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Acting Mayor Kim Janey is sworn into office on Wednesday by Supreme Judicial Court Chief Justice Kimberly Budd, as her granddaughter holds the Bible for her. She becomes the first African American and woman to lead the City of Boston following the departure on Monday night of former Mayor Martin Walsh.

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

BY LAUREN BENNETT

In a ceremony at City Hall on Wednesday afternoon, Kim Janey was sworn in as the first Black person and first woman

to lead the City of Boston, a day after Mayor Marty Walsh left for Washington following his confirmation as US Labor Secretary.

Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley presided over the ceremony, which was attended by Janey's friends and family, while Chief Justice Kimberly Budd, administered the oath of office. An invocation was delivered by Reverend Willie Bodrick II, Senior Pastor at the Twelfth Baptist Church. Pressley was the first woman of color on the Boston City Council and Massachusetts' first Black Congresswoman, and Budd was the first Black woman to become Chief Justice of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court.

Walsh gives final farewell after Senate confirmation

BY LAUREN BENNETT

Mayor Marty Walsh gave his final press conference as mayor of Boston on March 22, and headed off to Washington, D.C. on Tuesday morning to begin his new role as US Secretary of Labor.

The Senate voted 68 to 29 to confirm Walsh's position late

Monday afternoon, after which he delivered his heartfelt final farewell to Bostonians.

Walsh reflected on his past seven years as Boston's mayor, saying that "there is no other elected or appointed position where you are so closely in touch with the people you serve. It's

emony, which was attended by Janey's friends and family, while Chief Justice Kimberly Budd, administered the oath of office. An invocation was delivered by Reverend Willie Bodrick II, Senior Pastor at the Twelfth Baptist Church. Pressley was the first woman of color on the Boston City Council and Massachusetts' first Black Congresswoman, and Budd was the first Black woman to become Chief Justice of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court.

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

Pressley called Janey a "fierce

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Jamaica Plain's Seed adult cannabis dispensary opens

BY JOHN LYNDIS

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

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

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

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

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

On February 21, 2017 Jawara, also a musician and marijuana activist like his father, was beaten into a coma by a fellow inmate while he was serving a one-year sentence for marijuana possession in New Jersey.

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Kim Janey juró como alcaldesa

BY LAUREN BENNETT

El miércoles por la tarde, Kim Janey juró como la primera persona negra y la primera mujer en dirigir la ciudad de Boston.

La congresista Ayanna Pressley presidió la ceremonia. Pressley fue la primera mujer de color en el Ayuntamiento de Boston y la primera congresista negra de Massachusetts.

"Este es un día de orgullo para la ciudad de Boston y todos los bostonianos", dijo.

Pressley llamó a Janey una defensora de los niños y la equidad en la educación.

Janey fue la primera mujer y la primera persona negra en convertirse en Concejal de la Ciudad del Distrito 7, y finalmente

se convirtió en presidenta del Concejo Municipal.

"Ella liderará con ojos claros, un corazón lleno y una mano firme mientras comenzamos con la reconstrucción de nuestra ciudad", dijo Pressley.

"Estoy ante ustedes como la primera mujer y la primera alcaldesa negra de Boston, la ciudad que amo", dijo Janey.

Janey agradeció a su familia por su apoyo a lo largo de los años.

"Cuando era niña en Boston, fui nutrida por una familia que creía en mí y estaba rodeada de buenos vecinos que sabían mi nombre",

Continued on page 2

CALLING ALL BOSTON-BASED ARTISTS!

Design competition for 2,500 sq. ft. of murals in JP

The Stonybrook Neighborhood Association (SNA) and SSG Development and Con-

struction are commissioning a Boston-based artist (or artists) to design murals for a new Extra Space Storage building at 141 McBride Street in Jamaica Plain. There are two areas of the building available, so two opportunities to submit mural proposals! Applicants are welcome to

apply for one or both areas by first submitting previous work. When complete, the murals will create a significant presence in the neighborhood.

The SNA has assembled a 7-member jury composed of Boston arts professionals and community representatives who

will select the winners. Jurors include Museum of Fine Arts curator Karen Haas and co-founder of Artists for Humanity (AFH) Rob “ProBlak” Gibbs.

Prizes to be awarded:

- \$500 for each semifinalist.
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For more information and

application, please visit: https://artist.callforentry.org/festivals_unique_info.php?ID=7716

Applications are being accepted now

Deadline for submissions: April 17, 2021

Questions: SNAmurals@gmail.com

Kim Janey

Continued from page 1

advocate on behalf of our children and education equity,” and said that “this is a proud day for the City of Boston and all Bostonians.”

Janey was the first woman and first Black person to become the District 7 City Councilor, eventually becoming the City Council president. According to City Councilor Matt O’Malley’s

office, O’Malley has now become City Council President Pro Tempore as he was previously the vice president.

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

“Today is a new day,” Janey said in her speech. “I stand before you as the first woman and first Black mayor of Boston, the city that I love. I come to this day with life experience that is

different from the men who came before me.”

Janey thanked her family for their support over the years.

“As a girl growing up in Boston I was nurtured by a family who believed in me and surrounded by good neighbors who knew my name,” she said.

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

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

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

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

Janey said that she will “fight” to ensure that vaccines are accessible for all, “especially in communities hardest hit” by the virus, as well as work to expand testing across the city.

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

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

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

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

She also spoke about racial justice in the city and the work she plans on doing on that front.

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

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

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

que planea hacer en ese frente.

“Desmantelar el racismo sistémico también incluye reformar la manera en que controlamos nuestra ciudad. Como alcalde, continuaré abogando y liderando la implementación de estas reformas”.

Janey dijo que hay más trabajo por hacer y que ese trabajo comienza ahora. Ella le agradeció al equipo de transición y al personal de la ciudad por su trabajo hasta ahora.

“De la justicia racial a la justicia ambiental, de viviendas asequibles a nuestro sistema de tránsito, desde nuestras escuelas públicas hasta la seguridad pública—no podemos volver atrás.”

Alcadesa

Continued from page 1

dijo.

Ella habló de su experiencia al ser trasladada en autobús a su escuela en la década de 1970 durante el esfuerzo por eliminar la segregación de las Escuelas Públicas de Boston.

“Arrojaron piedras e insultos raciales a mi autobús, simplemente por ser negra”, dijo.

Janey dijo que siempre ha sido una defensora activa de la educación pública para todos los estudiantes, especialmente como una madre joven que quería la mejor educación pública para su hija.

“Al asumir las responsabilidades de alcalde de Boston, prometo darles un liderazgo audaz y valiente”, dijo, y agregó que comenzará con un enfoque implacable para abordar los impactos del COVID-19.

Janey dijo que luchará para garantizar que las vacunas sean accesibles para todos, especialmente en las comunidades más afectadas por el virus, y trabajará para expandir las pruebas en toda la ciudad.

Janey mencionó el estudio de disparidad que se publicó recientemente que mostraba una enorme desigualdad en los contratos de nuestra ciudad.

También habló sobre la justicia racial en la ciudad y el trabajo

JP CHILDREN’S SOCCER

JP Children’s Soccer Welcomes you back for a Spring 2021 Soccer season!

We have modified our spring session to follow State and City guidelines with appropriate adjustments for COVID. As a result we will limit team sizes, and our overall number of players.

Please review our website for details:

<https://teamsideline.com/sites/jpcsregister/home>

Please register by April 14th

Coaches ALWAYS needed, and an additional price discount included for families able to participate in coaching.

We look forward to seeing you for soccer on Pinebanks again!

Sincerely, JPCS

JP Fútbol para Niños les da la bienvenida a la temporada de primavera 2021!

Hemos modificado la temporada de primavera para seguir las reglas generales del estado y ciudad apropiadamente para COVID. Como resultado, restringimos el número de jugadores por cada equipo y el número de participantes en total.

Favor de revisar nuestro sitio del web por más detalles:

<https://teamsideline.com/sites/jpcsregister/home>

Por favor registre su hijo antes del 14 de abril.

Siempre buscamos entrenadores y le damos un descuento especial para las familias que pueden participar como entrenadores.

¡Esperamos verlos en Pinebank por fútbol de nuevo!

Sinceramente, JPCS

JPNC hears from subcommittees; votes in a new member

BY LAUREN BENNETT

The Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council (JPNC) met virtually on March 23, where members heard updates from committee chairs, and one new member was elected to the Council.

HOUSING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Committee chair Carolyn Royce reported that members of the Friends of Blessed Sacrament Church came before the committee to speak about their public statement regarding their wishes for a future developer of the church, which is currently owned by the Hyde Square Task Force, which has put it on the market. The Task Force has been invited to come to the next meeting of the committee to speak about it from their point of view.

Royce also spoke about the letter to the BPDA and the developer of the proposed project at 3390 Washington St. (the BMA Paper site) that the committee has proposed to send. She said that the letter will lay out both areas of the project that the committee supports, and areas that they feel need more work or adjustment.

The committee supports the proposed parking numbers and the sustainability goals of the project, but they would like to see even more affordability and more information about specific Area Median Incomes for the affordable units. Royce also said that they hope the project team can improve the safety of the parking the way it is proposed now to better protect pedestrians and cyclists.

The JPNC voted to approve the sending of the letter.

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMITTEE

Committee Chair Michael Reiskind reported that Egleston Liquors at 3086 Washington St. requested “a change of description of the premises of its retail package store all alcoholic beverages license to add an addition in the rear for storage for up to 500 square feet,” according to the committee notice.

Reiskind said that the current owner is retiring and wants to sell to a younger owner. The new manager will be Carlos Castillo, and the store will have the

same hours it does right now.

He said that people like Castillo’s proposal for the store, which includes “no solid security grates on the front of the building,” but rather open mesh will be used and lights will be kept on inside the building at night to increase the visibility.

Reiskind also said that Castillo did not agree to not sell nips or single beers, as he believes he needs to sell them with such a small location. Reiskind said that there was a “lot of discussion about nips and we will be continuing that. It does reduce litter to not have nips and single beers, but it’s a major part of their business,” Reiskind said.

This matter went before the JPNC Executive Committee which recommended approval, and “a letter was submitted the next day,” he said. The Licensing Board is not expected to vote on this matter until April 1, but Reiskind said that he is trying to “exert some political pressure” for the vote to take place earlier, as the owner is in some serious time crunch with his bank lender on this issue.”

Additionally, the applicant would like to add another 500 square feet to the back of the store, and Reiskind said that the committee did not feel that he should have to go back through another public process for this request, so the committee voted in favor of the addition.

There are no plans for the addition yet, and the full Council will wait to vote until those are available. Gert Thorn said that he does not believe the license and expanding the building should be in the same vote.

“I am somewhat concerned that there are people who would take such a hard line with a small business owner who owns a package store...about nips and single beers,” said JPNC member Dave Baron. “We hear a lot of, I think, undeserved criticism of these sorts of local processes that they can elevate a sort of certain fussy neighbor that is just against things....You had people voting against the license because of this nips and single beer issue—that’s a real problem.”

Reiskind responded by saying that “people are allowed to vote” however they want, and this issue is being debated across the city.

POLICE REFORM SUBCOMMITTEE

The Public Service Committee has a subcommittee on police reform, and Reiskind spoke briefly about what the committee has been working on.

He said that the committee will attend all meetings of the city’s Civilian Review Board, for which it has sent three names on behalf of the JPNC.

He said that the committee is “trying to improve the training of the Boston Police Department,” and had asked for the curriculum that is taught at the Boston Police Academy. Subcommittee member Paige Sparks reported that after going “jumping

through many hoops,” the Municipal Police Training Committee (MPTC) released the the training information.

Reiskind also said that the subcommittee is “trying to expand the youth diversion programs they have in Suffolk County,” as well as “create a restorative justice work circle” by “shifting funding towards more prevention, street workers, and more use of trauma teams.”

He added, “I thought the committee would be more radical initially,” and said that it has “reduced in size,” and there are two police officers “who do attend regularly and do give us a good perspective,” but the subcommittee does not have a lot of people

of color as members.

He said that “in the future, we are going to keep working on this as well as add some public listening sessions.”

ZONING COMMITTEE

Committee chair Dave Baron said that the proposal at 16 Malcolm Road to remove the existing three-season porch and turn it into part of the house, construct a new deck and patio, build a new bathroom in the basement, and relocate the laundry facilities was “entirely uncontroversial.”

He said there was also a hot tub and landscaping proposed

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English High leads the way on increasing graduation rates

STAFF REPORT

Boston Public Schools (BPS) experienced the highest four-year graduation rate for the district on record, according to information released by state officials reporting graduation data for the 2019-20 school year. Boston showed a 2.2 percentage point increase in the four-year cohort graduation rate, rising from 73.2% in 2019 to 75.4% in 2020 – with JP’s English High School leading the way over the past six years.

The BPS graduation rate has increased nearly nine percentage points since 2014.

Over the last six years, The English High School in Jamaica Plain has seen its graduation rate increase nearly 30 percentage points, from 52.3% in 2015 to 81.8% in 2020. Last year English High, celebrating its 200th anniversary later this year, achieved a four-year graduation rate above the district rate and an increase of 4.9 percentage points from last year. District and school administrators point to creativity with autonomy and scheduling for improved student outcomes.

Students have an intervention and enrichment block every day where they can meet with any teacher or counselor for support and additional skill development. Any student with a grade below 70% must meet with their teacher in that subject during this period. Students can choose from a course catalog with the opportunity to trace a theme over the course of a semester.

Students are also able to choose from a course catalog to enroll in various electives. In addition, English offers an online credit recovery program led by an English High School alum, who acts as an advisor and mentor to keep students engaged.

