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JP KIDS, SEE PAGES 10 + 11

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# Jamaica Plain GAZETTE

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## BOSTON BUILDING RESOURCES CELEBRATES EARTH DAY WITH COMMUNITY EVENT



Boston Architectural College had a pop-up classroom to illustrate how engineering and design can help the environment.



DEREK KOUYOUJIAN PHOTOS

Shown above, Al Cousson grills up both veggie and meat burgers and hot dogs for the crowd.

Shown to the right, Volunteer Emma Atallah is excited to make a tie-dye shirt. See more photos on Pages 16 and 17.



## JPNC Housing Comm. hears of Stonely Brookley condominium project

BY GAZETTE STAFF

The Housing and Development Committee of the Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council (JPNC) held its regular monthly meeting last Tuesday, April 16.

On hand for the session were chair Danielle Somer Kieta, vice-chair Purple Reign, Willie Mitchell, Bernard Doherty, Gert Thorne, Caroline Royce, Aiden Foley, Esther Beillard, and Pam Bender. Also in attendance was JPNC member Sarah Freeman.

The main portion of the meeting consisted of a presentation from Rebecca Mautner, the Vice-President of Real Estate Development & Assets with the Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Development Corp. (JPNDC), which has been building affordable homes in the community for 40 years.

According to the JPNDC's website, the group focuses on "new projects that are 100% affordable to households earning below 60% of Area Median In-

come (AIM)." Among its forthcoming projects, the JPNDC will be involved with the redevelopment of the Shattuck Hospital campus which, according to its web site, is, "A partnership among Boston Medical Center, JPNDC, The Community Builders, Bay Cove Human Services, Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program, Health Care Resource Centers, Pine Street Inn, and Victory Programs to redevelop the 13-acre Shattuck Hospital campus to provide the best and most seamless care possible to people experiencing addiction, mental illness, and homelessness. The JPNDC will take the lead in developing 201 service-enriched apartments for families who have experienced homelessness."

After providing an overview of JPNDC's residential and business portfolios and other programs, Mautner discussed the Stonley Brookley project, a new

Continued on page 3

## City Council members hear from rat control consultant

BY GAZETTE STAFF

In a scene in a Three Stooges film, a patient in a mental health hospital, pointing to a button-hole on his shirt, tells the Stooges, "I've seen rats come out of that hole!" and everyone in the

audience laughed. Well, the rats are coming out of the holes in the ground in the Boston parks where children play and out of the cracks in the Boston sewer masonry walls, but it is not funny. And their population is growing fast.

That's the message that a subcommittee of the Boston City Council heard from research scientist and rodentologist Dr. Bobby Corrigan at a meeting in the Council Chambers on April 9. Corrigan has been hired by the city as a consultant on the rat

problems in the city.

The problem is only going to get worse in the coming years, said Corrigan, as the global population of rats is increasing. In cities such as New York, Philadelphia, and Boston, the rat population is expanding even faster,

thanks to the many food sources for rats to feast on, such as open trash containers and plastic bags filled with food on the streets, as well as large burrowing holes for rats to breed.

Continued on page 6

# Franklin Park Defenders to continue lawsuit against White Stadium development

BY ADAM SWIFT

A group of residents and the Emerald Necklace Conservancy, now calling themselves the Franklin Park Defenders, are continuing their legal action against a public-private partnership to redevelop White Stadium.

The group met at the stadium at Franklin Park on Tuesday to announce the next steps in the lawsuit in what they call the unlawful privatization of the stadium.

Last month, a judge denied a request for a temporary restraining order and preliminary injunction to halt the project.

Boston Unity Soccer Partners have a public-private partnership with the city of Boston and Boston Public Schools to renovate White Stadium to bring a professional women's soccer team to Boston in 2026.

Under the agreement with the city, Boston Unity will redevelop the west grandstands and create a public area called the Grove just outside the entrance of the stadium. The city would be responsible for the redevelopment of the east grandstands as well as the field itself.

Boston Unity would have full use of the stadium for about 20 game days from May through November, while the updated

stadium would be open for use by the city, school sports and other activities, and possible community events the rest of the year, according to city officials and the developers.

But the Franklin Park Defenders have raised a number of concerns about the project, including what they call the unconstitutional privatization of public land; the displacement of BPS student-athletes and the local community from White Stadium and Franklin Park; the absence of a realistic transportation plan for 20 annual game days that will draw more than 10,000 attendees to the stadium; and any other concerts or events to be

planned in the new facility once leased, and the lack of adequate community participation in decision making about how best to improve the park throughout an incredibly fast-moving redevelopment process.

"We all want to see White Stadium renovated as a public stadium for the sole benefit of BPS students and the local community," said plaintiff Renee Welch, an Egleston Square resident. "But instead of working with members of the community to rebuild a public stadium that would meet the needs of Boston students and the neighborhoods surrounding the park, the City of Boston is planning to hand

White Stadium over to a private developer to host a professional sports stadium, which we fear will ultimately result in the displacement of our communities from this park we love. In recent weeks the City has moved forward aggressively, holding several public meetings on the project where our concerns as residents have continued to go unaddressed."

Welch said city officials have dismissed residents' concerns as frivolous.

On Tuesday, the Franklin Park Defenders announced that it will be continuing the lawsuit,

*Continued on page 3*

## Mayor Wu's Coffee Hour Series comes to Jamaica Plain on May 7

SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE

Mayor Michelle Wu and the Boston Parks and Recreation Department will host the 2024 Neighborhood Coffee Hour Series

in partnership with Dunkin'® in parks citywide from April 22 to June 26. Wu will be in Jamaica Plain on May 7 at Mozart Street Playground that is located at 10 Mozart Street from 9:30 to 10:30

a.m.

Mayor Wu's Neighborhood Coffee Hours offer a unique opportunity to speak directly with the Mayor and staff from City departments about open space and their neighborhoods. Through these conversations, and a suggestion box at each site, Mayor Wu looks forward to hearing how the City of Boston can improve upon parks, public areas, and City services.

"Every neighborhood and every resident has their own diverse set of concerns that deserve to not only be heard, but to be acknowledged and addressed," said Mayor Michelle Wu. "I am excited for all of the conversations and connection that will come from Neighborhood Coffee Hours."

Leadership and staff from the Community Engagement Cabinet will be at each Coffee Hour. Community members will have an opportunity to meet their neighborhood liaisons, who will share updates on each neighborhood, including how many 311 cases have been resolved, streets repaired, as well as the City's investments in housing, local businesses, and the arts. The City is again releasing a Community Input Survey, which provides an opportunity for constituents to ask questions and inform what will be presented during Coffee Hours with the Mayor. Last year, this proved to be a success, allowing constituents to hear directly from the Mayor and City leaders as they addressed concerns and

answered constituents' questions at each Coffee Hour event.

"Coffee Hours with the Mayor is an intentional effort to meet community members in the heart of their neighborhoods," said Brianna Millor, Chief of the Community Engagement Cabinet. "I encourage residents, including our youth, seniors, civic organizations, business owners, and local leaders to attend this neighborhood-centered event. Boston 311 will be present to connect residents to essential city services."

