was adopted years ago and then found herself back at the shelter because her family was gone long hours daily. She is a big girl and so sweet! She is hoping her new family will come along soon, as she is used to being a family pet!

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MBTA launches NextGen Bus Navigation Pilot Program

SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE

The MBTA has announced the beginning of its new NextGen Bus Navigation Pilot Program, a new initiative designed to assist bus operators in navigating detours and other road challenges. In partnership with Swiftly, a transit technology company committed to open data and interoperability, off-the-shelf tablet technology will be piloted in the operator cabs of up to 100 buses by the end of the year, providing turn-by-turn directions similar to navigation apps like Google Maps or Apple Maps. The NextGen Bus Navigation Pilot is supported by major new features in Skate, the MBTA's internally managed bus dispatching app, which allow the MBTA's Operations Control Center to map out, monitor, and manage unplanned bus detours on-the-fly.

"This technology is a step forward in improving service for customers and supporting our drivers who need to be nimble when unforeseen obstacles get in the way of running vehicles on regular routes," said MassDOT Secretary and CEO Monica Tibbits-Nutt. "MBTA bus service is a great option for travel and we believe the new technology will result in more efficient bus service, reduced travel times, and improved service reliability."

"As we continue to improve

bus service for our riders, it's important to put our workforce in a better position to succeed. We all know how the ability to navigate our road network can vary from day to day, and even hour by hour, affecting travel times. We are utilizing technology to give our dispatchers and operators the tools to make timely decisions and deliver improved and more reliable travel for our riders. The NextGen Bus Navigation Pilot does just that," said MBTA General Manager and CEO Phillip Eng. "Providing our front-line bus operators with turn-by-turn directions is another example of the investments we're making in our workforce, building a more resilient and nimble transit system. Credit goes to our Technology and Operations teams along with our Safety Division that have worked to ensure the NextGen Bus Navigation Pilot Program is safely implemented."

Automobile drivers increasingly use navigation apps like Google Maps or Apple Maps for turn-by-turn directions, which typically provide the fastest, most efficient route. However, the needs of the MBTA's buses, which operate along fixed routes making hundreds of scheduled stops at bus stops, are very different. During special events, closed streets, and unplanned subway service suspensions, MBTA bus-

es follow approved detours and shuttle bus accommodations provided by the Control Center, which can sometimes be complicated by narrow and winding streets.

In designing and implementing the NextGen Bus Navigation Pilot, the MBTA addressed these challenges by:

Using modern practices from the technology industry: Rather than relying purely on proprietary systems, the MBTA combined its in-house software engineering staff experts with an in-development tool from Swiftly.

Centering safety: Minimizing distractions is even more important for bus operators than for most drivers given their varied responsibilities keeping riders safe. The MBTA's Safety Division has been engaged since this pilot's inception, orchestrating testing and planning that helped Swiftly and internal technology staff ensure that the pilot technology is supportive, not distracting, for bus operators.

Listening to front-line staff: For almost a year, the MBTA and Swiftly iterated and tested with bus operators, inspectors, and dispatchers, ensuring that the turn-by-turn software and new detour features in Skate reflect the input and expertise of front-line staff.

"Providing safe and reliable service is the core to everything

we do at the T — and that starts with supporting our operators," said MBTA Director of Bus Safety Asia Williams. "Turn-by-turn navigation will ensure a seamless transition as the T continues to update its routes and reinforce bus operators' existing knowledge, giving them more confidence. We tested this feature with our operators and instructors to ensure that the technology works seamlessly in real-world conditions, creating a safer on-board experience."

Swiftly's navigation solution will provide bus operators audible and visual turn-by-turn directions from a low-cost, off-the-shelf tablet. Concurrently, new features in the internal Skate app allow bus dispatchers to draw detours on a map from the Control Center — Skate then

allows these detour maps to be shared with inspectors and other staff who manage service in real time across the system. The MBTA plans to eventually push these detour directions to the in-cab Swiftly tablets, and ultimately also to bus riders via industry-standard real-time open data feeds.