“At English, we have shifted our practice to a relentless focus on student data. Our academic and student support teams are constantly reviewing student progress to ensure that all staff members are looking at both social-emotional supports and academic supports to provide students with an individualized plan based on their needs,” said Caitlin Murphy, English High’s Head of School, who started teaching at the school in 2009 and became school leader in 2018. “We remain committed to providing opportunities for our students to become more engaged in their schedules and coursework by increasing student choice and agency in their learning. Our students are excited about coming to school because once they’re with us, we know how to support them.”

The entire district saw increases in four-year graduation rates for multiple student groups, including increases between two and three percentage points for Black, Latinx, and white students. The four-year graduation rate increased for male and female students, with female students having a graduation rate of over 12 percentage points higher than males.

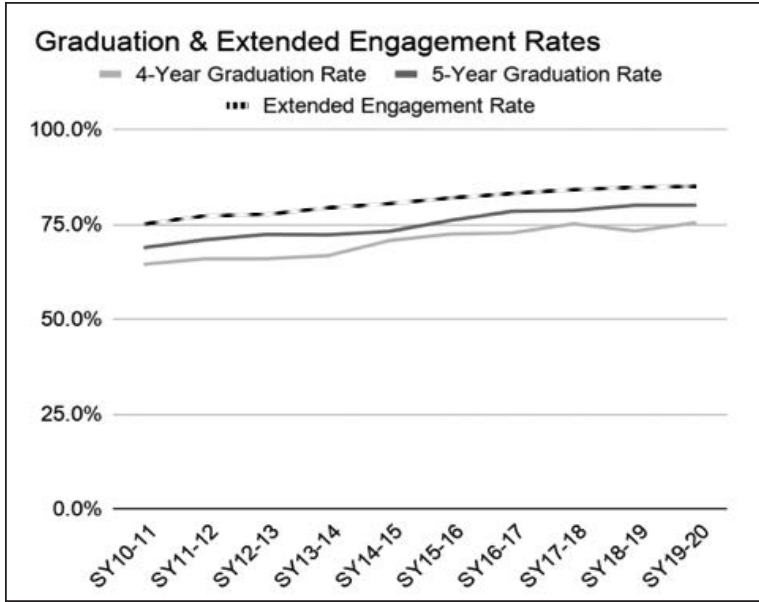
The annual dropout rate for Boston decreased by 0.3 per-

centage points, from 4.2% in the 2018-19 school year to 3.9% in the 2019-20 school year, representing 58 fewer students dropping out than in 2019. Most major student groups experienced a decrease in dropout rates, including English Learners. The dropout rate for students learning English decreased from 7.8% to 6.3% in 2020.

“Our students demonstrated their resolve and determination last spring, meeting their targets and earning their diplomas. I am proud of our students and grateful for our staff, who rallied to mobilize support for our students, particularly our most vulnerable learners and students who needed the extra boost to stay on track for graduation,” said BPS Superintendent Brenda Cassellius. “But we know there is still work to do. We must close all opportunity gaps and not let our kids fall behind. Boston Public Schools is committed to holding our students to a high standard. We are increasing rigor across our schools and continuing our high school redesign work, aligned to the MassCore which will ensure all of our students receive an excellent and equitable education so no student falls between the cracks.”

BPS school and district staff worked diligently to ensure that all students eligible for the modified process were able to benefit and earn their diplomas. Due to the pandemic, some seniors were unable to take the MCAS during the spring of 2020. BPS educators supported students in earning an equivalent competency-based determination, a modified process in which schools certified students received a passing grade in an equivalent course.

Fifteen BPS high schools experienced increases in their graduation rates, while seven schools saw no meaningful change in their graduation rates. Four of the nine transformation high schools saw increases in



the percentage of students graduating. Transformation schools are defined by the state’s Department of Elementary and Secondary Education as “in need of broad/comprehensive support” or “in need of focused/targeted support.” While graduation classes in BPS schools vary in size, Lyon High (+16.1), English High (+4.9), TechBoston Academy (+3.5), and Excel High (+1.8), all experienced increases in graduation rates.

Thirteen BPS high schools experienced decreases in their graduation rates. As part of the district’s high school redesign work, integral to the BPS strategic plan, BPS has worked to expand professional development for educators, specifically to improve outcomes for English Learners and sheltered English immersion classes. In addition, the district has led training on Pre-AP strategies for rigor in multiple content areas for Transformation schools and has opened this opportunity districtwide. BPS is also planning robust summer learning programs to motivate and engage students, provide credit recovery options, and address social and emotional learning.

Throughout the school year, BPS has bolstered its implementation of Panorama Student Success, a unified student manage-

ment system that allows staff to analyze individual student data, collaborate and problem-solve remotely, monitor interventions to determine their effectiveness, and assess issues of equity. Utilizing the management software, educators can create individualized student success plans. This affords BPS to be more systematic and coordinated in efforts to improve student outcomes and provides more substantial opportunities for collaboration at the district and school level in pursuit of equitable outcomes for each student.

“It’s so wonderful to see the achievement of Boston Public Schools students; across student groups, and despite the unpredictable and challenging circumstances our community encountered last year,” said Boston School Committee Chairperson Alexandra Oliver-Dávila. “Equally as impressive are the families who support our students. It has been proven repeatedly that it takes a village to raise and educate our children. These results are a testament to their tenacity and to the unwavering commitment of our educators, school-based and Central staff, parents, and caregivers who work tirelessly to improve educational outcomes for our students.”

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JPNC

Continued from page 3

that “looks really nice.” He said the Jamaica Hills Association had approved this project, and the full JPNC voted to approve it as well.

FILLING A VACANCY
The second announcement of

a vacancy in Area B led to two candidates nominating themselves for the position. The first was Micah Sachs, a former journalist who currently also serves on the Jamaica Pond Association, and the second was My’Kel McMillen, who works as the youth program director and is on the task force board at the Mildred Hailey apartments, where he is also a resident.

McMillen won the vote by the Council, and said he is interested in community development and police reform. He said he feels like the voice of the “little guy” often “gets shunned out. I feel like I’m one of those that isn’t afraid to speak. I’m here today to speak truth to power” and to ensure that “people who aren’t necessarily being heard are being heard.”

Friday declared 'Leonard Nimoy Day' in City of Boston

By DAN MURPHY

Just days before being confirmed by the Senate as the nation's Labor Secretary, exiting Mayor Martin Walsh declared this Friday, March 26, "Leonard Nimoy Day" in the City of Boston in honor of the English High graduate who skyrocketed to international fame in the 1960s for his portrayal of the iconic character, Mr. Spock, on the classic TV series, "Star Trek," on what would've been Nimoy's 90th birthday.

Walsh wrote that Nimoy, who died at age 83 in February of 2015, "through his fictional character, Mr. Spock – half human/half Vulcan – gave the immigrant, the refugee, and the oppressed, a hero for 'the Outsider.'"

Nimoy honed his acting skills at the Elizabeth Peabody House and the West End House, as well as through a summer scholarship for acting lessons at Boston College in his teens, wrote Walsh, and he was awarded an honorary degree from Boston University in 2012.

One local connection of Nimoy's overlooked in the city's official proclamation is that he's also a graduate of English High School, Class of 1948.

Michael Thomas, president and CEO of the English High School Association (EHSA) of Boston, said, "We are honored to join Mayor Walsh and the City of Boston in celebrating Leonard Nimoy Day on what would have been his 90th birthday."

Nimoy caught the acting bug as a member of English High's Drama and Discussion clubs, and School Radio Play, according to Thomas, and he was also a member of the Switchboard Boys in 1948.

"English High School has a long list of distinguished alumni," Thomas said, "but just as important, the school has always been an educational beacon of hope and a stepping stone for the working-class population in the city."

After graduating from English High, which was then located on Montgomery Street in the South End, Nimoy, who was the son of a barber, said Thomas, used the "seed money" he received from his grandfather to move to Los Angeles to pursue his acting career.

"I encourage all Bostonians to recognize Leonard Nimoy's commitment and dedication to the Arts and the lasting impact that he has left on the community," Walsh wrote in the proclamation, the local news outlet that first reported the story.

Walsh's proclamation dovetails with an effort to build a memorial to Nimoy in the West End that South End artist Tom Stocker began in earnest in March of 2015, one month after the actor's death.

Somewhat surprisingly, Stocker, who regularly watched the series in reruns in the '70s and even saw "Star Trek: the Motion Picture" upon its theatrical release in 1979, has never considered himself a "Trekkie." But instead Stocker's interest in Nimoy was piqued after watching "Leonard Nimoy's Boston" – a half-hour special that first aired on WGBH-TV in 2014 in which Nimoy, accompanied by his filmmaker son, Adam, returned to his native city to reminisce about growing up as the son of Jewish immigrants from Ukraine in the old West End.

Nimoy also revealed in his autobiography "I Am Not Spock," that he based the Vulcan salutation, which comprises a raised hand with the palm forward and thumb extended while the middle and ring finger ring fingers are parted, on a rabbinical blessing he saw performed during a religious service he accompanied his grandfather to as a boy at an Orthodox synagogue in the old West End.

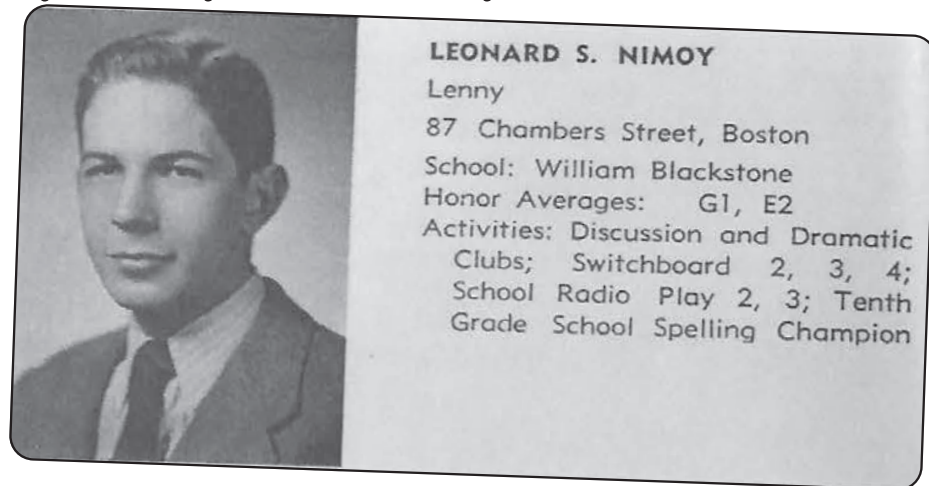
Stocker, who has been in close contact with Leonard's daughter, Julie Nimoy, has finalized the design for the memorial, which, he said, depicts the Vulcan hand salutation crafted from stainless-metal lattice and illuminated from inside using LED lighting. The Vulcan hand salutation (along with its accompanying spoken expression of well-wishing, "Live Long and Prosper") ranks among the most indelible and instantly recognizable images from the "Star Trek" universe.

Stocker, a Northampton Street resident, said he drew his inspiration for the design from "Scrolls" – a 16-foot-high sculpture by Boston-area artist David Phillips" crafted from perforated stainless steel to resemble the form of a violin and illuminated from within via LED

lighting that sits on the lawn across from the New England Conservatory's Jordan Hall.

Progress on the Nimoy Memorial is now moving at a swift pace, said Stocker, although the Nimoy family, which is fully on board with the project, has asked him to not yet divulge who would fund the project, as well as its possible location.

Stocker, who initially proposed "Leonard Nimoy Day" to the City of Boston, has also reached out to Montreal, Canada, the hometown of William Shatner, who played Captain James T. Kirk on "Star Trek" opposite Nimoy and remained a close friend of Nimoy's throughout his life, in regard to that city declaring March 22, which was Shatner's 90th birthday, "William Shatner Day." But so far, Stocker hasn't heard back from them.



LEONARD S. NIMOY

Lenny

87 Chambers Street, Boston

School: William Blackstone

Honor Averages: G1, E2

Activities: Discussion and Dramatic Clubs; Switchboard 2, 3, 4; School Radio Play 2, 3; Tenth Grade School Spelling Champion

Leonard "Lenny" Nimoy, English High School, Class of 1948.

As for the status of the memorial, Stocker said he had hoped to have more information to share on this project in time for the day honoring Nimoy.

"This is sort of an appetizer

for the main course," Stocker said last week of the information he has provided to date, "with meatier details coming down the line."

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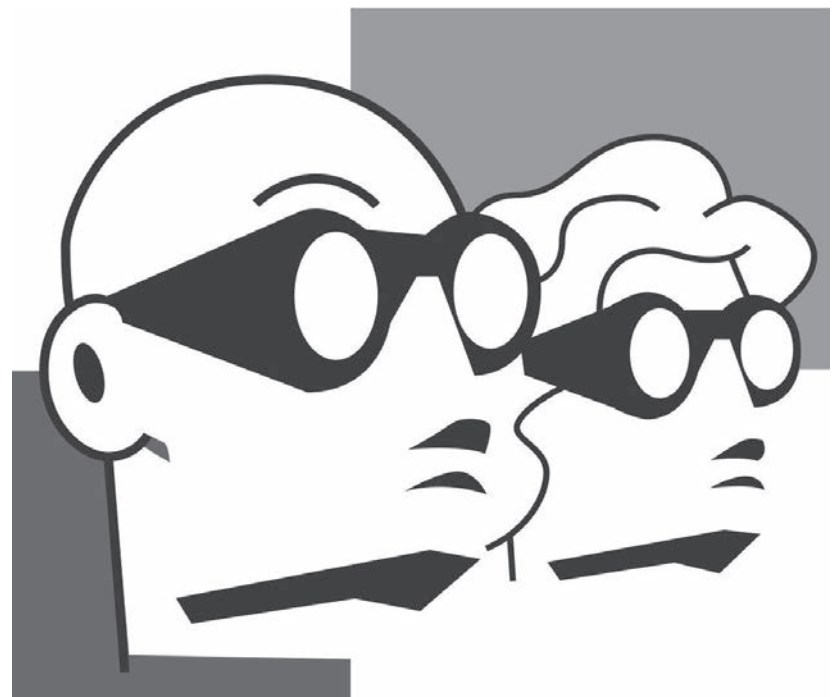
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Walsh

Continued from page 1

truly where democracy lies.”