Dunkin' will be on-site with freshly brewed Iced Coffee and MUNCHKINS® donut hole treats. Dunkin' will have lawn games and gift card giveaways. Residents at each event will also be eligible to win a raffle prize from Dunkin'. Individuals in attendance will receive a free flowering plant provided by the Boston Parks and Recreation Department, while supplies last. Fresh fruit will be provided by Star Market.

"Mayor Wu's Neighborhood Coffee Hours are vital for community engagement, allowing residents to share their thoughts directly. We're grateful for their participation," noted Ryan Woods, Commissioner of the Parks and Recreation Department. "These events not only foster dialogue but also mark the kickoff for our exciting summer calendar of events. From outdoor concerts to movies to arts and crafts workshops for kids, our programming breathes life into

our parks, fulfilling our core mission of creating vibrant spaces for all to enjoy."

All coffee hours will be held from 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m., weather permitting. Visit [boston.gov/coffee-hours](http://boston.gov/coffee-hours) for more information. For more information and updates on possible rain locations, please contact the Boston Parks and Recreation Department at (617) 635-4505 or @bostonparksdept on X, Facebook, or Instagram, or by visiting [boston.gov/parks](http://boston.gov/parks).

- Monday, April 29  
Horatio Harris Park  
85 Harold Street  
Roxbury
- Tuesday, May 7  
Mozart Street Playground  
10 Mozart Street  
Jamaica Plain
- Thursday, May 23  
McConnell Park  
30 Denny Street  
Dorchester
- Thursday, June 6  
Iacono Playground  
150 Readville Street  
Hyde Park
- Monday, June 24  
Mission Hill Playground  
1497 Tremont Street  
Mission Hill

For more information and updates on possible rain locations, please contact the Boston Parks and Recreation Department at (617) 635-4505 or @bostonparksdept on X, Facebook, or Instagram, or by visiting [boston.gov/parks](http://boston.gov/parks).

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# Lawsuit

*Continued from page 2*

and proceed into legal discovery to reveal the many details of this soccer stadium plan that have not been made public, according to Welch.

“The City has collected bids for an emergency demolition contract that could result in White Stadium being torn down as soon as this month, with only 48 hours notice,” said plaintiff Louis Elisa, a Dorchester resident, founding member of the Franklin Park Coalition in 1978, and President of the Garrison Trotter Neighborhood Association. “Boston kids and the community would be displaced from White Stadium this summer, in an effort to meet the incredibly rushed timeline of the professional soccer team.”

Elisa noted that community events and festivals would have to be scheduled around the soccer games and residents who want to use the area would be forced out on the majority of

warm-weather weekends during the year.

The group said they want to see White Stadium renovated as a public stadium for the sole benefit of Boston Public School Students and the local community.

Following the press conference, plaintiffs and residents led by Dr. Jean McGuire toured the site to share their concerns about the redevelopment of White Stadium into a for-profit professional soccer stadium.

“Franklin Park, as it was originally designed by Fredrick Law Olmsted over a century ago, is for the people who live here. It’s not for any private group to profit from; it’s for the public’s free use,” said plaintiff Jean McGuire of Roxbury, a former executive director of METCO and a community activist who lives four blocks from Franklin Park. “All of us in Boston and the suburbs who use the park want it left pristine. We want it left the way we designed it — for the people.”

Plaintiff Rodney Singleton, a Roxbury resident, said the group is fed up with the disregard by city officials in response to concerns raised about the planned renovation of the stadium.

“Would the city give Boston Common or the Public Garden over to private hands? No,” he said. “Would they place a professional sports venue inside a park with limited transit access anywhere else in the city? No! But Franklin Park, located in the heart of Boston’s neighborhoods of color and environmental justice communities, is being offered to the highest bidder. Our kids, and our communities, deserve better.”

Plaintiff Karen Mauney-Brodek, President of the Emerald Necklace Conservancy, said her organization is committed to supporting the residents of all the Necklance;s neighborhoods. “Today -together - we are standing up against the unconstitutional privatization of White Stadium and surrounding green space,” she said. “The environmental

justice communities served by Franklin Park and future generations of Boston student-athletes deserve a restored public stadium and improved park.”

Last month, the Franklin Park Coalition unveiled the results of a recent survey on the use of the park and attitudes toward the proposed renovation of White Stadium at an online meeting.

The results showed that the

majority of the more than 700 respondents would either support or consider supporting the stadium plans if some issues were addressed, while 20 percent of respondents said they are outright opposed to the project. The majority of the respondents to the survey were from the Jamaica Plain neighborhood, although there were responses from residents who lived in all areas near the park.

# JPNC Housing

*Continued from page 1*

building at the corner of Stonley and Brookley Rds., that will consist of 45 affordable condominium units with a mix of studio, 1-, 2-, and 3-bedroom units with a likely completion date of early 2025. Applicants for the units must be either U.S. citizens or lawful resident aliens and must be first-time home buyers, with preferences for Boston residents and first-generation home buyers. There also will be five artist live-work studios. The sale of all of the units will be conducted through a lottery.

The price of the units will range from approximately \$180,000 for a studio to \$297,000 for a 3-bedroom for persons who have incomes of 80% of AMI, though those figures are subject to being updated.

After the committee members queried Mautner about various aspects of the project, Paola Liendo, the JPND's Director of Economic Mobility Services, made a presentation regarding the services offered by the JPND to prospective home buyers to assist them with complying with the many

requirements for qualifying for a mortgage.

The next topic taken up by the committee was a discussion with the members of the committee's MBTA's Arborway Garage subcommittee. Bender, a member of the subcommittee, said the subcommittee is asking the full HDC to send a letter to the T and the city regarding the T's proposal (with the city's assent) to place a 150-space parking lot on the eight acres of community development land that was promised to JP dating back to the original Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in 1999 and subsequently signed by the T and the city (by then-mayor Tom Menino) in 2001.

Sue Cibulsky, a member of the subcommittee, presented the draft letter to the full committee, which essentially asks the T to find another location for the employee parking lot so as not to impinge on the eight acres set aside for community development purposes.

The committee members voted 7-1 in favor of sending the letter.

The committee also briefly discussed the status of the Forbes Building, which the owner has committed to turning into permanent affordable housing.

The committee then adjourned until its next meeting on May 21.

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## 3458 Washington Street

Public Meeting | Virtual Meeting

Tuesday, April 30, 2024 | 06:00 PM - 07:30 PM

The information at this meeting is crucial to you as a City of Boston resident and stakeholder. Interpreting services are available to communicate the content of these documents at no additional cost to you. If you require translation services, please contact Tyler.C.Ross@boston.gov. The meeting is scheduled for 4/30/2024. Please request interpreting services no later than 5 days before the meeting date.

Meeting of the general public to review the proposed 3458 Washington Street Project in Jamaica Plain.

Please note that this is a Public Meeting. The meeting will begin with a 45-minute presentation of the project by the development team, followed by 45 minutes of public Q&A.