"We are delighted to partner with the MBTA to bring a modern navigation experience for the unique concerns of transit to life," said Swiftly's Chief Product Officer Meredith Bordon. "With Navigation in Onboard App, transit agencies can prevent wrong turns, improve service reliability and safety, guide operators through detours, and build operator confidence. While

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Harry Potter

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Zaller remembered becoming a fan of the series when he began reading the books and watching the movies with his oldest son, nearly two decades ago. He believes that Harry Potter is still cherished by fans today because of how relatable the characters are.

Fortunate to have been a part of the experience, Zaller has developed into an even greater fan since starting the project in 2020. He has been intensely involved in choosing the details for all of the elements throughout the exhibition; and now envisions himself in the role of Harry Potter: not always a rule-follower, less polished, but with a deep care and determination to do the right thing.

"I've created lots of different experiences. Potter was always



A little one potting a Mandrake seedling.

the Holy Grail for me. It was a huge honor when Warner Bros. called," said Zaller, who would find it convenient to be able to use the "alohomora" spell to unlock doors and other objects in his day-to-day life. "I love it. People love it. You feel the energy when you're here."

Visit www.HarryPotterExhibition.com to learn more about Harry Potter: The Exhibition,

located at 100 Cambridge Place, Cambridge, in the former Best Buy space. Hours are Friday-Saturday 9am-7pm, Sunday-Thursday, 9am-5pm, and holidays, 9am-7pm. Browse the gift shop (no ticket necessary), which features exclusive apparel, products, and treats such as chocolate frogs and butterbeer candies.



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EDITORIAL

Bicycling is not safe in Greater Boston

The tragic death of a 62 year-old bicyclist last week on Memorial Drive has highlighted the lack of safety on our roadways for even experienced cyclists. We ourselves know first-hand how dangerous Metro Boston's roads can be. We train for triathlons and are fully aware that we are taking our life into our own hands whenever we take off for a ride. Even in places where there are bike lanes on the roads, those bike lanes always just end precipitously -- eventually forcing cyclists to navigate unsafe roads alongside high-speed automobile traffic.

And even when we are in a bike lane, we still have to deal with motorists who pull out halfway into the bike lane in order to see oncoming traffic, or who are distracted thanks to cell phones, or who are under the influence (either by alcohol or marijuana), or who are just bad drivers, not to mention the prospect of being "doored" by an inattentive driver exiting their parked car adjacent to the bike lane. Although we applaud the trend toward encouraging bicycling both for exercise and in order to reduce our dependence on cars for environmental reasons (we used to commute to work on our bike on nice days and rode our bike routinely when we were in college in Cambridge), the reality is that bicycling never is going to be widely-adopted by commuters thanks to rain, snow, ice, and summer heat-and-humidity. It's a good way to get exercise, but it has its limitations for our increasingly-aging populations and for those who are not mobile.

Biking has its place in communities with designated bike paths, such as those on Cape Cod and the islands, where we enjoyed many bike rides with our children when they -- and we -- were younger.

But the reality of the push to get people on bicycles, as laudable as it may be, is that it only will lead to more tragedies on our unsafe roads. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reported that 1,105 bicyclists were killed in motor-vehicle traffic crashes in 2022, a 13% increase from 976 in 2021. In addition, the Consumer Product Safety Commission reports there were 405,411 emergency department-treated injuries associated with bicycles in 2022.

In New York City, last year was the deadliest year for cyclists since 1999, according to that city's Department of Transportation. Of the 30 cyclists who died in 2023 on NYC streets, 23 died riding e-bikes, which is more than double the previous record for e-bike fatalities. Serious injuries among cyclists in NYC went up last year as well, with a total of 395 cyclists who were severely injured, including 79 who were riding e-bikes, an increase of about 50 from the previous year.