He said he has frequently been in touch with Acting Mayor Kim Janey over the past two months, and said that “together the council president and myself and our teams have worked diligently to ensure a smooth transition.”

Janey tweeted on Monday evening, “Congratulations on your confirmation, Secretary Walsh. You are a proud son of Dorchester who will bring our city with you to the @USDOL. The working people of America will benefit greatly from your passion. Now, we look ahead to a new day—a new chapter—in Boston’s history.”

Janey made history by becoming the first Black person and first woman to lead the city.

“I am proud of what we’ve been able to do together over the last seven years in moving the city forward,” Walsh said at the press conference. During his term, Walsh said that almost 140,000 new jobs have been created in the city, Boston is “number one in the nation for building affordable housing,” major crime has been reduced, the graduation rate in Boston Public Schools has increased nine points, and a “new system to end homelessness was

created.”

He added, “We tackle racial justice. We changed Boston’s reputation. We still have work to do.”

Walsh said he will be the “first to admit” that more work needs to be done, but he is confident that it will continue.

Also during Walsh’s administration, investments were made in new parks, libraries, community centers, fire stations, streets, sidewalks, bike lanes, and more, he said.

“We did all of this while managing our city finances responsibly,” Walsh said. Over his seven years as mayor, the city had an AAA bond rating each year.

He also said that “battling a global pandemic” was “not what anyone expected,” but “in some ways, it was a blessing” and helped the city come together to help each other.

“As I told the team this morning, the journey doesn’t stop. The work of the city keeps going. Tomorrow morning, when there will be a new mayor in City Hall, the work needs to continue to move forward. The work will continue to be hard. But I’m confident that our public servants, our business community, and our residents will continue to rise up to the occasion,” Walsh said. “Boston, Massachusetts is the greatest city in the world.”

Walsh said he wanted to “thank every person who held

a sign for me, made a phone call for me, put a bumper sticker on their car for me, that fought for me, that advocated for me; I want to thank all of you.” He also thanked those who “criticized” him, adding “that might have been criticism you were giving, but what it was for me is ‘we have to do better.’”

He also gave advice to the candidates running for mayor in the November election.

“Enjoy the race,” he said. “Have fun. Talk to everybody.”

However, “I will not be playing a role in the mayor’s race,” Walsh said. “It is not right for me to play a role in the mayor’s race, number one, and number two, the candidates that are running...I know them all personally. One worked for me, one grew up on my street, one’s a legislator, we served in the same body, I served with councilors as well, so it’s no place for me to be involved.”

Walsh also said he will not endorse any mayoral candidate.

Walsh said that he doesn’t “know if I can put a signature achievement” on his time in office, but “I’m really happy with our accomplishments in housing. We inherited a housing crisis in our city. I’m really happy with 2300 formerly homeless people living in a home today.”

He said he would leave his failures “for other people to criticize.”

Walsh said that “there’s definitely a feeling of work undone,” but “I think that your work is never done.” He said he would like to have built the Long Island Bridge, “but we’re not giving up on that one.”

Walsh also said that he was hoping to have the investigation on Dennis White, who was appointed police commissioner after William Gross’ retirement but was found to have domestic assault allegations against him, completed before leaving, but that did not happen.

He said that he is grateful that the investigation is “thorough” and he’s been in touch with Acting Mayor Janey about moving forward, adding that he is “confident” that the investigation will be finished “within the next couple of weeks.”

Walsh said, “I’m proud of the accomplishments that my administration has done in the city, because it’s not my accomplishments, it’s the people I work with’s accomplishments and that’s honestly how I feel.”



Mayor Martin Walsh waves a final goodbye to Boston residents and those in attendance following an emotional farewell address.

He continued, “This has been a very very bittersweet last eight weeks. I have been very emotional in my office because I love the people I work with. They’re amazing. I love being mayor of the city I grew up in. I’m honored to have been called by President Biden to serve in his cabinet.

“And I think, honestly, now thinking about it, I think I just try to get every single last second out of being mayor of the City of Boston....then I can start focusing on the new gig,” Walsh said.

Several elected officials and mayoral candidates have issued statements on the mayoral transition, including City Councilor Andrea Campbell, John Barros, and State Rep. Jon Santiago.

“Congratulations to our new Secretary of Labor, Marty Walsh. I look forward to working with Mayor Walsh in his new role to center working people as we build a strong, equitable recovery from this pandemic and for the future of the City of Boston,” Andrea Campbell said in a statement. “There’s so much I’ve been proud to work with Mayor Walsh on to address longstanding inequities in Boston, including establishing the Youth Development Fund, passing the Community Preservation Act, and most recently committing our City to historic policing reforms. I wish him the absolute best as he embarks on this new chapter.

“It’s with excitement and joy that I also congratulate our Council President, now Acting-Mayor Kim Janey. This is a historic moment for our City, and absolutely the beginning of a new era of female leadership in Boston.”

In a statement, mayoral candidate John Barros, who worked as Walsh’s Chief of Economic Development for the past seven years, said, “Marty Walsh is the right person at the right time to serve as United States Secretary of Labor. As millions of Americans struggle to recover from the devastating impacts of the pandemic, we now have a Secretary we can trust to advocate for the needs of working families across the nation.”

Jon Santiago said in a statement, “I have been proud to call Marty Walsh our mayor and my friend during his time in office. His leadership has been marked by a commitment to public service, an empowerment of working people and for those in recovery across the City of Boston and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Throughout a global pandemic, he’s guided our city with a steady hand, navigating immense challenges I look forward to working with him in the years ahead as he begins the work of advocating for working families nationwide alongside President Biden and Vice President Harris.”

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

BY JOHN LYNDIS

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

During a virtual press conference hosted by the Massachusetts Education Justice Alliance on Tuesday students, parents, and school committee members from cities across Massachusetts discussed their school funding needs, their perspectives on in-person school reopening this spring, and their aspirations for education this summer and during the upcoming school year.

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

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

"I'm a parent of two Boston Public School students and a parent organizer for the Boston Edu-

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

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

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

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

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

in SOA funding.

At the press conference students and parents plan to keep pushing for a true commitment

to fully fund public school and call for putting the state's commitment to public education funding back on track.

One demand by the group Tuesday is that the state delivers at least two of the seven years of promised funding increases.

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JP OBSERVER

Expansion of important police/social worker program is under way

By SANDRA STOREY / SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE

Talk about falling through the cracks. Talk about holes in safety nets. Between 1955 and 1994, state mental institutions were closed in Massachusetts and around the country with few reliable care resources available in the communities.

Now it is sometimes said that troubled people have to “hit bottom” before they can get the help they need.

Unfortunately for everyone, that has meant the job of dealing with people in crisis from mental illness, substance abuse and/or homelessness often falls to law enforcement by default.

Thousands of calls to the Boston Police Department (BPD)—at least 9,600 in 2019, according to researchers—specifically involved an emotionally disturbed person.

“We can’t arrest our way out of every problem,” BPD Sgt. Peter Messina said in an interview last week. “Mental illness is at the crux of a lot of calls.”

Messina is a BPD deputy superintendent and head of the Street Outreach Unit. As such, the he is the “lead collaborator” who synchronizes the myriad parties involved in the BEST Co-Responder Program, including community groups and non-profit partners.

In the BEST Co-Responder Program, Master’s level clinicians and their supervisors work in partnership with Boston police. Co-responders are paired with officers at district stations

where they work the same shifts. They can then deal together with calls that involve a “behavioral health” component.

The Co-Responder Program “combines law and social work that results in deescalating crisis situations,” Messina said. “Sometimes it’s good if a problem is dealt with by a hospital, not a court.”

Co-responders have frequent opportunities to work with people in their districts and often work closely with the Community Service Office in their station, according to BMC Communications Director David Kibbe.

Much needed expansion of the Co-Responder Program is on the way now, after additional funding was announced by the City of Boston in September. BEST (Boston Emergency Services Team), based at Boston Medical Center (BMC) since 2003, received reallocated City funds to greatly expand its Co-Responder Program in partnership with BPD.

BMC will be adding up to four new positions this spring and continue to build toward a total of 15 new clinical and supervisory positions through this summer and early fall, Kibbe said in an email earlier this month in response to a question.

“Expansion was required,” Messina said. “The city and the communities need it.”

Currently, there are two full-time and one part-time clinician and one Certified Peer Specialist

working in the Co-Responder Program, which began in 2011.

District 13, JP’s station on Washington Street, has one part-time co-responder now. JP also hosts one of two meetings in the city where the police and service providers/stakeholders from the community come together to discuss issues of mutual concern and determine which services or agencies would be best to offer, according to Kibbe.

Kibbe gave some hypothetical examples of calls where cooperation between an officer and a social worker can be very helpful: a parent or guardian contacts police because they want a verbal altercation with a child de-escalated; a person or community contacts the police because someone is acting strangely, such as walking in traffic; an individual is struggling with anxiety due to the pandemic; a parent calls about a depressed child who has been searching the internet for information about suicide; a person with a history of mental illness has not been taking their medications, and it is affecting their behavior.

BMC’s goal is to hire clinicians who reflect the diversity of the city “linguistically and culturally,” Kibbe said. Monthly trainings cover a variety of topics, including cultural competence.

Funding for the additional co-responder positions comes from the BPD budget. In late June, the Boston City Council

passed the 2021 budget proposal of Mayor Marty Walsh.

In his resubmitted proposal, Walsh reallocated \$12 million in BPD overtime spending—20 percent of the department’s overtime budget—to other programs, including the Co-Responder Program. He shifted the funds in response to calls by racial justice advocates to put some policing resources into services for troubled people.

One of the current co-responder positions and a peer specialist position are funded through a Department of Mental Health grant to the BPD. BMC employs and supervises the Co-Responder clinicians and the Certified Peer Specialist.

BEST’s Co-Responder Program has become a national model, according to Messina. Most cities have similar numbers of calls with a behavioral health component where a co-responder would be helpful. Rather than just being “reactive” to events, having co-responders allows intervention to occur before a situation becomes critical, Messina said.

He also credited Boston’s “outside the box” community policing component which involves communicating with groups and individuals in the neighborhoods regularly.

Families are now reaching out before incidents occur, he said. And police training now includes information about dealing with calls that have a behavioral

health component.

In addition to overseeing BEST’s Co-responder Program, BMC is the lead agency for what’s called the Emergency Services Program (ESP) in Suffolk County.

According to Kibbe, BEST’s ESP mobile team has a similar role to co-responders. ESP is different in that mobile clinicians can be accessed directly by members of the community in case a mental illness-related issue arises.

People who call 1-800-981-HELP, available 24/7, always speak to a live Master’s level clinician, Kibbe said. Among other things, the clinicians can go to the scene, arrange to see someone in person or set up a telehealth evaluation. They can consult with a police officer and even call one in, if needed.

It’s helpful if a person who dials 911 tells the operator clearly if they have mental health or substance abuse or homeless concern regarding the situation, Kibbe said. That will alert first responders as well as officers who may have a co-responder on their shift so the clinician can provide assistance on the scene or by phone.

It’s important for people in the JP community to realize we have a role, too, in educating ourselves and our neighbors about how to access, create, evaluate and preserve humane policing programs and practices.

Cumulative and weekly positive COVID-19 test rates both up in Jamaica Plain

By JOHN LYNDIS

Last week the cumulative COVID-19 positive test rate in Jamaica Plain and the weekly positive test rate both increased according to the latest data released by the Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC) last Friday.

According to the data 34,444 Jamaica Plain residents have been tested for COVID since the pandemic began and 7.7 percent overall were found to be positive—this was an increase of 1.3 percent from the 7.6 percent

reported on March 5.

Last week 2,077 Jamaica Plain residents were tested and 1.8 percent were found to be COVID positive— a 38 percent increase from the 1.3 percent reported by the BPHC on March 5.

Citywide, 27,067 residents were tested and 3.6 percent were COVID positive—this was a 5.5 decrease from the 3.6 percent positive test rate reported by the BPHC two weeks ago.

In his last press briefing Friday before heading to Washington DC to serve as U.S. Secretary

of Labor, former Mayor Martin Walsh said ICU occupancy has continued to go down and the case numbers have stayed below the city’s thresholds of concern for about a month now.

“We are ready to move forward in our reopening,” he said. Acting Mayor Kim Janey will now take the reins and oversee Boston’s reopening process.

On Monday the state moved to Phase 4 Step 1 of the statewide reopening plan. This means that more activities and industries will be allowed to be open, and capacity limits for event venues

and public settings will be expanded.

Boston, we will move into a modified Phase 4 Step 1, consistent with the cautious approach the city has taken throughout the pandemic.

Starting on March 22, the State will allow indoor and outdoor stadiums, arenas, and ballparks to open with a strict 12 percent capacity limit in place, after they submit a plan to the Department of Public Health. The City of Boston will align with this step.

“But, moving forward, we

will only allow these venues to go above 12 percent capacity if the State allows it and if Boston’s positivity rate stays under 2.75 percent, for two consecutive weeks, as calculated by the City,” said Walsh. “We are also requiring these venues to submit their safety plan to the City’s Licensing Board.”