### How to Participate

Register in advance:

[bit.ly/3458Wash](https://bit.ly/3458Wash)

Meeting ID: 161 638 2273

Toll-Free Call-in Number: 833.568.8864



Scan me to learn more about this meeting



**boston planning & development agency**

# BPDA hosts virtual meeting for 3458 Washington Street project in Jamaica Plain

The Boston Planning and Development Agency will be holding a virtual public meeting on the project slated for 3458 Washington Street on Tuesday, April 30, from 6:00 PM - 7:30 PM

Meeting of the general public to review the proposed 3458 Washington Street Project in Jamaica Plain. The Proposed project is to construct a new five-story building to contain approximately 807 square feet of ground-floor commercial space and 37 dwelling units, 7 motor vehicle exterior surface parking spaces, and bicycle parking/storage in accordance with City requirements.

The meeting will begin with a 45-minute presentation of the project by the development team, followed by 45 minutes of public Q&A. If you require translation services, please contact Tyler.C.Ross@boston.gov. Please request interpreting services no later than 5 days before the



COURTESY OF THE BOSTON PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

A rendering of the 3458 Washington St. project.

# Louis D. Brown Peace Institute pre-walk gathering features inspiring speakers

In advance of the Louis D. Brown Peace Institute's Mother's Day Walk for Peace on May 12, organizers will be honored to welcome as speakers Rachel Rodrigues, Co-Executive Director of the LDBPI and Marc Cawley Bercy, Community Outreach Coordinator. The event will take

place Thursday, May 2, from 5:30-6:30 pm on the lawn of the First Baptist Church, Jamaica Plain, 633 Centre St.

For further information contact Mary Lenihan at maryfrankenlenny@gmail.com, (617)834-8938 or Penny Wells at pwells222@gmail.com, (617)640-3557

meeting date.

How to Participate  
Register in advance:  
[bit.ly/3458Wash](https://bit.ly/3458Wash)

Meeting ID: 161 638 2273

Toll-Free Call-in Number:  
833.568.8864

To learn more about the meeting, visit the meeting page online at <https://www.bostonplans.org/news-calendar/calendar/2024/04/30/3458-washington-street-public-meeting>

# Mayor Wu announces return of Playoff Hub on Canal Street

SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE

Mayor Michelle Wu, in partnership with Downtown North As-

sociation, announced the return of the Boston Playoff Hub on Canal Street, creating a car-free zone for fans to gather before

and during home playoff games at TD Garden. The return of this pedestrian zone builds on Mayor Wu's commitment to re-

imagining Boston's streets and transforming public space in a way that's enjoyable for residents, small business owners,

and visitors.

"We're thrilled to give Boston fans an opportunity with both the Bruins and the Celtics in the playoffs this year to come together safely, cheer on their favorite teams, and support our local businesses," said Mayor Michelle Wu. "I'm grateful to our partners for working with us to bring back the Playoff Hub, creating a joyful experience for our hockey and basketball fans. I encourage everyone to come out before and during the playoff games to build community and support our teams."

"This is a really great thing for us to be doing to ensure we are encouraging local fans to support small businesses while celebrating Boston's legacy as the city of champions at the teams' doorstep! Our fans show up for our iconic teams year after year, so I can't wait to take part in these festivities as we root for the Celtics and Bruins to take it all the way," said District 8 City Councilor Sharon Durkan.

The Playoff Hub will be free and open to the public, providing more space for residents and visitors to gather outdoors and

Continued on page 5

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# City officials to host disability community forum on May 1

SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE

Mayor Michelle Wu, the Mayor's Commission on Persons with Disabilities and the Disability Advisory Board announced that the City's annual Disability Community Forum will take place on Wednesday, May 1 from 2:00 to 3:30 p.m. The event is hybrid and will be held at Suffolk University Law School located at 120 Tremont St. Boston. The event is open to the public, with hybrid attendance options allowing participation both in person and on Zoom. Please visit [boston.gov/disability-forum](http://boston.gov/disability-forum) if interested in attending.

"Boston's Disability Community Forum is an important and critical opportunity for Boston residents with disabilities to build community, connect with city services and provide invaluable feedback on issues across the city's neighborhoods," said Mayor Michelle Wu. "As we continue to build Boston into a city for everyone, I encourage everyone to attend this forum and help move us forward in our work to make our city more inclusive and accessible for all."

"Boston's Disability Community Forum is an incredible opportunity for city officials to listen to people with disabilities, and hear the priorities and ideas they have to make Boston more accessible and inclusive," said the City of Boston Commissioner on Person with Disabilities and ADA Title II Coordinator, Kristen McCosh.

The hour and a half long event will open with a brief presentation from Commissioner McCosh of the Commission and Board's Annual Report. The event will

then open for public comment and a Q&A session. The purpose of the event is to provide an opportunity for Boston residents with disabilities to share their feedback on and ask questions about City services. It is also a chance for City of Boston officials to learn from the disability community's unique perspective. This event will be recorded

by the City of Boston's Cable TV channel, and following the end of the event a video recording will be available to stream on the City's YouTube channel, Xfinity channel 24, RCN channel 13, and Fios channel 962.

The Disability Community Forum is a once a year event, but the City of Boston Disabilities Commission office is open Monday through Friday from 9 am to 5 pm, and staff are available every day to answer any questions or concerns you may have.

To learn more about the Disability Community Forum, visit [boston.gov](http://boston.gov), email [disability@boston.gov](mailto:disability@boston.gov) or call the Mayor's Commission on Persons with Disabilities at 617-635-3682.

The hour and a half long event will open with a brief presentation from Commissioner McCosh of the Commission and Board's Annual Report. The event will

then open for public comment and a Q&A session. The purpose of the event is to provide an opportunity for Boston residents with disabilities to share their feedback on and ask questions about City services. It is also a chance for City of Boston officials to learn from the disability community's unique perspective. This event will be recorded

by the City of Boston's Cable TV channel, and following the end of the event a video recording will be available to stream on the City's YouTube channel, Xfinity channel 24, RCN channel 13, and Fios channel 962.

## Playoff Hub

*Continued from page 4*

celebrate Boston's home teams. Canal Street will be closed from noon on game days, through one hour after the game ends. Parking regulations will be posted ahead of the first Bruins playoff game on Saturday, April 20. Vehicles in violation of posted regulations will be towed.

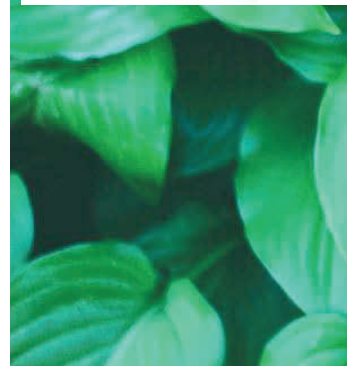
"We are looking forward to creating vibrancy and camaraderie on Canal Street," said Segun Idowu, Chief of Economic Opportunity and Inclusion. "Activating this space will give visitors and residents the opportunity to support local businesses while supporting Boston's sports teams."

"We are grateful to Mayor Wu and the City of Boston for bringing back the Playoff Hub on Canal Street," said Glen Thornborough, President of TD Garden and COO of Boston Bruins. "With both teams in the playoffs, it's a great opportunity for fans to gather before games and bring

the palpable energy from TD Garden out into the community." "There's nowhere quite like TD Garden, especially on Celtics and Bruins gamedays," said Rich Gotham, President of the Boston Celtics. "We extend our appreciation to Mayor Wu and the City of Boston for bringing back the Playoff Hub on Canal Street, which creates a space outdoors for fans to continue cheering on both teams and support local businesses throughout the playoffs."