The U.S. never is going to be Europe, where bicycling was a way of life before the automobile and the roadways in major cities were designed with bicycling in mind. We certainly would like to see safer roads for bicyclists in and around the Greater Boston area, especially if we can add dedicated bike paths. But until we have figured it out (and have the money to pay for it), we fear that more tragedies are inevitable.

Deja vu all over again for long-time Sox, Pats fans

The Red Sox once again are on the outside looking in. The Sox have failed to make the playoffs for the third year in a row and the fifth time in six years. The Sox had appeared destined for a playoff spot at the midseason All-Star break, only to falter miserably in the second half of the season, a pattern of the past three years.

As for the pathetic Patriots, it's hard to imagine them winning more than one or two games for the remainder of the year, which means they will finish up even worse than last year's four-win team, leaving them out of the playoffs for the fourth season in the past five. Even worse to contemplate is that the future for the Pats appears dim. As long as Allen, Mahomes, and Jackson are still in their prime, the Pats at best will be a .500 ballclub for the next decade.

Although both the Sox and the Pats enjoyed incredible success in the first two decades of this century, the downward trajectory for both teams is not all that surprising. The Sox and the Pats may be rated among the most valuable sports franchises in the world -- the Patriots recently were ranked the fourth most-valuable NFL team -- but the ownerships of both teams take their incredibly loyal fan base for granted and appear disinterested in constructing a championship-caliber team.

The Pats' demise must be particularly galling for owner Bob Kraft, who often speaks of being a Patriot fan from the founding of the franchise in 1960 and then enduring the decades when the Patriots were among the worst teams in the NFL.

Although younger Boston sports fans came of age during a 20-year period of excellence, the woeful performances of the Sox and the Pats these days bring back sad memories for older fans of the early 1960s for the Red Sox ("When April's high expectations turned to September's tears", in the words of Ken Coleman on the Impossible Dream record) and the latter half of that decade when the Pats were the worst team in the NFL.

Ironically, when the Pats and the Sox were awful in that era, it was the Celtics who brought us success with their incredible run of NBA titles led by Bill Russell -- and once again the Celts seem to be our only hope for joy once again, just as they were six decades ago.

With the tough summer for Sox fans behind us and the fall football season fast-forwarding (so it ends quickly) for the Patriots, hopefully the Celts will bring us some salvation this coming winter and spring.

GUEST OP-ED

A milestone for Massachusetts housing: new solutions for a growing crisis

BY SEN. LYDIA EDWARDS

On July 31, the Massachusetts legislature passed a groundbreaking \$5.2 billion housing bond bill. Less than a week later, Governor Maura Healey signed it into law, setting the stage for one of the most ambitious efforts in the state's history to address its growing housing challenges. The legislation represents not just a substantial financial commitment, but a bold vision for the future of affordable housing across the Commonwealth.

This bill tackles critical issues that have long plagued our state: deteriorating public housing, a lack of affordable homes, and an urgent need for policy innovation. The housing bond bill allocates \$2 billion toward the maintenance and redevelopment of public housing, which will have a direct impact on the lives of over 70,000 residents. These investments will finally address safety concerns and neglected conditions that have been ignored for far too long.

"For years, we've heard from families in public housing about the dangers they face from outdated, unsafe conditions," said Senator Lydia Edwards. "With this bill, we're taking action, ensuring people can live in dignity and safety. But it's also about

more than fixing buildings—it's about fixing our approach to housing."

The bond bill doesn't stop at repairs. It includes \$200 million for a forward-thinking demonstration program that will transition public housing into mixed-income communities. This shift will reduce the need for state-funded modernization in the future while fostering vibrant, diverse neighborhoods.