On March 22, the State will expand gathering limits for event venues and public settings to 100 people indoors and 150 people outdoors. The City of Boston will

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COVID-19

Continued from page 8

also increase gathering limits for event venues and public settings, but they will not be as high as the State's limits. Boston will allow up to 60 people indoors and 100 people outdoors.

Under the State's guidance,

outdoor gathering limits at private residences will remain at a maximum of 25 people, and limits for indoor house gatherings will remain at 10 people. The same goes for the City of Boston.

Live musical performances will be allowed at restaurants in Boston. This includes all live entertainment except singing. Singing is still not allowed indoors because of the risk of

spreading respiratory droplets.

All of this information will be posted in detail at Boston.gov/coronavirus.

According to the BPHC data, Jamaica Plain's infection rate increased 3 percent since March 5.

Jamaica Plain went from 634.7 cases per 10,000 residents to 654 cases per 10,000 residents.

An additional 78 Jamaica

Plain residents became infected with COVID-19 since March 5 and the number of total cases here went from 2,563 cases to 2,641 cases in the neighborhood.

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

Citywide positive cases of coronavirus increased 2.5 percent last week and went from 61,025 cases to 62,539 confirmed cases in a week. Eighteen additional Boston residents died from the virus last week and there are now 1,329 total deaths in the city from COVID.

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JP's main streets organizations weigh in on Reimagine Boston Main Streets

BY LAUREN BENNETT

Information gathering for the Reimagine Boston Main Streets process is underway, with listening sessions to garner feedback and comments from main streets districts now complete. The goal of the program is to look at main streets programs and resources and decide how they can be strengthened in an equitable way.

The Gazette spoke with the executive directors of Jamaica Plain's three main streets organizations: Ginger Brown of JP/

Centre South Main Streets, Warren Williams of Three Squares Main Street, and Denise Delgado of Egleston Square Main Street, to get their feedback on the Reimagine Boston Main Streets program, as well as to learn more about how the organizations have been helping out their communities over the past year.

GINGER BROWN, JP CENTRE/SOUTH MAIN STREETS

Ginger Brown said that she attended two different listening sessions, including the one that

was held for the Jamaica Plain community.

"I appreciate that the consultants are casting as wide a net as possible in order to discover any hidden nooks and crannies," she said, as well as "services [that] could be expanded or improved."

She also said that while she felt the sessions "focused equally in what individual main streets can do as well as what the city as a whole can do," she added that "I felt that the initial introduction to what the listening session was all about...needed a little clarity."

She said that "at the same

time," it's "hard to now what the intent of the program is," but that "might be because the consultants themselves didn't know."

Brown said that she believes there are some changes that could be "updated or maybe even reverted back to their original processes" when it comes to the Boston Main Streets program.

"Dealing with the bureaucracy of the city can always be a challenge," she said, however, she added that she thinks the city does a "pretty good job" at assisting main streets organizations. She said that while the city does

a great job providing funding and resources, it's "really important to maintain our independence from the city."

She said that each of the main streets organizations in the city has its own "unique needs" and contributes to the community in a different way.

Brown said that in Jamaica Plain, with three different main streets districts, "that independence is vital to our effectiveness. I'm hoping the city understands that in moving forward with any

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REAL ESTATE TODAY

Spring market a busy time for JP's real estate professionals, but inventory remains low as buyers are optimistic about the future

BY LAUREN BENNETT

Heading into the spring, the real estate market is beginning to boom again, as the weather warms up and people are looking to get a fresh start. The buyer demand is growing, but the inventory can't seem to keep up, according to real estate professionals.

The Gazette spoke with three Jamaica Plain area real estate professionals to get a sense of the market in the neighborhood right now as well as some trends that they've seen over the past year.

"I think that buyers right now are grabbing whatever they perceive as anything they can get

because there's a lack of supply as usual," said Faye Simon, owner of Faye Simon Real Estate.

"I just think that with the lack of supply, people who want to start families, they're getting married, they want to buy a house, it's just pushing it further and further up the mountain of price."

She said that she believes this trend will continue, as people are looking for larger homes and starter homes, until more supply is built.

On the rental front, "large apartments have emptied out," she said. She said that prices have come down on many rental apartments.

"If you're a reasonable land-

lord and you can adjust the prices, you're doing good," she said.

Simon said that within "within the last 10 days," the rental market "went poof," as many leases in Boston are either for June or September and people are beginning to look for places.

"There's cycles of downturn that will then change and become a cycle of upturn," Simon said. "We're in an upturn cycle right now; everyone's getting vaccinated hopefully."

She said that shifts in living arrangements between roommates during the pandemic has slightly changed what people are looking for. She said that those who had lived with roommates in a three or four bedroom unit are

now looking for a two bedroom unit instead so they only have to live with one other person.

This "opens up all these larger apartments," she said, but the demand is now picking up again.

She said that sales have stayed relatively the same "because there's no supply." Simon said that "if you flood the market with supply, the prices will go down."

Karen McCormack, a co-owner and broker at McCormack and Scanlon Real Estate, said that at the beginning of the pandemic, many people were "nervous" about moving and the prospect of looking for a new house, but a lot of them realized they needed more space as they worked from

home and their kids learned remotely.

"People started moving and then the beginning of the year came around," McCormack said, but the "inventory never picked up. More buyers came into the marketplace" who were looking for more space, and others who were looking to downsize. She said that people put single family homes on the market, many of which received multiple offers.

"There are a lot of people I know that their spaces aren't necessarily working for them," McCormack said. "A lot of my clients want to stay close."

McCormack also talked about

Continued on page 12

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REAL ESTATE TODAY

Real Estate

Continued from page 11

all of the new construction happening in JP, particularly on Washington St. that has created new housing units. She said that it has leveled the rental prices slightly, but “has not affected the sales market at all.”

She also said that many buyers are willing to pay more than they should to secure a home. She said with interest rates as low as they are right now, “new buyers would feel better about taking a mortgage out even if they’re paying a little over market value.”

She added that in JP specifically, “I think we have so much going for us with green space, colleges, being so close to the scientific world, that “even if there’s a bit of shift or leveling, I don’t think JP will see any great depreciation in the short term.”

She said that much of the inventory in JP consists of condos, but she mentioned a single fam-

ily home that just recently came on the market for more than a \$1 million with no parking.

“From a historic perspective, the prices and price per square foot are higher” than they’ve been, she said.

She said that people are willing to pay more than a house is worth because they don’t want to lose a home that they see as valuable. She said that because of this, in a way, multiple offers lead to buyers driving the market and deciding what they feel a property is worth.

Shifting into the spring season, this time of year is always busier for the real estate market, and this year seems to be no exception, despite the ongoing pandemic.

“I think the biggest difference between now and six months ago,” said Randal Engelmann, an owner and agent at FOCUS Real Estate, is that the “fall market is always a lot less vibrant than the spring season.”

He said that while FOCUS Real Estate still takes COVID

very seriously and still takes all the proper precautions, life has started to feel more normal as people are fairly accustomed at this point to doing things like wearing masks, staying distant from others, and sanitizing their hands.

“The people that are least comfortable are not going to open houses nor are they selling their homes,” he said. But during open houses, they are only allowing a certain number of people in at a time, adding that “people are pretty cautious and also patient and respectful to one another in regards to the pandemic.”

Engelmann, too, made note of the low inventory for home buyers in the JP area, and the fact that there is a “huge buyer demand.”

He said that while people are moving all across the country because they are able to work remotely, there are still many people who are moving around the city into larger homes. He said that single family homes are “getting absorbed the fastest.”

Engelmann said that with people trying to flee their homes for larger ones, “that would always beg the question: what happens to the houses they’re leaving behind?”

He said that the large population of baby boomers are now “gainfully employed” in careers in the tech industry, as doctors, as lawyers, and other high paying jobs, so “they are absorbing the two bed, one bath properties that are the bread and butter of the marketplace.”

Engelmann said he didn’t “think the market would slow down in the fall,” but it has definitely “snapped back with such fervor.”

He said that there are between five and 15 offers on every property that has come on the market, and these offers are “significantly over the asking price.”

He also said that what drives the rental market in JP this time of year is doctors who are here for their residencies in the Longwood Medical Area.

Engelmann added that “in my opinion, the spring market is all about new beginnings and it’s about hopefulness for the

future.”

He said the fall market is “dark and cold” and there’s the “impending doom of winter. People are very pessimistic in the fall season and the winter season. The market isn’t very vibrant.”

Engelmann also said that when it comes to what people are looking for in a home, there has been a trend towards wanting move-in ready. He said that because of COVID, it has become harder to have people in and out of your house doing renovation work with people working from home and kids learning from home.

“People don’t really want to do those kinds of things.”

He also said that people in JP are looking for access to outdoor space, whether it be a deck or a yard.

As for looking towards the near future, all three said they think that the market will remain about the same as the city returns to some more normalcy as more vaccines roll out.

“I think everything is going to improve,” Simon said.

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REAL ESTATE TODAY

Should you buy or sell a home in 2021? Here's what to know

SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE

While the roll-out of the COVID-19 vaccine has left a lot of question marks about the future of the U.S. economy at-large, analysts expect the housing market to remain strong and stable in the coming year.

"Despite the uncertainties of the pandemic, the housing market performed well in the second half of 2020," says Sam Khater, Freddie Mac's chief economist. "Low mortgage rates and the ability to work remotely continued to propel demand for housing, which is reflected in home sales reaching levels not seen in 15 years."

Whether you're a potential homebuyer, a current homeowner or considering selling, here are some of the biggest takeaways of Freddie Mac's Quarterly Forecast:

- Interest rates are likely to remain low. The average 30-year fixed-rate mortgage (FRM) hit a record low over a dozen times in 2020. The low interest rate environment is projected to continue through 2021, with the 30-year FRM expected to average below 3 percent. Low rates are good news for buyers looking to purchase a home, and homeowners looking to reduce their mortgage payment through refinancing.

- Home sales to remain high. The demand for housing is expected to remain strong in 2021, creating a favorable market for sellers. Last year, low mortgage rates and the ability to work remotely drove up home sales (the measure of the number of homes sold every month). This year, home sales are expected to ride that wave, averaging 6.5 million for the year.

- House prices to grow moderately.

In the second half of 2020, the high volume of home sales and low supply of housing drove up house prices. In 2021, house price growth is expected to moderate for the full year.

- Refinances to start declining. Low mortgage rates spurred refinance activity in 2020, boosting mortgage originations (the process in which borrowers apply for a home loan) to historic highs. As mortgage rates rise modestly in 2021, refinance activity should start to slow. "While many homeowners took advantage of these low rates in last year, evidence suggests that many lower income homeowners still have the opportunity to strengthen their financial position by refinancing," says Khater.

For more insights on housing, visit freddiemac.com/research. For homebuying and homeownership resources, visit My Home



PHOTO SOURCE: (C) FIZKES / ISTOCK VIA GETTY IMAGES PLUS

by Freddie Mac.

Many of the trends that shaped the market last year, especially historically low mortgage rates, will continue to drive

housing activity in 2021. As you embark on your journey towards your home goals, be sure to have a firm understanding of today's market conditions. (StatePoint)

What homeowners need to know before refinancing

SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE

With mortgage rates hovering near three percent, experts say there are still a number of homeowners who could benefit from refinancing. In fact, borrowers who refinanced in 2020 to lower their mortgage rate saved over \$2,800 in mortgage payments annually, according to the latest Freddie Mac research.

"While today's low mortgage rates have fueled a refinance boom, it's been driven mainly by higher-income borrowers. With millions of borrowers eligible to refinance, lower- and middle-income borrowers who could stand to benefit the most from refinancing might be leaving money on the table," says Sam Khater, Freddie Mac's chief economist.

To determine whether refinancing makes financial sense for you, it's essential to first understand the basics. Here's what to know about the refinancing process:

- Understanding refinancing: When refinancing your mortgage, you are essentially applying for a new mortgage with the goal of securing a loan with better terms than your current one. Primarily,

people refinance their mortgages for three reasons: to lower their interest rate, to switch from one product to another (i.e. switch from an adjustable-rate mortgage to a fixed-rate mortgage) or switch to a loan with a shorter term.

- Determining refinancing

costs: While refinancing can save you money, it isn't free. Just as there are closing costs and associated fees with your current mortgage, there are related costs to refinance your loan. To get a sense of what refinancing could cost you, use Freddie Mac's refinance calculator, which is avail-

able at calculators.freddiemac.com.

- Knowing your options: The refinancing option that is best for

you will depend on your financial situation and goals. The most

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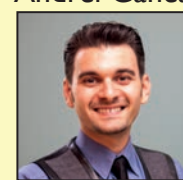
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REAL ESTATE TODAY

Get more bang for your buck with these spring home improvements

The warmer weather means it's time to start thinking about home improvement projects. Whether you're getting your home in tip-top shape for your own enjoyment, or getting it ready to put on the market, not all home improvement projects are created equal when it comes to return on investment (ROI). Here are top areas on which to focus:

Interiors

The kitchen is the heart of the home and it's one of the best areas to renovate in terms of ROI, according to Remodeling magazine's annual Cost vs. Value Report, which puts the price tag of the average minor kitchen remodel at \$22,507, with 80.5 percent of the cost recouped upon resale.

To give the kitchen an updated appearance, replace the floor-

ing, countertops, sink and faucet. A fresh coat of paint in a trendy shade, such as Living Coral, Pantone's Color of the Year, can add a vibrant pop of color to energize any kitchen. Not looking to go that bold? Consider an accent wall, or stick to a classic palate of gray and white in terms of cabinets and countertops. White on white is also a popular new style for kitchens and bathrooms.