"The Downtown North Association is excited to see the return of Canal Street as the Playoff Hub," said Jay Walsh, Executive Director of Downtown North Association. "We look forward to welcoming Bruins and Celtics fans to the area and to create a festive atmosphere. We are grateful to Mayor Wu and our members look forward to what will hopefully be lengthy playoff runs for both teams."

The first Bruins playoff game will be on Saturday, April 20. The first Celtics playoff game is Sunday, April 21.



## Get ready for summer with the Curley K-8 School's annual PLANT SALE!

**Date:** Saturday, May 4th, 10a-2p – Rain or shine!  
**Location:** City parking lot directly across from the Curley School at the corner of Centre St. and Spring Park Ave.

Come celebrate spring and see your neighbors while picking out annuals, herbs, and vegetables for your summer garden. In addition to plants, there will also be a bake sale with lots of delicious treats.

This fundraiser, sponsored by the School Parent Council, supports expansive programming and materials for the Curley School, Boston's largest K-8 school.



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**DATE:** Saturday, May 4th, 2024  
**TIME:** 2:30PM  
**LOCATION:** 633 Centre St. Jamaica Plain, MA

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# Rats

*Continued from page 1*

District 9 Councilor Liz Brendon, a sponsor of the hearing, told her colleagues that this is the fifth hearing on rats that she has attended in as many years, but now there is talk of hiring a rat czar and establishing a separate department to deal with what many councillors are calling a quality-of-life issue.

In a previous meeting, Ward 8 City Councillor Sharon Durkan stressed the urgency of addressing the problem.

“Residents should reach out to my office if they see an uptick of rat activity on the streets, as this is a major priority for my office,” Durkan said at that time. “My team has been working closely with the hardworking staff at the Inspectional Services Department to make sure rat burrows and sewers are baited, and I’m glad we have such dedicated partners at ISD for our rat mitigation efforts.”

During the April 9 hearing, District 2 City Councillor Ed Flynn asked how many inspectors from ISD are working on rodent control. He was told by the city’s Chief of Operations, Dion Irish, that there are 14 full-time inspectors who work basically Monday through Thursday. Flynn noted that many problems occur during the weekend when there are no ISD inspectors working, though Irish pointed out that there are other inspectors from other departments who are on-call and who can address a rat problem.

However, the overall tone at the hearing was upbeat in view of the city’s hiring of Corrigan as a consultant to design a rat control program for the city.

In addition, in March councilors established the Boston Rat



*One of the signs of rats is their burrows.*

Action Plan (BRAP) to identify possible steps to address the problem.

Corrigan told the committee that a simple solution is “no food, no rats.” He also showed some of the rat-proof barrels that are in use. Corrigan, who is completing his report for city officials and expects it to be ready in a few weeks, thanked the city workers who helped him to go into the field to find the places where rats live and breed, such as alleys with food and the sewers, where rats peer from cracks in the brick walls.

He also offered some “band-aid approaches” for the time being, such as making sure that construction projects are done with thought about the consequences to adjacent areas so that the rats do not migrate to a quieter place, creating a new problem in a new area.

District 6 Councilor Benjamin Webber is a member of the Committee on studying the rat problem. Weber represents Jamaica Plain on the City Council.

And there was a final, sobering piece of advice that Corrigan offered: Just one rat-infested property can affect up to 10 other adjacent properties that never have had a problem with rats and mice.

## — Seeing rats? Tips for controlling them —

The New York State Department of Health has issued the following tips on controlling rats:

### Controlling the Rat - A Community Effort

Rats like to live where people live. They quickly adjust to the neighborhood. Rats can thrive on just an ounce of food and water daily, so when they enter a neighborhood and gain access to meat, fish, vegetables and grains, they will stay. Rats prefer to feed in and around homes, restaurants and businesses. But they will settle for scraps from trash bags and cans, private yards and what they find at the community refuse disposal and transfer station. Rats get the shelter they need from tall weeds and grass, fences and walls, rubbish piles and abandoned appliances.

If rats are living in your neighborhood, there are steps you should take, even if they aren’t in your home. Rats move freely in and out of buildings in the neighborhood, so any steps that your neighbors take to control rats will encourage them to move into a nearby building (maybe yours!). A community effort works best, where everyone in the neighborhood takes steps at the same time to prevent rats from entering the buildings and to remove their food and shelter.

### Checking for Rats

The sooner you know rats have entered your home, the easier it will be to get rid of them. Here’s how to check.

Listen.

After dark, turn on the lights in a dark room or basement and listen for any scurrying sounds.

Listen for gnawing sounds when it is quiet.

Look.

Move stored materials and furniture to uncover any hiding places.

Look at packaged goods, doors, windows, baseboards, and electrical cords for chewed spots, tooth marks, woodchips or shavings.

Check for freshly dug earth near holes around foundations, walls, and embankments. Look under sidewalks, floors and platforms.

Check for rub marks - dark smears along hallways, or near pipes, beams, edges of stairs or around gnawed holes.

Check near walls, food supplies and pathways for droppings.

Fresh droppings are dark and soft; old droppings are hard, or gray and brittle. Fresh droppings are a sure sign of a current infestation.

Watch.

Dusty areas often show signs of pawprints or tailmarks. Sprinkle flour around the area and check for tracks for a few days.

Place a small quantity of food where rats can get at it, and check daily for signs of feeding.

### How Rats Get In

Once you know how rats come into a building, you can check your home for places they could use and take steps to prevent them from moving in. Rats (and mice) can enter buildings through cracks or holes in walls or foundations, even holes as small as a dime;

by digging under house foundations if they are shallow enough;

through open windows, doors, sidewalk grates, or vents (check in the basement or walls for vent openings);

by squeezing through openings in the foundation or wall for pipes or wires; through floor drains, quarter inch gaps under doors, letter drops and fan openings; and from inside large packages of food or merchandise.

### Keeping Rats Out

It is much easier to keep rats out than to get rid of them once they have moved in. But, taking these steps help control rats once they have come in. It’s a three-step approach.

Don’t feed rats. Limit their food source by placing trash in covered metal or heavy duty plastic trash containers. The heavy duty plastic cans on wheels are resistant to rats’ chewing, and so are metal cans. Fix plumbing.

ing leaks to cut off their water source. Keep the house and yard neat and clean. Remove uneaten pet foods. Don’t fill up your bird feeder. Clean up food spills. Store food in rat-resistant containers. Avoid storing food in basements.

Remove rats’ shelter. Indoors, replace wooden basement floors with poured concrete. Place storage racks at a height of 18 inches above the floor. Move appliances, sinks and cabinets so they are flush against the wall or out far enough that you can clean behind them. Outdoors, restrict their shelter by rat-proofing all buildings in the area and removing outside shelters like appliances, junk piles, old fences and walls. Keep the property, including alleys and yards, clean and trash-free. Pile wood and other stored items at least 18 inches above the ground and away from the walls. Clean out the area behind wooden steps, especially those leading into the house.