"As Senate Chair of Housing, I had a front-row seat to help negotiate, plan, and push this language forward. At the heart of the bill is a comprehensive approach to affordable housing." The legislation pours \$800 million into the Affordable Housing Trust Fund and adds hundreds of millions more into other key housing programs, such as the Housing Stabilization and Investment Trust Fund and the Housing Innovations Trust Fund. These funds will fuel projects that create and preserve affordable housing, helping to close the widening gap between housing demand and supply.

The bond bill recognizes that housing is not just about buildings—it's about people and communities. It includes \$275 million for environmentally friendly

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

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Op-Ed

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housing projects, ensuring that as we build more homes, we also contribute to a sustainable future. Additionally, \$100 million is designated for homes for first-time buyers, while \$70 million will support housing development for people with intellectual disabilities and people with mental illness.

This bill also introduces meaningful policy changes aimed at making housing more equitable and accessible. Senator Edwards led the charge on a provision creating a process for eviction records to be sealed, allowing individuals to petition for sealing records of no-fault evictions, rent nonpayment due to economic hardship, older fault evictions, records from civil actions related to property misuse, and record from dismissed eviction actions or judgements favoring the defendant. The reform includes protections against the disclosure of sealed records by consumer reporting agencies and ensures applicants can answer "no record" for sealed evictions when applying for housing or credit. "Eviction should not be a

life sentence," Senator Edwards stated. "This reform is about fairness and giving people a second chance." Moreover, the provision reflects the input of a wide coalition, including the Greater Boston Real Estate Board, who endorsed the original bill in 2023.

In a creative approach to addressing vacant commercial spaces, the bill supports a Commercial Property Conversion Program that will transform underutilized properties into much-needed housing units. This not only addresses the housing shortage but also breathes new life into struggling commercial districts.

Other notable reforms include:

- Making it easier to build Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) on single-family lots.
- Local Option for Veterans Preference in affordable housing programs. Municipalities may opt to reserve up to 10% of affordable units for veterans.
- Ensuring that state-funded housing projects comply with responsible contractor standards to protect workers' rights.
- Creating seasonal communities definition and policies to

protect communities with extensive population growth during the touring season. One such policy is the municipal worker preference.

- Creating a policy on Social Housing.
- Creating a commission on Senior Housing.
- Creating an Office of Fair Housing.

The housing bond bill is a testament to the power of innovative policy paired with serious investment. It's a reflection of our commitment to ensuring that housing is a right, not a privilege, and that no one is left behind in the push for more affordable homes. As Senator Edwards put it, "This bill is more than a financial investment—it's an investment in the future of Massachusetts. A future where housing is stable, accessible, and equitable for all. I am grateful for the opportunity to lead as a freshman Senator in a conference committee on one of the leading issues of our time, contributing to a bill that tackles such critical challenges head-on."

With the enactment of this historic legislation, Massachusetts is not just responding to today's housing crisis but also

laying the foundation for long-term solutions that will benefit generations to come. This is more than just a victory for housing advocates—it's a win for every-

one in the Commonwealth.
Lydia Edwards is a State Senator representing the Third Suffolk District.

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LOCAL STUDENTS EARN ACADEMIC HONORS

NUNEZ NAMED TO DEAN'S LIST AT UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND GLOBAL CAMPUS

Jael Nunez of Mission Hill was named to the Dean's List for the summer 2024 term at University of Maryland Global Campus. To be eligible for the honor, a student must complete at least six credits during the term, earned a grade point aver-

age of at least 3.5 for the term, and maintained a cumulative GPA of 3.5 at UMGC.

University of Maryland Global Campus was founded more than 75 years ago specifically to serve the higher education needs of working adults and military servicemembers. Today, UMGC is the largest provider of post-secondary education in Maryland and continues its global tradition with online and hybrid courses, more than 175 classroom and service locations worldwide, and

more than 125 degrees and certificates backed by the reputation of a state university and the University System of Maryland.