Other features home buyers are paying close attention to are laundry rooms and such energy-saving elements as Energy Star appliances and windows, according to the survey "What Home Buyers Want in 2019" by the National Association of Home Builders.

Curb Appeal

The popularity of outdoor projects remains strong and it's for a good reason. According to

the Cost vs. Value Report, the biggest bang for your buck in 2019 will come from replacing a garage door. The report says the average price is \$3,611, and 97.5 percent of it is recouped when the house is sold.

Other outdoor projects with high ROI include adding manufactured stone veneer to the exterior (94.9 percent), adding a wood deck (75.6 percent) and replacing siding (75.6 percent). Looking for a simpler way to make an impact? Sprucing up the landscape by planting flowers or bushes or even just clearing the yard of debris will make a big statement.

No matter what updates you end up making, it's always a good idea to notify your insurance agent. "Certain upgrades may change the value of a house, so homeowners need to make sure they're properly covered," says



PHOTO SOURCE: (C) TYLER OLSON / STOCK.ADOBE.COM

Bob Buckel, vice president of product management, Erie Insurance. "There are a few things to look for. Ask your agent about guaranteed replacement cost policies that can cover the cost to rebuild a home in today's dollars following a covered loss."

Some upgrades may also make you eligible for discounts, Buckel adds, especially if they make the home more secure. "For

example, Erie Insurance offers certain safety discounts such as for installing smoke alarms or an automatic sprinkler system."

Now you have a checklist of DIY projects to focus on this spring. But before you start, take a moment to assess which ones are worth your time and money. (StatePoint)

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Refinance

Continued from page 13

common option is to refinance the remaining unpaid balance on your mortgage. Through refinancing, you can improve your financial position by shortening your term or locking in a lower interest rate. Your lender will be able to discuss refinancing options with you and help determine the best solution for your situation.

- Closing your loan: Closing on your new loan is the final step in the refinancing process, a pro-

cedure that is almost identical to when you initially closed on your current mortgage. During closing, it's important that you take your time to read all documents carefully and ask clarifying questions. Once all of the closing documents are signed, you will have a new loan.

For more information on refinancing, visit myhome.freddie-mac.com.

Remember, even with today's mortgage rates near historic lows, it's important to carefully evaluate your situation and your home goals with a housing counselor or lender. (Statepoint)



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REAL ESTATE TODAY

February median prices for single-family homes and condos in Massachusetts continue to surge past previous years, inventory reaching new record lows

STAFF REPORT

The Massachusetts Association of REALTORS® (MAR) reported a steady rise in closed sales for the month of February. Closed sales on single-family homes rose a total of 8.1% while condominiums also increased 6.0% compared to February of 2020. Inventory is again hitting record lows as single-family homes are down 68.4% over February 2020 and condo inventory is down 33.6%, a remarkable jump from January 2021's 64.0% and 26.1%, respectively.

Home prices have been on a steady rise in recent months, with February's data staying on trend. The median price for single-family homes was \$462,500, an increase of 17.1% and condominium prices rose by 5.1% to \$425,750, when compared to February 2020. Prices are being

February 2021 Data

	February 2021 Closed Sales	February 2020 Closed Sales	February 2021 Median Price	% Change Closed Sales (year over year)	January Closed Sales 2021
Single-Family	2,748	2,541	\$462,500	+8.1%	3,623
Condominium	1,276	1,204	\$425,750	+6.0%	1,488

driven again by high demand, low supply, and interest rates continuing to hit record lows.

"While interest rates did increase in February compared to January, they remain lower than previous years' and this is contributing to the strong buyer demand. This is not something I believe will majorly impact home sales, though it is important to take this shift into consideration when thinking about buying or

selling a home as interest rates contribute to the overall afford-

ability index," says Steve Medeiros, 2021 President of MAR and

REALTOR® at Keller Williams Realty.

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Main Streets

Continued from page 10

changes that they made.”

She said that some challenges she’s heard from Centre/South businesses is that getting grant money was “really tedious” and “very difficult” as there were some issues with the system for applying for grants from the Reopen Boston Fund. “I think it was just a technical error,” she said, but it was frustrating for business owners.

“It would have been great to partner with the city more in determining who the grantees should have been,” she said, “mostly because main streets were not involved in that grant process.”

She said that when many of the businesses reached out to her at the beginning of the pandemic, “I felt a little helpless. I’m not a city employee; there was only so much I could do.”

However, JP/Centre South was able to distribute grants and other funds and information to businesses to help them get back on their feet, and created programs like Orange Means Open, where businesses hung an orange lantern in their window for patrons to know that they were open for business, as well as held events to support local businesses, among other things.

WARREN WILLIAMS, THREE SQUARES MAIN STREET

Warren Williams said he’s also attended a listening session for the Reimagine Boston Main Streets program, adding that he feels the consultants might not necessarily “understand what main streets does” and how it might “fit into the city’s plan.”

Williams said that “all the landscapes in every district are different. Each organization is a

separate organization...with its own mission.”

He said it’s “kind of hard to cookie cut what main streets should be or could be when they should all be different,” he said of the main streets program.

What each organization does share, he said is “trying to make our communities thrive.”

He continued, “I think that it starting out as a city program, led with the city’s agenda and what they believe main streets should be,” and “over the years turned into so much more because of the different landscapes and different cultures in each district.”

Williams said that Three Squares focuses heavily on “bridging the gap between residents, businesses, and organizations” and really works within the entire community and the people who live in it.

“Some main streets may not look at that as how they operate,” he said. “When it comes to youth summer jobs, recreation; we work on that. A lot of main streets don’t work on that. Their mission is to help the small business. From where I came from, we need each other. The pandemic exposed how much we need each other.”

He also agreed with Brown that the city has been instrumental in providing funding and awareness of different programs and tools for small businesses. He said he thinks the “technical assistance the city offers” is “great,” and the city “gives us a lot of weapons to work with.”

But he also said there’s a “lot of overlap” with what the city offers and what main streets offers small businesses.

“We have to have a stronger line of communication and basically sharing of resources,” he said. “We should be able to provide resources to the city as well. Everyone already comes

with their own network and resources and contact for certain things. The city doesn’t have all the answers.”

He also said he’s heard from businesses that more financial aid is needed, including commercial rent relief. Warren said that expediting things like common victualler licenses would be beneficial to businesses in his district, as would be helping business owners with various

what [I] hope to see out of the Reimagine Boston Main Streets process is a “healthy neighborhood, economically, where everyone has access to those opportunities and prosperity.”

— Denise Delgado

processes regarding licensing.

“We just completed a program with [State Rep.] Nika Elugardo with the [Boston Housing Authority,” he said, which “gave the community \$80,000 to hire 35 young people to work for eight weeks in the community” in the form of small grants for businesses to be able to pay these young people. He said many of the youth came from the Mildred Hailey housing development.

“I definitely appreciate Nika Elugardo,” he said, for raising the money to help these kids work in real businesses in their community.

Williams said that over the past year, he’s “learned there’s a lot of gaps and a lot of duplication of services,” as well as that “transparency is important.”

He said, “it’s been a very exciting year. I got a lot done. I know we can’t do this alone and it has to be a collective effort.”

Williams stressed that Three Squares Main Street needs to work with the entire community, and “not just with businesses.”

He also said that the connection between Three Squares, JP Centre South, and Egleston Square Main Street is “very strong. During the pandemic, we reached out and worked with each other collectively. In a way, I feel like it made us stronger as individuals and collectively.”

He said he learned a “lot” from Brown and Deglado. It’s “really powerful when we come together,” Williams said.

DENISE DELGADO, EGLESTON SQUARE MAIN STREETS

“I think that it’s challenging to do these kinds of processes right now with Zoom,” Delgado said of the listening sessions. “I do think that they are really trying to create as many opportunities as possible for people to weigh in. It did create some opportunities for me and neighborhood associations that we partner with and some of our merchants to give some feedback.”

She spoke about the program’s goal of creating more equity within the mains streets districts.

She said that she thinks that this process is “an opportunity to take a look at the [main streets] program,” and do so through an equity lens.

Delgado said that “we have some really wonderful neighborhood business managers” who “really go out of their way to help” main streets districts. She said the city is also helpful in helping businesses navigate “all of the processes a business has to navigate.” She said that main streets organizations “deal with so many different city departments,” and “having a touchpoint is helpful in having us be able to get things done.”

When it comes to the city, “I do think they did the best they could under the circumstances in terms of getting relief funds out,” Delgado said.

She also said that businesses in her district are still concerned about paying rent.

“Some people had landlords who were really helpful; other people were getting pressure from their landlords,” she said. At the beginning of the pandemic, Delgado said that it was “challenging to navigating PPP and federal programs.”

She said that over the past year, she has learned a great deal about how small businesses operate and how many of them are “someone’s livelihood.”

During the first few months of the pandemic, Egleston Square Main Street was “working around the clock” to assist businesses, and she said that something she

and another volunteer worked on was translating resources and sharing them with residents and business owners, as most information coming from the city was only available in English at first.

She also said that a lot of “one on one assistance” was given to assist small businesses in the form of notifying them about relief funds, and other grants that became available.

She also said that the organization helped distribute food to residents in the neighborhood as well as vouchers for local restaurants.

“Now, there’s many more sources of information,” she said. “People are burned out. It’s a different time,” and there’s a “huge barrage of info all the time.”

She said that while “we haven’t hit that point where a lot of people are being evicted,” she has seen an uptick in people trying to sell their businesses.

“If the main streets weren’t doing all this stuff, we would be seeing way more vacancies all over the city.”

She said that what she hopes to see out of the Reimagine Boston Main Streets process is a “healthy neighborhood, economically, where everyone has access to those opportunities and prosperity.”

She said that it’s about “having great public spaces and opportunities for the community to come together and support a great neighborhood culture. Those things are so much a part of what a main street does.”

She continued, “I...hope that an outcome of this reimagining process is to help us bring in more resources to do those kinds of things and preserve what’s unique about each neighborhood.”

Delgado agreed with Williams that “we need to be able to have the flexibility and address the needs of our particular district and work with the people and the resources that we have here.”

A “really big focus” in Egleston Square is “development without displacement,” Delgado said, but that “might look a little different in another neighborhood.”

She said that “being as organizations, we can evolve to kind of like meet that and address that in a more organic and flexible way.”



JPNC Housing & Development Committee discuss Blessed Sacrament sale and BMS Paper project

BY LAUREN BENNETT

The Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council (JPNC) Housing & Development Committee met virtually on March 16, where committee members heard from the Friends of Blessed Sacrament about their requests to future developers of the Blessed Sacrament church site, as well as reviewed the proposed project for the BMS Paper site at 3390 Washington St.

BLESSED SACRAMENT

Betsaida Gutierrez, a community activist and member of the Friends of Blessed Sacrament, a group aiming to “preserve the Blessed Sacrament Church’s legacy as a shining jewel of the Hyde/Jackson Square neighborhood of Jamaica Plain,” according to its statement, spoke about the public statement read by the group, which was previously reported on by the Gazette. The Hyde Square Task Force owns the Blessed Sacrament church, and after failing to find a development partner, has decided to sell the building.

Requests include not tearing down the existing church building, ensuring that space for the community is provided, and if there is a housing component to a proposal, that it be affordable to allow members of the community to remain in the neighborhood, among other things.

Gutierrez said that her hope is that a future developer will “respect the historic nature of the building and not demolish it or raze the structure.”

Vanessa Snow, a former youth organizer for the Hyde Square Task Force, said that “we need to make sure the community is involved in the future of this building.”

Kevin Rainsford, the Chair of the JPNC, said he wanted to “thank everyone who’s been advocating for Blessed Sacrament,” as he lives in Hyde Square. He said he wants to know if there will be any “flexibility with the outcome” of the sale and future development.

Harry Smith, a member of the Friends of Blessed Sacrament, said that the group hasn’t set any specific requirements for things like the size of a potential community space or how many units of housing there should be.

“We’re flexible, but we also want to make sure that the hard work, planning, and priorities... are honored and respected,”

Smith said. He said that the goal is to find a developer “who is flexible enough to work with the community” on what would work best for everyone. He did also say that “we’re trying to be respectful,” as “we don’t own the building,” referring to the Friends of Blessed Sacrament.

Michael Rogers from Rep. Liz Malia’s office spoke as a resident, as he has knowledge about the Catholic Church and was able to provide some insight on potential restrictions as well as advice on how to get the building to advance in its landmarking process with the Boston Landmarks Commission (BLC).

The Blessed Sacrament church is a pending landmark in the City, and Rogers suggested reaching out to former parishioners as well as the Archdiocese to get baptismal and marriage records from the church.

“It’s a good idea for our committee to stay on top of this Landmarks issue,” said committee member Kathy Brown.

The Hyde Square Task Force will be at next month’s committee meeting, Royce said.

3390 WASHINGTON ST.

The project at 3390 Washington St. has had a fairly involved community process thus far, having been presented to local neighborhood groups such as the Stonybrook Neighborhood Association (SNA), and an Impact Advisory Group (IAG) and a public meeting with the Boston Planning Development Agency (BPDA) were also held as part of its Article 80 process for this project.

The project proponents came before the committee last week to present the latest iteration of the proposal, and the committee went through its Development Checklist to review the project as it stands right now.

Architect David O’Sullivan said that the goal of the project is to keep the existing two and a half story BMS Paper building, but “add to it and enhance the site.”

Chris Tracy of O’Neill and Associates, said that “Bob [Harrington] has been an owner and operator here for decades.” As part of the project, Harrington wants to add a grocery market and a restaurant that can also be used as a space for the community to gather.