Keep them out. Put in self-closing doors that open outward, and use latches or spring locks to keep doors closed. Check to see that doors and windows close tightly, and use metal screens on all windows that are kept open. Protect basement windows with a 1/2 inch wire mesh (called hardware cloth). Cover the edges of doors, windows and screens, which can be gnawed, with sheet metal or hardware cloth. Make a collar around pipe and wire openings into the house with pieces of sheet metal or tin cans. Rats cannot easily gnaw through metal. Fasten floor drains tightly to keep sewer rats from coming in.

### Getting Rid of Rats

The two best ways to remove rats are traps or poison. The use

*Continued on page 7*



*Rat traps are one way to combat the rodent.*

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# Jamaica Plain man charged in string of car break-ins and vandalism

SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE

A Jamaica Plain man is facing numerous charges in Roxbury BMC and West Roxbury BMC in connection to a string of car break-ins and vandalism in January and March, District Attorney Kevin Hayden announced.

Justin Catterson, 32, was arraigned in West Roxbury BMC on March 28 for possession of a burglarious instrument, carrying a dangerous weapon (brass knuckles), trespassing, and resisting arrest. Catterson was also charged in a separate case with breaking and entering vehicle/boat nighttime for felony and vandalizing property.

Catterson was ordered held on \$500 bail and will return to court on April 23 for pre-trial hearings on both cases. Catterson was then transported to Roxbury BMC to address numerous outstanding warrants.

“There may have been no bodily harm inflicted in these incidents, but bodily harm isn’t the only measure of how crime

affects victims and communities. Car break-ins and vandalism certainly take their toll. They violate residents’ sense of security and wellbeing, force them to arrange for time-intensive and sometimes costly repairs, and quite often result in the loss of personal items. These incidents hurt our community, and those behind them, particularly repeat offenders, will be made to answer for their actions,” Hayden said.

At about 8:34 a.m. on March 15, Boston police responded to a vandalism call on Parker Hill Avenue where they discovered two vehicles with shattered windows. Nothing was reported stolen from the vehicles.

At about 12:45 a.m. on March 28, officers were notified that a male, wearing a black hoodie, about 5’9”, smashed a vehicle’s window on Jamaica Street before fleeing the scene.

At about 2:37 a.m. on March 28, Boston police observed a male matching the description of the suspect from Jamaica Street walking through the park across

from the Stony Brook MBTA station. As officers approached the male, later identified as Catterson, he fled and attempted to jump over a fence. Catterson refused multiple commands and violently resisted officers before they could safely place him into custody.

Officers recovered brass knuckles, an orange tool typically used to shatter windows, a Swiss army knife with a name not belonging to Catterson inscribed on it, and a Bank of America Card and a Maine ID that also did not belong to Catterson, from his cross body bag.

Catterson was arraigned in Roxbury BMC on March 29 after being transported from West Roxbury BMC for seven other separate incidents occurring between January 5 and March 24. Catterson was charged with 11 counts of breaking and entering vehicle/boat nighttime for felony, five counts of vandalizing property, three counts of larceny under \$1,200, and trespassing.

Catterson was ordered held on \$1,750 bail and to stay away from each location. He is due back in Roxbury BMC on May

14 for pre-trial hearings on those seven cases. The charges stem from the following incidents:

On January 5, police responded to Vancouver Street, behind the Wentworth College campus. A woman reported that someone smashed her driver’s side window and took a black bag containing \$300 in cash, medical insurance cards, a gift card, charging cables, a portable charger, clothing, and a hygiene kit.

At about 8:07 a.m. on January 15, a man reported damages to the front and back passenger side windows of his vehicle on Wayland Street in Dorchester.

At about 10:13 a.m. on January 15, officers responded to Dale Street and spoke to five people who all had damage to their vehicle’s windows. One person reported a missing android cellphone.

On January 22, officers took a report from a woman who said she parked her vehicle in the Westminster Court Apartments lot and found her driver’s side window shattered and her portable car jumper missing on January 19.

On January 22, officers met

with man who stated he heard his car alarm go off around 7:30 a.m. and found his vehicle’s front passenger window shattered on Copeland Street.

On March 24, officers responded to Judge Street and met with a man who reported his driver’s side window of his vehicle was shattered.

On March 24, officers took a report from a woman who said she had video footage of a male breaking into cars by pulling on doors and breaking windows on Sunset Street between the hours of 1:30 a.m. to 2:00 a.m. A man reported his front passenger window was broken and \$100 cash was stolen from the center console.

Catterson is also facing additional charges in relation to another fourteen motor vehicles that were broken into in the area of Carmel Street, Delle Avenue, and Sewall Street on March 19. Catterson will be arraigned on those charges at a later date in West Roxbury BMC.

All charged individuals are presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

## Rats

*Continued from page 6*

of either requires caution!

Traps. Choose wooden base snap traps, and enlarge the traps by fastening a 2-inch square of cardboard to each trigger. Set out several traps at a time - at least 10 if you think there are many rats. Place the traps behind boxes and against walls, so that the rats must pass over the trigger. Be sure the traps are out of the reach of children and pets! Fasten food attractive to rats, such as peanut butter, raisin bread, bacon or gumdrops, tightly on the trigger of each trap. Don’t let the trap run out of bait. An advantage to traps is that they are less of a hazard to children and pets than poison.

Poison. Warfarin, chlorophaconone, and Pival are all rat poisons. They work by making the rats’ blood unable to clot, so the rats die of internal bleeding. Rat poisons must be fed daily for six to 10 days. Read the poison label before you begin, and be careful to follow all steps.

Watch out for children and pets! Make sure the baits are clearly marked, and put them in low traffic, secure areas that might attract rats, such as under or behind boards, boxes, pipes or cans, and out of the rain and snow. Remove the baits when all signs of rats are gone. Follow what the label says about how to dispose of the leftover poison. If, after a month or two, there are still signs of rats, skip a month and start again. Stopping for a month and then starting helps keep the rats from building up resistance to the poison.

Keeping Rats Under Control If you do have rats, it’s a community problem and the entire neighborhood should work together.

Once the rat infestation is under control, the goal is to prevent them from coming back. Help yourself and your neighbors by keeping trash picked up and placed in covered, rat-resistant containers. Promptly remove or repair any shelter areas, such as fences and old appliances. Periodically check for new entry holes into neighborhood buildings, and seal them up quickly.

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# Brian Swett named Chief Climate Officer for City

SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE

Mayor Michelle Wu announced the appointment of Brian Swett as the City of Boston's Chief Climate Officer, leading the Environment, Energy and Open Space (EEOS) Cabinet. This Cabinet is currently overseen by Reverend Mariama White-Hammond who will be transitioning out of her role on April 26. In this role, Swett is charged with spearheading the Mayor's bold agenda on climate action while advancing Boston's

commitment to sustainability, resilience, and environmental justice. The EEOS Cabinet includes the Environment Department, the Parks and Recreation Department, the Office of Historic Preservation, and the Office of Food Justice. In this expanded role, Swett will also work to develop and co-lead a new Climate Cabinet alongside Boston's Green New Deal Director, Oliver Sellers-Garcia. The Climate Cabinet will implement innovative climate policies and programs to support decarbon-

ization and resilience, reaffirming Boston's role as a national leader in climate action.