HERD NAMED TO SNHU PRESIDENT'S LIST

Andrew Herd of Mission Hill has been named to Southern New Hampshire University's (SNHU) Summer 2024 President's List. The summer terms run from May to August.

Full-time undergraduate

students who have earned a minimum grade-point average of 3.700 and above for the reporting term are named to the President's List. Full-time status is achieved by earning 12 credits over each 16-week term or paired 8-week terms grouped in fall, winter/spring, and summer.

Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU) is a private, nonprofit, accredited institution with a 92-year history of educating traditional-aged students and working adults. Now serv-

ing more than 200,000 learners worldwide, SNHU offers approximately 200 accredited undergraduate, graduate and certificate programs, available online and on its 300-acre campus in Manchester, NH. Recognized as one of the "Most Innovative" regional universities by U.S. News & World Report and one of the fastest-growing universities in the country, SNHU is committed to expanding access to high quality, affordable pathways that meet the needs of each learner.

MBTA

Continued from page 9

feedback from dozens of transit agencies informed Swiftly's approach, the MBTA's unique open data standard orientation and innovative development approach made the agency an extraordinary partner in solving transit navigation challenges for the whole industry."

By building on a combination of in-house tools, off-the-shelf

hardware, and modern vendors like Swiftly, the MBTA is preparing for future innovation and iteration. In an industry where technology can often remain stagnant, the MBTA's Technology Innovation Department can iterate quickly based on feedback from dispatchers and other front-line staff.

"We've hired over 350 new operators in the last year. Though we train operators on all routes, it still can be a nerve-wracking experience to get out on the

road for new operators," said MBTA Executive Director of Bus Transportation Sean Mills. "This helps provide them with more confidence to learn more routes and be able to cover what would otherwise be dropped trips, when they have availability."

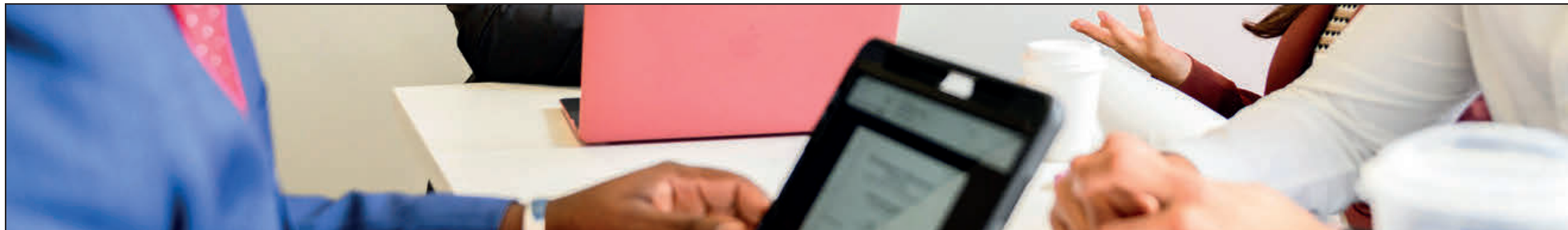
"The team has built the detours feature with dispatchers, for dispatchers," said MBTA Bus Dispatcher Byron Randolph. "They've done it by spending time learning from us, speaking our language, and understanding

our needs. I appreciate what the team has built. It'll make detour management so much easier for dispatchers by saving us time and improving how we work with staff in the field."

The MBTA will monitor the NextGen Bus Navigation Pilot over the fall and the winter 2024/2025. Following this evaluation period, the new technologies will be prepared to roll out to all bus garages with detailed real-time bus detour information available for riders too.

The MBTA's Technology Innovation team utilizes creative technology solutions to improve transit service for riders and the T's workforce. Members of the public interested in joining this exciting team can view their open positions online.

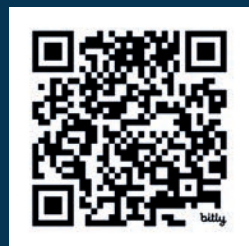
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