The site is two acres, which Tracy said is “really rare, especially in the heart of JP/Rox.”

The project includes the construction of 151 rental residential units “with parking kind of tucked into the back below grade underneath the building,” O’Sullivan said. Tracy said that 23 percent of the units will be affordable, for a total of 35 affordable units. The team said they do not yet have specific information relating to the Area Median Income percentage for the units. Tracy said that they “will take into consideration some of the AMI desires that we heard at the public meeting.”

“One of the things that we started when we did start looking at the site,” O’Sullivan said, is looked at PLAN: JP/Rox and the guidelines put forth by the plan.

He said that an all-electric system for the residential portion of the project is being proposed, as well as PV solar panels. The goal is to meet LEED Gold standards at a minimum, and there will be “vegetated roofs and integrated storm water management systems,” he said.

He then explained the massing and step-backs, which he said are “utilized along the street with the existing building at three and a half stories.” Additionally, the existing service route will be maintained and a new shared vehicle parking driveway will be built.

He said that 21 percent of the lot will be landscaped area that will not include any building, driveway, or patio, which is “over three times the study requirements for open space for units.”

O’Sullivan also said that the team is “trying to tuck the parking in the back of the site out of the way of the public.”

There will be “89 dedicated indoor garage spaces for residential units,” he said, as well as “20 indoor garage spaces shared for BMS employee parking and overnight/overflow residential units.”

He said that 26 outdoor surface parking spots will be for both the BMS retail use and commercial residential use, and that 15 percent of the proposed parking, or 19 spaces, will be electric vehicle ready.

The Housing & Development Committee has different categories on its Development Checklist that they discuss. The first one is affordability.

There were some questions around the different bedroom counts, as there are many more studios and one bed units than

two and three bedroom units proposed.

O’Sullivan said that there is “definitely a desire among the BPDA and people in the city to try to find housing” that a single person can afford to live in, especially coming out of the pandemic.

“I think that opportunity exists here,” he said. “A lot of JP has three and four beds occupied by roommates,” which he said is “less desirable now,” and will probably remain that way for some time. “More people are going to want to live alone,” he said.

“The need is not for studios when it comes to affordability,” Kathy Brown said, adding that she would like to see more affordable larger units. O’Sullivan said that this is part of the discussion with the BPDA.

Next up was Development and Design Focus, which includes things like consideration for transit-oriented development and location of the site.

O’Sullivan said that there is a “transportation management plan to promote use of the T,” by “keeping the parking ratio low” and “not promoting a lot of cars on the site.”

Marvin Mathelier, a member of the committee, asked what the abutters’ thoughts were on this project, as there are “lots of projects happening at the same time,” and he was wondering about the “long term effects” of all of them once they are completed.

Tracy said the team has “made numerous attempts to talk to Forestvale Apartments,” and that Harrington is making efforts to talk to the neighbors. “There’s going to be some congestion here; we know that,” Tracy said.

He said the two acre site is an “advantage” and provides the opportunity to “get cars off of Washington St. as much as possible. We want to mitigate it and minimize it as best we can.”

Committee member Aiden Foley said that “I think it’s an appropriate site for the level of the density. I think it’s a site that has great strategic benefit for the location.”

Committee chair Carolyn Royce said that “I am in favor of all the parking on the site,” as “nearby projects have zero parking.” She also said that she likes that the existing BMS Paper building will be preserved.

The committee then talked about the sustainability of the

project, and while O’Sullivan said that the project will not be built to passive house standards, the committee said they liked that it will be all-electric. O’Sullivan said that the commercial portion will still use gas for heating in the BMS Paper store and in the restaurant for cooking.

“In terms of working with Bob and his team, we’re super excited for Bob to be able to expand his business and be able to stay where he is,” said Jennifer Uhrhane of the SNA. The SNA has a subcommittee working on this project with the development team, and they still have outstanding concerns regarding the massing and design of the new building.

“We’ve given him (Harrington) and his team a lot of feedback on the design,” including the shape of the building and integrating it better with the surroundings and existing building.

“Maybe if it wasn’t one huge building,” she said, there “might be a bit of visual relief.”

She also said that the “strip of grass along the parking lot and towards the back of that,” there is a “huge incline there” and it is “not a usable space for residents.” She said that while it’s “important to keep the trees,” she doesn’t think there is enough usable green space for residents.

The committee also spoke about jobs that this project would create, both during construction and permanently, and Harrington also said that he wanted all the three bedroom units to be affordable.

The committee discussed their comment letter that would be submitted to the BPDA, which includes an ask for all the affordable units to be at or below 50 percent AMI, as well as top consider more larger units and for even more of the units to be affordable. They also said that they want the team to come back to the committee with final information on the AMIs “before it goes to the BPDA board.”

In the letter, the committee said they want to applaud the all-electric proposal, and expect that local hiring will continue as the process moves forward and once the new development is up and running. The committee also said that they recognize that “community engagement has been strong.”

The full JPNC voted to send the letter at their monthly meeting on March 23.

SEED

Continued from page 1

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



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

three years in a coma.
"He would call me from the jail and say hey Niambe, can you read this scripture?" his sister told Rolling Stone after her brother's death. She said his nightly routine with his children included reading the Bible together, and he kept it up while incarcerated, with his sister's help.
The museum includes a space that features a six by eight replica jail cell where McIntosh will narrate her brother's story. Guests are able to sit in the jail cell and listen to McIntosh's story, as well as the story of thers, of the injustices of the war on drugs.
"The Social Justice Cannabis Museum is a very unique aspect of this cannabis shop," said Core's CEO April Arrasate. "Core is trying to give people an understanding of what incarceration is like in this country.



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

Eighty-two percent of Core is owned by locals, 72 percent women owned and the owners of the company have spent collectively over 10 years incarcerated by the war on drugs.
Aside from the museum, Core has over 6,000 square feet of space that houses all the adult-use cannabis products that are for sale to consumers.

Let's Celebrate

Spring

2021

Buy an ad in the April 9th issue & Get

MINIMUM AD SIZE: 2X3

1/2 Price

off the same size ad in April 23rd edition

— New Clients Only —

CALL 617-524-7662 OR EMAIL

PATRICIA@JAMAICAPLAINGAZETTE.COM

OR DEB@THEBOSTONSUN.COM



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

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

Several residents were presenters at 15th Cape Verdean-Jewish Passover Seder

STAFF REPORT

Jamaica Plain residents were well-represented at this year's Cape Verdean-Jewish Passover Seder. For the past fifteen years, the Cape Verdean-Jewish Passover Seder has brought together Jews and Cabo Verdeans from Massachusetts and Rhode Island to meet face-to-face, share and celebrate their cultures, and explore what they have in common. This year, on March 21, Jews and Cabo Verdeans around the world joined together virtually for an international event whose theme this year was "A Celebration of Resilience."

During this event, JP resident Rabbi Margie Klein Ronkin explained about the Jewish holiday of Passover, while neighborhood resident Ida Assefa told the story of the Jewish journey from slavery to freedom, as written in Exodus. JPer Stephen Hodin dedicated the traditional First Cup of Wine to "the courage and resilience of our ancestors who overcame slavery and persecution to give us our freedom."

At this event of cultural connection, presenters shared their messages from Cabo Verde, Por-

tugal, Israel, California, Florida, and Washington, DC, as well as from the Boston area. Approximately 270 Jews and Cabo Verdeans, and their guests, in 10 countries, including South Sudan, Norway, Belgium, Ecuador, France, UK, and 26 US states, including NM, KY, IN, SC, and NE, tuned in to this event.

The Cape Verdean-Jewish Passover Seder is structured around the Jewish holiday of Passover, which commemorates the biblical liberation and exodus of Jewish slaves from Egypt. The event shared the stories of each group's journey from slavery to freedom.

Highlights of the Cape Verdean-Jewish Passover Seder included a performance in Ladino (Judeo-Spanish) by Cabo Verdean recording artist Gardenia Benros, whose Jewish grandfather immigrated from Morocco to Cabo Verde, and one by Cabo Verdean superstar Elida Almeida in Cabo Verdean Creole. Second graders in a school in Cabo Verde sang the national anthem, while youth from Temple Beth Zion, in Brookline, MA created a TikTok video about Passover. Speakers included Fabio Freit-

as, a 21-year-old man with Jewish-Cabo Verdean ancestors who is learning Judaism, in Lisbon, Portugal; Carol Castiel, a Jewish woman who is the founder and president of the Cape Verde Jewish Heritage Project, which has raised funds to restore the Jewish cemeteries and graves in Cabo Verde; and Rabbi David Jaffe of Sharon, MA. Since a Passover seder would typically involve a meal, the planning team produced what is perhaps the first ever Cape Verdean-Jewish Cookbook, with recipes from both cultures. This international event was emceed from Waltham, MA by Aviva Weinstein, a sophomore at Brandeis University and from Praia, Cabo Verde, by Suely Neves.

Speaking from Praia, Cabo Verde, Manuel da Luz Gonçalves, author of the only Cabo Verdean Creole-English dictionary, shared his thoughts on the resilience of both Cabo Verdeans and Jews. Speaking in Cape Verdean Creole, he spoke of the Jewish people's "capacity to rescue the past and transform the collective suffering into well-being and community success," and how Cabo Verdeans "turned their dreams into reality due to this existential process of Resilience and determination for a better tomorrow.... Resilience of the Cabo Verdean people led Cabo Verdeans to fight for independence, achieve victory, and create conditions for success in all aspects of life."

Sofia de Oliveira Lima, a Cabo Verdean with Jewish ancestors from Morocco, stood in the main cemetery of Praia amid ten Jewish graves, each with engravings in Hebrew as well as Portuguese. She reflected on the connection between these two peoples: "The Jews who came to Cabo Verde left deep marks in the economy, in history, together with the Cabo Verdean people, also a resilient people, and together they have suffered many struggles with hunger, drought, lack of rain. Consequently, they identify with each other." Ms. Lima concluded, "I'm very proud of my Jewish heritage and to be a part of these (Cabo Verdean/Moroccan Jewish) families."

Due to two waves of Jewish



Jamaica Plain resident Stephen Hodin says the blessing over the First Cup of Wine at the Cape Verdean-Jewish Passover Seder

immigration to Cabo Verde and generations of intermarriage, a large number of Cabo Verdeans have Jewish ancestors. Now members of both communities live together in Greater Boston, and around the world.

This year's sponsors include the Anti-Defamation League of New England; Boston U. - Elie Wiesel Center for Jewish Studies; Boutique Nha Tchiku, Cabo Verde; Brandeis U. - Dept. of Anthropology; Bridgewater State University - Pedro Pires Institute for Cape Verdean Studies; Bristol Community College - Holocaust and Genocide Center; Brown U. - Dept. of Anthropology; Cape Verdean American Community Development; Con-

sulate General of Cabo Verde; Congregation Beth Shalom of the Blue Hills, Milton; Kriola's Professional Association; Massachusetts Alliance of Portuguese Speakers; Temple Aliyah, Needham; Temple Beth Zion, Brookline; Temple Hillel B'nai Torah, West Roxbury; Temple Israel of Boston; Temple Sinai, Brookline; UMass Boston - Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies; Unity Peace Festival.

If you would like a copy of the video of the event, please contact us by email or at the phone number listed.

To find out more about the Cape Verdean-Jewish Passover Seder, visit www.capeverdean-jewishseeder.com



Jewish graves in the main cemetery in Praia, Cabo Verde.



Locations of participants - 26 US states and 10 countries.

Gazette Pet of the Week

by Sarah Carroll



ECHO & ANNIE

Four-year-old Echo and one-year-old Annie are mom and daughter looking for a home together! Weighing less than five pounds each, these little ladies are Polish rabbits. They are a bit shy at first, but sweet and playful once they feel safe. They would do best in a home without dogs or young kids but may be able to live with other rabbits. Since these cuties are so small, they would do well in an x-pen enclosure or free-roaming. They're working on litter box training and are sure to put a smile on your face with their love for each other. If you're interested in this adorable pair of bunnies, inquire today!



For more information about Echo & Annie and/or other animals in need of adoption, please contact:

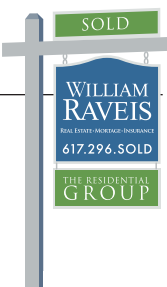
mSPCA
Kindness and Care for Animals®
350 South Huntington Avenue

Sponsored by:

Sarah Carroll, REALTOR®
The Residential Group
at William Raveis Real Estate
16 Clarendon St., Boston MA 02116
781-820-0280 or
sarah@residentialgroup.com

Email www.mspca.org/bostonadopt to apply to meet Echo and Annie

(617) 522-5055
www.mspca.org



Lawsuit against Exam School admissions process slows down notification

By SETH DANIEL

As if the Exam School admissions process could be any more confusing, now parents waiting for notification of acceptance, or not, will have to wait about a month or more longer than usual.

A parent advocacy group called the Boston Parent Coalition for Academic Excellence Corp. filed a lawsuit this month on behalf of several parents claiming discrimination against Asian American and white students under the revised process created last fall due to COVID-19. That process went forward using zip codes, student population data and grade point average/MCAS test results to determine admission to the three selective schools, which include Boston Latin School, Boston Latin Academy and O'Bryant High School. The entrance this year is for students in 6th grade going into 7th, and for those in 8th grade going into 9th. The typical timeline has students and families notified of acceptance by mid-March.

However, in a letter to parents late last week, Supt. Brenda Cassellius said the process would be delayed because of the lawsuit.