"Brian is a visionary leader with a proven track record of taking on climate challenges to improve the health and prosperity of our communities. He brings decades of experience implementing decarbonization, resilience, and energy transition programs with environmental justice principles at the core," said Mayor Michelle Wu. "I am thrilled to welcome Brian back to the City of Boston and look

forward to his passion, expertise, and collaborative spirit to lead us forward in our climate work, and build on the strong foundation that has already been set."

Swett is a nationally recognized leader in climate change and sustainability strategy with over two decades of leadership experience in municipal government, private sector real estate development, federal government, and non-profit sectors. He combines his advanced business, policy, and science background to lead effective policy development

and management for built and natural environments. Swett's expertise includes sustainability strategy, energy and climate policy, green buildings, policy and program development, and performance management. He is currently a Principal at Arup, a global engineering, design and consulting firm focused on sustainable development. Based out of Boston, he is a board member of its Americas Region and leads Arup's East Geography, com-

*Continued on page 9*

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# Mayor Wu announces launch of Wake Up The Night grant

SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE

Mayor Michelle Wu and the Office of Nightlife Economy have announced the launch of the City's Wake Up the Night Grant, which will award individuals and organizations up to \$10,000 for nighttime activations. The application is now open and the deadline to apply is May 28.

The Wake Up the Night Grant Pilot Program will use up to \$250,000 in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to revitalize Boston's nightlife economy and foster safe, inclusive social spaces. All activations will take place in July through December

2024 and be free and open to the public.

"Boston is a city of neighborhoods, and we are working to revitalize our nighttime economy and create opportunities for residents to enjoy safe, joyful spaces throughout the warmer months and into the fall," said Mayor Michelle Wu. "This year we're trying to make it easier than ever to foster fun programming that showcases the beauty of our communities and support residents and businesses in their efforts to make this summer a safe, enjoyable one for all in Boston."

All funded events will align with one the following categories:

ries:

- **Accessible Programming:** Social events specifically curated for persons with diverse abilities (physical, cognitive, or emotional)
- **Cultural Expression:** Activations showcasing the many cultural interests and expressions of Bostonians.
- **Intergenerational:** Activations promoting multi-generational social interaction.
- **Spirit-Free Programming:** Activations mindfully omitting the consumption and presence of alcohol.
- **Weekday Activations:** Events promoting social interac-

tion Monday through Thursday, specifically in the Downtown and surrounding neighborhoods.

- **Youth Programming:** Activations aimed to serve persons 20 years old and younger.

"There is a pressing demand for more innovative, inclusive, and accessible nighttime activities," said Corean Reynolds, Director of Nightlife Economy for the City of Boston. "Through the Wake Up the Night Grant Pilot Program, we are excited to directly invest in people and organizations that are reimagining Boston's nightlife."

The Grant is open to individ-

uals, nonprofit organizations, or businesses working in partnership with community partners. Applicants must be Boston residents or demonstrate that their project is led by partners who are Boston residents.

The Wake Up the Night Grant is an Office of Nightlife Economy initiative. The Office, launched in March 2023, works to create a more robust and equitable nightlife economy to enhance the overall quality of life for residents of Boston. For more information about the Office of Nightlife Economy, visit [boston.gov/nightlife](http://boston.gov/nightlife).

## Swett

*Continued from page 8*

posed of Arup's offices in Boston, New York City, New Jersey, Chicago, and Washington, DC. Prior to joining Arup, Swett served as Boston's Chief of EEOS from 2012 to 2015. Over his tenure, Swett led a variety of major policy and program initiatives including developing and passing a rental inspection ordinance and Boston's energy benchmarking ordinance, BERDO. He launched Climate Ready Boston, the City of Boston's initiative to plan for the near and long-term impacts of climate change and led the update of the 2015 Climate Action Plan. Under his leadership, Boston was recognized by the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE) as the #1 city in the country for energy efficiency policies and programs in their 2013 and 2015 biennial rankings.

"I am deeply honored and grateful to be appointed as the first Chief Climate Officer for the City of Boston, and I am thrilled to lead the EEOS Cabinet," said Brian Swett, incoming Chief Climate Officer. "Climate change is the existential threat of our time, and I look forward to once again serving Boston residents and working alongside Mayor Wu and the incredibly talented staff at the City. Collaborating with government agencies, non-profits, and the private sector, I am confident we can deliver

a decarbonized, climate resilient, and just Boston for current and future generations."

During Swett's tenure as a leader at Arup, he has led and worked on a variety of sustainability, decarbonization and resilience projects in the Boston area including the Wharf District Council Protection & Resiliency Plan, Carbon Free Boston, the Lower Mystic Regional Critical Infrastructure Assessment, and the Downtown Boston Master Plan, among others. Swett's history of executive leadership, technical expertise, and driving systemic change within large, complex organizations makes him the ideal candidate to lead Boston's sustainability strategy. Brian returns to the City of Boston with a particular focus on expediting Boston's decarbonization work, implementing climate resilience strategies, and enabling the transition to green energy, while embedding environmental and racial justice in all of Boston's climate policies and programs. The Chief Climate Officer will serve as a thought leader and communicator on Mayor Wu's climate agenda, driving engagement and awareness across Boston's communities.

"I have worked with Brian for over a decade, and his experience advancing climate action through public and private partnerships, real estate development, and business will be critical as we navigate the complexities of implementing our ambitious climate plans," said Oliver Sellers-Garcia, Green



*Boston's newest Chief Climate Officer, Brian Swett.*

New Deal Director. "I am thrilled to be working with Brian again to realize our vision for a sustainable, resilient, and equitable Boston."

"Brian is a terrific leader in the climate space and he has already helped the Boston Housing Authority design our roadmap for decarbonization in his work with Arup," said Kenzie Bok, BHA Administrator. "I am excited to see him return his commitment, passion, and creativity to City Hall."

"Boston Harbor Now is thrilled that Brian Swett is returning to the City of Boston to lead Mayor Wu's visionary work to tackle the climate crisis," said Kathy Abbott, President and CEO of Boston Harbor Now. "With his extensive knowledge and experience spanning government, the private sector, and non-profits, Brian is an exceptional candidate for this critical role. I can not think of a better leader to make real progress on Boston's

climate actions."

"I applaud the appointment of Brian Swett as the Chief Climate Officer for the City of Boston. In his roles of Principal at Arup and Co-Chair of the Chamber's Climate & Energy Leadership Council, Brian's strategic and effective leadership led the successful development of projects and partnerships nationally and globally," said James E. Rooney, President and CEO of the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce. "The City of Boston will benefit from his immense expertise in energy and climate policy and sustainability strategy as he leads the climate goals of the City forward."

Swett's appointment builds on the Wu administration's commitment to enhancing climate resilience and green spaces through a citywide Green New Deal. Last week, Mayor Wu shared her FY25 Budget which included groundbreaking investments in climate action and adaptation. These investments range from new personnel investments, such as a park administrator and six new maintenance staff to maintain Franklin Park, to transformative Capital investments, such as a new \$75 million City fund that leverages State and Federal climate resilience grants. Swett will begin his new role on June 10, 2024.

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# JP Kids

SPECIAL SECTION

## Tons of fun programming is coming for kids this summer and beyond

BY MICHAEL COUGHLIN JR.

As summer approaches, the neighborhood is buzzing with exciting opportunities for kids to engage in enriching activities that will ensure a memorable season.

KidsArts, an organization on Eliot Street that provides kids with space to explore the arts, has plans for eight weeks of summer programming.

As part of the program, kids ages 5-12 can participate in the arts through workshops, field trips, and even swimming at the Curtis Hall Community Center.

Through these workshops, kids work on various types of arts, such as dance, acting, visual art, and more, during the week leading up to a showcase at the end of the week, where they can show off their work to their families.

As mentioned, each week of programming includes a field trip on Wednesday. While Lara Brennan, KidsArts' Program

Manager, and Jenna Figueiredo, the organization's Director of Operations, indicated that planning for this year's field trips is still in progress, some examples of past field trips were given.

For example, kids in previous programs have visited the Franklin Park Zoo, The Museum of Science, and Spectacle Island.

During each week, programming is from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. daily. The eight-week program schedule is as follows:

- Week 1: July 1st-3rd
- Week 2: July 8th-12th
- Week 3: July 15th-19th
- Week 4: July 22nd-26th
- Week 5: July 29th-August 2nd

- Week 6: August 5th-9th
- Week 7: August 12th-16th
- Week 8: August 19th-23rd

The cost for participating is \$490 a week, though it should be noted that week one has a discounted rate due to being shortened by the Fourth of July.

Not only does KidsArts offer a 5% sibling discount and

sliding-scale tuition, but they also accept Child Care Choices of Boston Vouchers.

While most spaces in weeks two through eight are taken up, there are spots open for week one of the program for those interested. To sign up for a spot in week one or get on the waiting list for a potential spot in weeks two through eight, visit <https://www.jpkidsarts.org/summer-2024>.

Once again, Tony Williams Dance Center (TWDC) is offering its five-week Summer Fun Dance Camp this summer.

The program, which goes on for two weeks in July and three weeks in August, allows kids to familiarize themselves with and learn different types of dances while participating in other activities.

According to TWDC's website, "Each Dance Camp will offer Ballet in the a.m. with Tap or Modern, break for a long lunch at the park/splash pad, and later come back to the studio to try different elective classes."

According to the center's website, some elective classes include tutu making, tiara making, pantomime, and more.

Additionally, as part of the program, kids will have the opportunity to learn certain dance styles taught by professional teachers each week. This culminates in a recital at the end of the week, where families can see their children perform.

For example, Tony Williams, Founder and Artistic Director of TWDC, spoke about the dance styles offered in past years.

"One year, we had a Mexican folkloric teacher, and so the kids got to — during the day, they would do a Mexican folk dance, and then it would be followed by a tap class and then a hip-hop class, and then you would have a ballet class," said Williams.

"From week to week, it will revolve, like one week, we might have a certain style that we won't have the next week, so if a kid did come for more than one or two weeks, they're not getting the same thing every week," he added.

Not only do the kids learn the dances they will perform, but they also get to make their own costumes for the recital.

"They really enjoy that, so it's not just dance," said Williams.

The schedule for the program, which is offered to kids ages 5-14, is as follows:

Week 1: July 22nd-26th (ages 5-8 only)

Week 2: July 29th-August 2nd

Week 3: August 12th-16th

Week 4: August 19th-23rd

Week 5: August 26th-30th

The camp costs \$450 per week, and those interested in learning more or signing up can visit <http://tonywilliamsdancecenter.com/summer/>.

In addition to the camp mentioned above, there are some significant events related to TWDC coming up soon. For example, the City Ballet of Boston—founded by Williams—and TWDC are presenting a Ballet Banquet at the Strand Theatre from April 26th to 28th.

For more information about the event, visit <https://cityballetofboston.org/performances/>. Williams also mentioned that some free tickets are available for community groups. For more information about free tickets, email [info@cityballetofboston.org](mailto:info@cityballetofboston.org).

Lastly, TWDC will perform at the Public Garden on May 12th for Duckling Day. For more information, visit <https://friendsofthepublicgarden.org/events/ducklingday/>.

The Eliot School of Fine & Applied Arts is holding its six-week summer program for children, which Angela Lett, the Eliot School's Interim Director of Development and Communications, described as "art intensive."

As part of the program, morning and afternoon classes are offered to kids ages 6-8 and 9-12.

"We offer general art classes — we call those art zone — we have mixed media, woodworking, sewing, and fiber art," said Lett. A Lego workshop is even being offered through a partnership

with DEILab.

Additionally, each week has a theme. For example, one week is entitled "Stories We Love," where kids "will gain inspiration for their art from global tales in books, movies, television, video games, and more," according to the school's website.

Moreover, there is a showcase where kids can present their work to friends and family each week.

The dates for the Eliot School program are as follows:

- Week 1: July 8th-12th
- Week 2: July 15th-19th
- Week 3: July 22nd-26th
- Week 4: July 29th-August 2nd
- Week 5: August 5th-9th
- Week 6: August 12th-16th

Regarding pricing, it is \$499 for a week of full days and \$315 for a week of half days. It is important to note that Lett indicated that the program is full but encouraged folks to join the waitlist.

"We do have waitlists that people can join, and every year, people's plans change, so we do have some kids on the waitlist who usually are able to get in, so if people missed it, I still encourage them to sign up for the waitlist," said Lett.

Additionally, Lett encouraged those interested in the programs to check out other classes that the Eliot School has that are separate from the summer program.

To join a waitlist and learn more about the summer program or anything else the Eliot School offers, visit <https://elioschool.org/>. Lett also mentioned that folks who want to know about

*Continued on page 11*



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## Summer Programs

Continued from page 10

future programs earlier should join the mailing list.

Kids Together in the Arts is also offering a six-week summer art program beginning in June, with each week having its own theme.

“Every week is based on a different theme. It could be the four elements; it could be witches, wizards, and magic,” said Mary Ellen Ehrenreich, Kids Together in the Arts’ Art Director.

Through the art program, the kids participate in four different disciplines daily: visual art, dance, theater, and music. Then, at the end of the week, a show is put on for families.

In addition to the activities mentioned above, the kids get to go to Stony Brook Park and play games like capture the flag.

Ehrenreich, who has run this program for over 20 years, indicated that kids love it, and many campers end up becoming counselors when they get older.

“It’s very well received. I’ve been very fortunate — to be honest with you — it’s been such a great thing in JP for so many years,” said Ehrenreich.

The schedule for the program, which is for kids ages 6-13, is as follows:

Week 1: June 24th-28th

Week 2: July 1st-5th (No Camp on July 4th)

Week 3: July 8th-12th

Week 4: July 15th-19th  
Week 5: July 22nd-26th  
Week 6: July 29th-August 2nd

The program costs \$450 per week, except for week two, which is \$360. In addition to the discount for siblings, Ehrenreich says she also offers scholarships for those who need it.

For more information and to sign up, visit <https://www.marknet.net/kids-together>.