“On Tuesday, March 16, in a court hearing for the ongoing lawsuit regarding this year’s Exam School admissions process, the judge stated his goal is to provide a decision on the case by April 15, 2021,” wrote Supt. Cassellius. “This lawsuit directs our timeline for informing families about Exam School admissions. We will move forward as

soon as possible. We will also share any impact the case has on the admissions timeline directly with families and on our website. Updates will be available every two weeks...”

That setback could complicate enrollments for families in K-8 schools who have 6th graders. To keep their spot in those schools were they not to get into the exam school could be complicated by the longer timeline to hear about admissions to the exam schools.

According to the Dorchester

Reporter, the parent group is made up of 14 families, with 10 of them from West Roxbury. They do maintain a Facebook page under the same name.

Fighting back against the suit are a coalition of organizations including the Greater Boston Latino Network, the NAACP Boston Branch and the Asian American Resource Workshop. They are being represented by attorneys from Lawyers for Civil Rights Boston and the Greater Boston Legal Services.

LEGAL NOTICE

LEGAL NOTICE
OF MASSACHUSETTS
THE TRIAL COURT
PROBATE AND
FAMILY COURT
Suffolk Division
INFORMAL PROBATE
PUBLICATION
NOTICE

Docket No.
SU20P1943EA
Estate of:
Anthony Francis
Pagliuca
Date of Death:
July 17, 2020
To all persons interested in
the above captioned estate
by Petition of Petitioner
Marie A. Collins of Stoughton,
MA.
Marie A. Collins of
Stoughton, MA has been
informally appointed as the
Personal Representative of
the estate to serve without
surety on the bond.
The estate is being
administered under
informal procedure by the
Personal Representative
under the Massachusetts
Uniform Probate Code
without supervision by
the Court. Inventory and
accounts are not required
to be filed with the Court,
but interested parties are
entitled to notice regarding
the administration from the
Personal Representative
and can petition the Court
in any matter relating
to the estate, including
distribution of assets and
expenses of administration.
Interested parties are
entitled to petition the
Court to institute formal
proceedings and to obtain
orders terminating or
restricting the powers of
Personal Representatives
appointed under informal
procedure. A copy of the
Petition and Will, if any,
can be obtained from the
Petitioner.

3/26/21
JP

LEGAL NOTICE
COMMONWEALTH
OF MASSACHUSETTS
THE TRIAL COURT

PROBATE AND FAMILY
COURT DEPARTMENT
Norfolk Division
DIVORCE SUMMONS
BY PUBLICATION
AND MAILING

Docket No.
SU21D0082-DR
Eriana Lizally
Castillo
Plaintiff
vs
Manuel Del Jesus
Pimentel Echavarria
Defendant
To the Defendant:
A Complaint for divorce
has been presented to this
Court by Eriana Lizally
Castillo.
You are required to serve
upon Attorney Mithra
Merryman, whose address
is 197 Friend Street Boston,
MA 02114, your answer
on or before 5/06/2021.
If you fail to do so, the
Court will proceed to the
hearing and adjudication
of this action. You are also
required to file a copy of
your answer in the office of
the Register of this Court at
CANTON.
WITNESS, Hon. Patricia
Gorman, Esquire, First
Justice of this Court at
CANTON, this 9th day of
March, 2021.
Colleen M. Brierley
Register of Probate

3/26/21
JP

LEGAL NOTICE
COMMONWEALTH
OF MASSACHUSETTS
THE TRIAL COURT
PROBATE AND
FAMILY COURT

Suffolk Probate
And Family Court
24 New Chardon St.
Boston, MA 02114
(617)788-8300
CITATION ON
PETITION FOR
FORMAL
ADJUDICATION
Docket No.
SU21P0178EA
Estate of:
James W. Slaughter
Date of Death
07/09/2018
To all interested persons:

A Petition for Appointment
of Special Personal
Representative has been
filed by Kisha Slaughter
of Dorchester, MA requesting
that the Court enter a
formal Decree and Order
and for such other relief as
requested in the Petition.
The Petitioner requests
that: Kisha Slaughter
of Dorchester, MA be
appointed as Personal Rep-
resentative(s) of said estate
to serve Without Surety on
the bond in unsupervised
administration.
IMPORTANT NO-
TICE
You have the right to obtain
a copy of the Petition from
the Petitioner or at the
Court. You have a right to
object to this proceeding.
To do so, you or your
attorney must file a written
appearance and objection
at this Court before: 10:00
a.m. on the return day of
04/21/2021.
This is NOT a hearing date,
but a deadline by which
you must file a written
appearance and objection
if you object to this pro-
ceeding. If you fail to file a
timely written appearance
and objection followed by
an affidavit of objections
within thirty (30) days of
the return day, action may
be taken without further
notice to you.
UNSUPERVISED ADMIN-
ISTRATION UNDER THE
MASSACHUSETTS UNIFORM
PROBATE CODE (MUPC)
A Personal Representative
appointed under the MUPC
in an unsupervised admin-
istration is not required to
file an inventory or annual
accounts with the Court.
Persons interested in the
estate are entitled to notice
regarding the adminis-
tration directly from the
Personal Representative
and may petition the Court
in any matter relating to
the estate, including the
distribution of assets and
expenses of administration.
WITNESS, Hon. Brian J.
Dunn, First Justice of this
Court.
Date: March 10, 2021

Felix D. Arroyo
Register of Probate

3/26/21
JP

LEGAL NOTICE
COMMONWEALTH
OF MASSACHUSETTS
THE TRIAL COURT
PROBATE AND
FAMILY COURT
CITATION GIVING
NOTICE OF
PETITION FOR
APPOINTMENT OF
A GUARDIAN FOR
INCAPACITATED
PERSON PURSUANT

TO G.L. c. 190B,
§5-304
Docket No.
SU21P0426GD
In the matter of:
Judy G. Bennett
RESPONDENT
Alleged Incapacitated
Person
Of: Jamaica Plain, MA
To the named Respondent
and all other interested
persons, a petition has
been filed by Massachusetts
Dept. of Mental Health of
Westborough, MA in the
above captioned matter al-
leging that Judy G. Bennett
is in need of a Guardian
and requesting that June
Marie Bennett of Salem,
NH (or some other suitable
person) be appointed as
Guardian to serve Without
Surety on the bond.
The petition asks the court
to determine that the Re-
spondent is incapacitated,
that the appointment of a
Guardian is necessary, and
that the proposed Guardian
is appropriate. The petition
is on file with this court and
may contain a request for
certain specific authority.
You have the right to
object to this proceeding. If
you wish to do so, you or
your attorney must file a
written appearance at this
court on or before 10:00
A.M. on the return date of
04/15/2021. This day is
NOT a hearing date, but
a deadline date by which
you have to file the written
appearance if you object to
the petition. If you fail to

file the written appearance
by the return date, action
may be taken in this matter
without further notice to
you. In addition to filing
the written appearance,
you or your attorney must
file a written affidavit stat-
ing the specific facts and
grounds of your objection
within 30 days after the
return date.
IMPORTANT NOTICE
The outcome of this
proceeding may limit or
completely take away the
above-named person’s
right to make decisions
about personal affairs or
financial affairs or both.
The above-named person
has the right to ask for a
lawyer. Anyone may make
this request on behalf of
the above-named person.
If the above-named person
cannot afford a lawyer, one
may be appointed at State
expense.
WITNESS, Hon. Brian J.
Dunn, First Justice of this
Court.
Date: March 04, 2021
Felix D. Arroyo,
Register of Probate

03/26/21
JP

LEGAL NOTICE
COMMONWEALTH
OF MASSACHUSETTS
THE TRIAL COURT
PROBATE AND
FAMILY COURT

Suffolk Probate
And Family Court
24 New Chardon St.
Boston, MA 02114
(617)788-8300
CITATION ON
PETITION FOR
FORMAL
ADJUDICATION
Docket No.
SU20P1556EA
Estate of:
Kristine K. Haney
Date of Death:
07/28/2020
To all interested persons:
A Petition for Filing of will
of deceased no petition
has been filed by Elizabeth
O’Killea Haney of Hingham,
MA requesting that the
Court enter a formal Decree

and Order and for such
other relief as requested in
the Petition.
The Petitioner requests
that: Elizabeth O’Killea
Haney of Hingham, MA be
appointed as Personal Rep-
resentative(s) of said estate
to serve Without Surety on
the bond in unsupervised
administration.
IMPORTANT NO-
TICE
You have the right to obtain
a copy of the Petition from
the Petitioner or at the
Court. You have a right to
object to this proceeding.
To do so, you or your
attorney must file a written
appearance and objection
at this Court before: 10:00
a.m. on the return day of
04/21/2021.
This is NOT a hearing date,
but a deadline by which
you must file a written
appearance and objection
if you object to this pro-
ceeding. If you fail to file a
timely written appearance
and objection followed by
an affidavit of objections
within thirty (30) days of
the return day, action may
be taken without further
notice to you.
UNSUPERVISED ADMIN-
ISTRATION UNDER THE
MASSACHUSETTS UNIFORM
PROBATE CODE (MUPC)
A Personal Representative
appointed under the MUPC
in an unsupervised admin-
istration is not required to
file an inventory or annual
accounts with the Court.
Persons interested in the
estate are entitled to notice
regarding the adminis-
tration directly from the
Personal Representative
and may petition the Court
in any matter relating to
the estate, including the
distribution of assets and
expenses of administration.
WITNESS, Hon. Brian J.
Dunn, First Justice of this
Court.
Date: March 10, 2021
Felix D. Arroyo
Register of Probate

3/26/21
JP

LEGAL NOTICE
COMMONWEALTH
OF MASSACHUSETTS
THE TRIAL COURT
PROBATE AND
FAMILY COURT

Suffolk Probate
And Family Court
24 New Chardon St.
Boston, MA 02114
(617)788-8300
CITATION ON
PETITION FOR
FORMAL
ADJUDICATION
Docket No.
SU21P0278EA
Estate of:
Murray W. Frank
Also known as:
Murray Walter Frank,
Murray Frank
Date of Death:
01/03/2021
To all interested persons:
A Petition for Formal
Probate of Will with
Appointment of Personal
Representative has been
filed by Jeremiah D. Frank
of Arlington, MA and Eliza-
beth J. Bailey of Arlington,
MA requesting that the
Court enter a formal Decree
and Order and for such
other relief as requested in
the Petition.
The Petitioner requests
that: Jeremiah D. Frank of
Arlington, MA and Elizabeth
J. Bailey of Arlington, MA
be appointed as Personal
Representative(s) of said
estate to serve Without
Surety on the bond in un-
supervised administration.
IMPORTANT NO-
TICE
You have the right to obtain
a copy of the Petition from
the Petitioner or at the
Court. You have a right to
object to this proceeding.
To do so, you or your
attorney must file a written
appearance and objection
at this Court before: 10:00
a.m. on the return day of
04/22/2021.
This is NOT a hearing date,
but a deadline by which
you must file a written
appearance and objection
if you object to this pro-
ceeding. If you fail to file a
timely written appearance

and objection followed by
an affidavit of objections
within thirty (30) days of
the return day, action may
be taken without further
notice to you.
UNSUPERVISED ADMIN-
ISTRATION UNDER THE
MASSACHUSETTS UNIFORM
PROBATE CODE (MUPC)
A Personal Representative
appointed under the MUPC
in an unsupervised admin-
istration is not required to
file an inventory or annual
accounts with the Court.
Persons interested in the
estate are entitled to notice
regarding the adminis-
tration directly from the
Personal Representative
and may petition the Court
in any matter relating to
the estate, including the
distribution of assets and
expenses of administration.
WITNESS, Hon. Brian J.
Dunn, First Justice of this
Court.
Date: March 12, 2021
Felix D. Arroyo
Register of Probate

3/26/21
JP

LEGAL NOTICE
COMMONWEALTH
OF MASSACHUSETTS
THE TRIAL COURT
PROBATE AND
FAMILY COURT

Suffolk Probate
And Family Court
24 New Chardon St.
Boston, MA 02114
(617)788-8300
CITATION ON
PETITION FOR
FORMAL
ADJUDICATION
Docket No.
SU21P0196EA
Estate of:
William E. Tarlow
Date of Death:
11/26/2020
To all interested persons:
A Petition for Formal
Probate of Will with
Appointment of Personal
Representative has been
filed by Daniel S. Tarlow of
Brookline, MA requesting
that the Court enter a
formal Decree and Order
and for such other relief as

requested in the Petition.
The Petitioner requests
that: Daniel S. Tarlow of
Brookline, MA be appointed
as Personal Representa-
tive(s) of said estate to
serve Without Surety on
the bond in unsupervised
administration.
IMPORTANT NO-
TICE
You have the right to obtain
a copy of the Petition from
the Petitioner or at the
Court. You have a right to
object to this proceeding.
To do so, you or your
attorney must file a written
appearance and objection
at this Court before: 10:00
a.m. on the return day of
04/15/2021.
This is NOT a hearing date,
but a deadline by which
you must file a written
appearance and objection
if you object to this pro-
ceeding. If you fail to file a
timely written appearance
and objection followed by
an affidavit of objections
within thirty (30) days of
the return day, action may
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tration directly from the
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and may petition the Court
in any matter relating to
the estate, including the
distribution of assets and
expenses of administration.
WITNESS, Hon. Brian J.
Dunn, First Justice of this
Court.
Date: March 08, 2021
Felix D. Arroyo
Register of Probate

3/26/21
JP

Mayoral candidate Michelle Wu responds to Atlanta shooting, violence against Asian Americans

By JOHN LYNDIS

Here in Jamaica Plain 7.9 percent of our neighbors are Asian Americans and while they make up a small minority of our overall population they contribute greatly to the fabric of the community as business owners, parents, students, and activists.

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

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

"I join our Asian American community in mourning and solidarity following the senseless shootings in the Atlanta area," said Wu in a statement. "It's heartbreaking and appalling to see the anti-Asian harassment, violence, and now mass murder that has accelerated over the

past year — part of a long history of racism in America that we all must fight to end. And all too often, the most silenced members of our community — Asian American elders and women working in invisible industries — have borne the brunt of these attacks."

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

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

Wu said Boston has not been

immune to these incidents and in every city across the country, we must build community to protect and celebrate intersectional identities.

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

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

"Today, we're asking for you to make a donation to support the Greater Boston area's Asian Community Emergency Relief Fund to help provide direct financial support to Asian and Asian American Boston residents who are having trouble meeting their basic needs," said Wu. "If you can, please chip in to the Asian Community Emergency Relief Fund. Your donation will go towards providing aid to those in our city's Asian American community who need it most."

Asian Americans account for 6 percent of all the COVID 19 cases and 8 percent of all the deaths in Boston. While count-



City Councilor and Mayoral Candidate Michelle Wu.

less communities are severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Asian American community in Greater Boston is being hit harder than most. Many are immigrants who work in food, hospitality, home care, and child care sectors that have been closed. Consequently, these workers have lost their incomes. Because of language barriers and immigration status, not everyone can access public benefits like unemployment and the new

stimulus dollars. These families are in jeopardy of not having enough money to buy basic necessities and pay for housing.

So far the fund has raised and distributed over \$350,000 and helped 327 families, totaling 946 individuals and 55.5 percent of the fund went to families with undocumented members, and the remaining fund helped families that were ineligible for other public benefits because of their immigrant status.



Virtual Public Meeting

Amend Accessory Parking Zoning

Wednesday, March 31
5:30 PM - 7:00 PM

Zoom Link: bit.ly/3kUXdqQ
Toll Free: (833) 568 - 8864
Meeting ID: 161 611 0558

Project Proponent:

Boston Planning and Development Agency

Project Description:

This is a public meeting to present proposed zoning changes that would make Accessory Parking a Conditional Use in neighborhood business subdistricts. Currently it is an Allowed Use in basements and first floors where there is an Allowed Use on the upper floors, such as residential. This condition creates a blank street wall with no active first floor use and runs counter to planning goals for neighborhood subdistricts. By making Accessory Parking Conditional, requiring a Conditional use permit, it provides and opportunity for community input and design review. See 3/31/21 on the BPDA Calendar for more info.

mail to: **Bryan Glascock**
Boston Planning & Development Agency
One City Hall Square, 9th Floor
Boston, MA 02201
phone: 617.722.4300
email: bryan.glascock@boston.gov

Close of Comment Period:
4.9.2021



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EDITORIAL

Violence against the AAPI community must end

Prejudice, discrimination, and violence against members of the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community has existed ever since immigrants from China began to arrive in America in the 1850s.

The first anti-immigration law in our nation's history, the Chinese Exclusion Act, specifically targeted Chinese immigrants in 1882 and was still the law of the land until 1943.

The wrongful detention of Japanese-Americans in camps during WWII has become well-known to every high school student of American history.

Locally, our newspapers through the years have reported on numerous incidents of hate in the Boston area, ranging from the graffiti and vandalism that plagued a popular Japanese restaurant in Winthrop Centre in the 1980s to the arson fires in Revere in the 1980s that culminated with the blaze in December, 1990, that drove more than 150 persons, mostly from the Revere Cambodian community, from their homes.

The tragic shooting late last week in Atlanta by 21 year-old Robert Aaron Long that targeted Asian-American employees in massage parlors is just the latest example of the growing trend of violence against Asian-Americans that was encouraged by the rhetoric of certain public figures who fed the flames of racial animosity with terms such as the "China virus" and "the kung-flu" to describe the COVID-19 pandemic.

The targeting of members of the AAPI community must stop. Hopefully, with a new administration that has rejected the divisive rhetoric of the past and a renewed determination by law enforcement to prosecute every incident of racially-motivated violence, our society can put an end to this virus of hate.

The Atlanta shootings: A confluence for a perfect storm

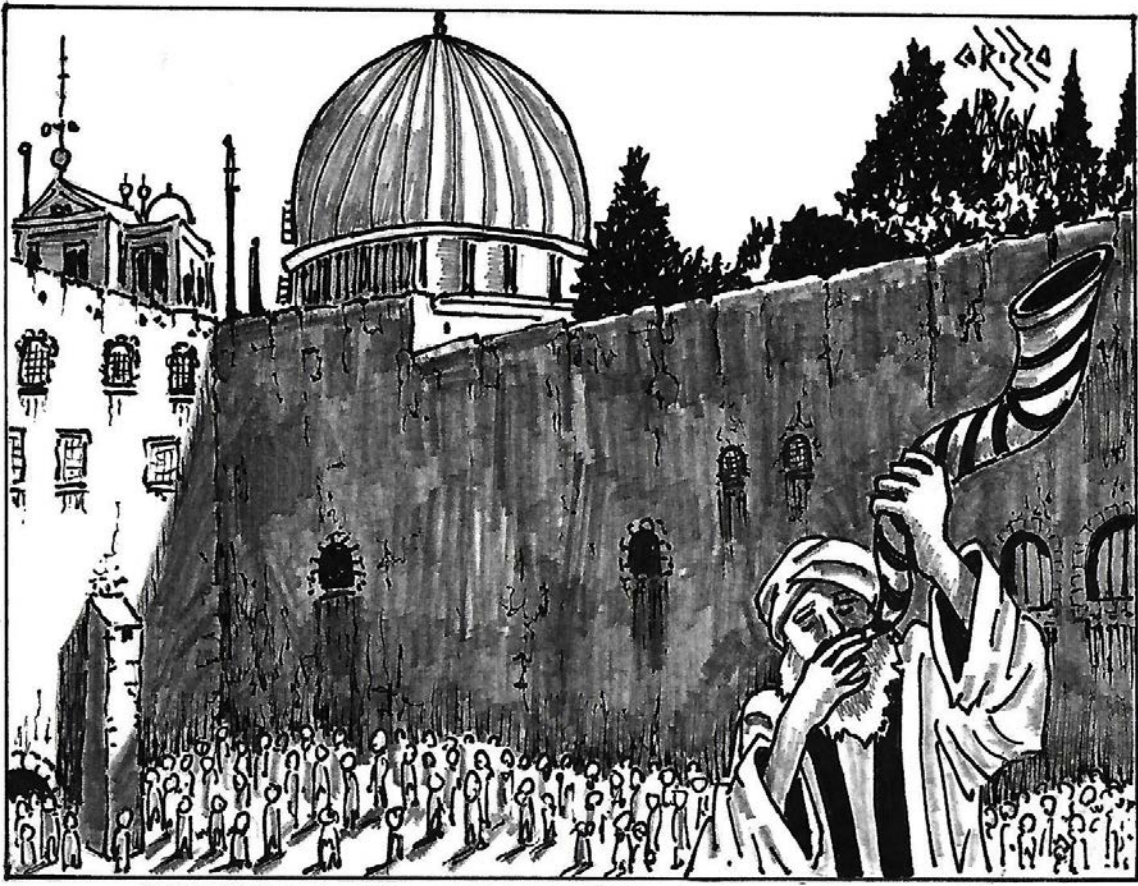
In addition to the obvious targeting of Asian-Americans in the tragic shootings in Atlanta, there were two other factors that created a perfect storm for this sort of tragedy to take place.

The first was the easy and immediate access for the purchase of a high-capacity weapon by the 21 year-old perpetrator of the shootings, who was able to buy the gun on Tuesday morning and kill six people that afternoon.

The idea of a waiting period -- also known as a cooling-off period -- between the purchase of a gun and the delivery into the hands of the buyer has been shown to be an effective measure in saving lives. According to a recent study, states with mandatory waiting periods -- regardless of their length -- had an average of 17 percent fewer murders and 10 percent fewer suicides by guns.

The second factor was the influence of the young man's church upon his mind from an early age. This is by no means an excuse for his murderous spree, but it is to say that he clearly had been brainwashed by the extreme and confusing messages from his evangelical church about sex that led him to believe that he had an unnatural sex addiction that he could quell only by taking extreme measures.

When there are tragedies such as the shootings in Atlanta, we all want easy answers. But in reality, the truth of what drives persons to commit such heinous acts are not always easily understood, even by the perpetrators themselves.



CELEBRATE PASSOVER MARCH 27-APRIL 4

LETTERS

I will bring Boston with me

Dear Editor,
To the people of Boston,
Today, the United States Senate voted to confirm me as the next Secretary of Labor. I am deeply honored to serve my country in this way at such a critical moment in our history. Before I depart, I want to say thank you to the City and the people who helped make me the person I am today. I have spent my entire life in Boston. It's the City that welcomed my immigrant parents, and it's the City that gave me a chance to follow my dreams.

When I became Mayor in 2014, I said I would listen, I would learn, and I would lead together with you. That is what we did, every moment of my time in this office. Our City's success is due to all of you who advocated for a better, more inclusive future for the city we all love. This spirit of collaboration, compassion, and community has been especially clear during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Our City has come together in extraordinary ways to look out for one another. My heart is filled with pride. I want you to know: Wherever

I go, I will bring Boston with me. I will work to make the new administration in Washington, D.C., the best federal partner Boston and America's cities have ever had, and I will never stop fighting for the values we believe in. I hope you and your families are staying safe and well during this uncertain time. There are better days ahead, and I have no doubt you will continue to show the world what it means to be Boston Strong.

Sincerely,
Marty Walsh

OP-ED

Pandemic highlights the contributions of immigrants to Massachusetts

By MARCELO M. SUÁREZ-OROZCO

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

Although they are often invisible, immigrants today represent more than 17 percent of the state's population. In some communities, the number is more than double that. In Revere, immigrants account for 38.7 percent of the population. At a time when birth rates are declining and our overall population is aging, immigrants are our first line of defense against

the deep demographic winter facing the Commonwealth. Over the next 15 years, immigrants and their U.S.-born children will represent *all* net labor growth, according to new research from the Migration Policy Institute (MPI).

One area where immigrants play an important role is the

Continued on page 23

RCC, Transformative Healthcare offering paid work experience opportunities for students during the COVID-19 vaccine rollout

STAFF REPORT

Roxbury Community College (RCC) and Transformative Healthcare are teaming up to connect RCC students to job openings at vaccination sites, such as the Reggie Lewis Track and Athletic Center. The students will serve in non-clinical roles at vaccination sites as Check-In Associates, Check-Out Associates, and Post Vaccine Observers and will be compensated for their work.

"This program is an important step in our students' preparation to become skilled healthcare workers, while also providing them with a source of income that so many of our students need during the pandemic," says

Roxbury Community College President Dr. Valerie Roberson. "We are grateful to Transformative Healthcare for providing students with the opportunity to work alongside their EMT's, clinicians and highly trained staff."

The RCC students will help Transformative Healthcare fill the hundreds of staff positions necessary to provide COVID-19 vaccination programs to the most vulnerable populations. Students can apply online or get information by calling (978) 335-1704.

"Addressing systemic health inequities, improving patient outcomes and reducing healthcare costs are part of our mission at Transformative Healthcare," says Charles T. Lelon,

Transformative Healthcare CEO. "We have found a like-minded partner with RCC. Together, we will train and hire a workforce that is representative of the communities we serve and create permanent employment programs that will far outlast the COVID-19 pandemic."

CIC Health was selected by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to operate and expand the COVID-19 vaccination site at the Reggie Lewis Track and Athletic Center at Roxbury Community College. The vaccination site is part of the state's comprehensive program to reach Massachusetts communities of color hardest hit by COVID-19.

"The Reggie Lewis Center mass vaccination site has ex-

panded vaccine access and equity for residents of Roxbury and its surrounding neighborhoods, and partnership with the local community has been key to its progress," said Dr. Atul Gawande, co-founder and executive chair of CIC Health. "This program to employ RCC healthcare students provides yet another way of supporting and involving the local community."

RCC has a longstanding tradition of meeting the workforce needs of Boston's largest em-

ployers in the field of healthcare. The College offers both credit and non-credit health sciences programs, and regularly meets with industry leaders to update program curricula and ensure students have access to the best clinical sites in Boston. RCC remains committed to its important mission of providing a cost-effective education and essential resources to students facing financial challenges.

Op-Ed

Continued from page 22

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

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

Again, immigrants are providing welcome news. The number of US-born adults with immigrant parents is projected to more than double between 2015 and 2035, and now accounts for 28 percent of all college stu-

dents. (UMass Boston, home to thousands of immigrant-origin students, plays a unique role in the Commonwealth: most of our students will stay, live and work in Massachusetts after graduation, becoming an integral part of our labor force.)

The pandemic has revealed the extent to which immigrants form the backbone of our health care system. If you are being treated for COVID-19 in the U.S., there is a nearly one in three chance that you will be seen by an immigrant physician, according to MPI. If you or a loved one needs a home health aide, there is a 40 percent chance that person will be an immigrant. One in six nurses working on the front lines is an immigrant, according to the Brookings Institution.

Even before the pandemic, immigrants were filling essential jobs that support every facet of our existence. They care for the sick, people with disabilities, older adults, children and babies. They deliver our food and work in our factories and warehouses and throughout the

supply chain. They teach our children and make our higher education system the envy of the world: since 2000 they have been awarded nearly 40 percent of the Nobel Prizes won by Americans in Chemistry, Medicine and Physics.

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

The data shows that when given the chance, immigrants take up an American identity, gravitate toward cultural norms and embrace the English language – and improve the levels of education, occupational diversity and income in their communities. That's good for them – and everyone else. After all, their future is our future.

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

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