Finally, although Jamaica Plain Children’s Soccer does not have a summer program, registration will soon be open for its fall program.

Jamaica Plain Children’s Soccer offers kids ages 3.5-6.5 an opportunity to get active through a soccer practice held once a week for about an hour.

“It’s not really about soccer; it’s more about just getting the kids active and an introduction to active lifestyles,” said Phil Hall, President of Jamaica Plain Children’s Soccer.

Registration for the fall season — which usually begins in September — is set to open by mid-May. For more information about Jamaica Plain Children’s soccer, visit <https://teamsideline.com/sites/jpcsregister/home>.

“Our objective is to kind of get anyone and everyone who wants to come out, out on the field,” said Hall.

Ultimately, there are several organizations in the neighborhood looking to offer summer fun for kids this year.

## 5th Quarter funding coming to JP programs

By MICHAEL COUGHLIN JR.

Boston After School & Beyond, an organization that focuses on providing support for youth after-school and summer programs, is set to provide grants and funding for programs with ties to the neighborhood.

Specifically, through the 5th Quarter of Learning initiative, Boston After School & Beyond is sending out grants totaling \$250,000 to six programs. The programs getting a share of the total include ACEDONE, Art Heals, Beantown Panthers, Breakthrough Greater Boston, Center for Arabic Culture, and Courageous Sailing.

Chris Smith, Executive Director of Boston After School & Beyond, indicated that funding is disseminated from two sources, one of which is the 5th Quarter of Learning.

In email correspondence with the Gazette, Smith wrote that the 5th Quarter of Learning, which he described as the “rein-

vention of summer school,” is co-managed between Boston After School & Beyond and Boston Public Schools (BPS).

“Programs provide students in grades K-8 with full day programs that combine academics and enrichment, five days a week, for five weeks,” wrote Smith.

“Typically, BPS teachers work with students the first two hours of the day with the remainder spent in enrichment, ranging from sailing to basketball,” he added.

Additionally, Smith explained that the approach mentioned above was included in the “largest national study ever” regarding summer learning by RAND.

Smith wrote that the study showed “high attending students outperform their peers in math, English language arts, and social and emotional skills.”

To Smith, providing this funding to local programs is a proven investment. “This funding

represents opportunities for kids that will pay off over a lifetime,” said Smith.

“It’s a proven investment that gets results in academics and skills and has the additional benefit of making the entire community a classroom for young people where they can explore, make new friends, develop confidence and curiosity based on their interests,” he added.

In speaking with representatives from a couple of the programs slated to receive funding, one theme stuck out — gratefulness.

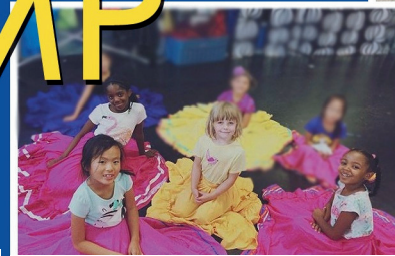
One program set to receive funding is the Beantown Panthers, a mentorship program that uses the fundamentals of basketball to get kids involved.

“We do skills and drills training as an icebreaker with the basketball, and then we really get the time to know our kids that come in, and we follow them and track them through school

Continued on page 12

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# 72 Hyde Park Avenue Oak Tree looks set to be saved

BY MICHAEL COUGHLIN JR.

An old Oak Tree at 72 Hyde Park Avenue was threatened to be removed due to development last summer, but now, after significant community outreach, the tree will seemingly be saved.

The 72 Hyde Park Avenue Tree saga stems from a project approved by the Zoning Board of Appeal (ZBA) in the summer of 2022 that would bring six housing units to the property.

A year later, in August 2023, the project—which had been subject to Boston Planning & Devel-

opment Agency (BPDA) design review—was set to break ground, and that is when issues arose.

A resident noticed last August that, while preparing for construction, a tree removal company was on the property, and they were told to leave. The issue was that this resident and others were under the impression that the tree was staying.

Specifically, Matt Shuman, a resident involved in the movement to save the tree, claimed to the Gazette last year that the developer, Vladimir Sirotin of M.I.R Realty, committed to

preserving the tree in the spring of 2022.

It should be noted that Sirotin told the Gazette last summer that in early conversations about the project, there was an intention to keep the tree “if feasible.”

Moreover, Sirotin told the Gazette last year that the tree was unable to be saved due to the need for a stormwater management system where the tree stood and provided testimony from a professional engineer that gave reasons why the tree could not be saved, such as safety, excavation damaging the roots

and more.

Sirotin also acknowledged last summer that an effort was made to keep the tree but said, “Sadly, the conclusion remained unchanged.”

A community meeting last September seemed to be the final nail in the oak tree’s coffin, to the point that Shuman told the Gazette he had given up.

However, everything changed after the BPDA issued a statement to the community last September, which indicated that not only was the agency under the impression that the tree was

staying, but the plans they approved during the design review suggested that the tree would remain on the property.

The BPDA statement also said that the BPDA had requested the revised plans for the project and would be reviewing them, which prompted Shuman to rally residents to send emails to the agency asking it to preserve the tree.

Fast-forward to now, the rally of more than 250 emails to the

*Continued on page 15*

## 5th Quarter

*Continued from page 11*

and make sure they get it done,” said Winford Mcrae, the program’s Founder.

Mcrae, a former college basketball player, explained that Beantown Panthers was put to-

gether with the help of a friend, the late Shamika James.

“I’m a former college basketball player, and I know I needed resources when I was coming out that I was unable to get that would help me further in life. So this is basically my gift back to my community to help some of the future ball players and fu-

ture kids get to where they need to go in life,” said Mcrae.

As part of the program, kids get breakfast, take part in academics, and have lunch. Then, following lunch, the basketball portion begins.

Speaking about the funding, Mcrae said it would be a huge help and would be used for

things like guest speakers and lecturers and trips for the kids.

“It means the world because it gives me and my team the opportunity to help some kids that are really, really less fortunate that really need some guidance,” said Mcrae.

If you would like to learn more about Beantown Panthers, visit <https://sites.google.com/beantownpanthers.com/web/home?authuser=0>.

Another program slated to receive funding is Courageous Sailing, which has existed since 1987 and uses sailing to bring kids together and “as a platform for fostering social, emotional growth, resilience, problem-solving, confidence, independence,” according to Jen Bodde, the program’s Education Director.

While the program has roots in Charlestown, it has also been involved with Jamaica Plain since the mid to late 2000s, doing sailing and boating on Jamaica Pond.

Courageous Sailing’s Swim Sail Science Program — its 5th Quarter Program — has been a staple in Charlestown since 2012, and just last year, that program was introduced in Jamaica Plain with the help of Boston After School & Beyond and the Curtis Hall Community Center.

As part of the program, academics are combined with swimming and sailing. For example, Bodde talked about how the students work on certain academic subjects like English language arts and math. This year’s curriculum is based on environmental science.

Moreover, the kids do hands-on science and then can go sail-

ing, kayaking, and more or learn to swim at the Curtis Hall Community Center.

“Last year ended up being awesome, and so we’re really excited to do it again,” said Bodde.

As for what the funding will provide to the program, Bodde indicated that the biggest expense was staff and that funding like this enables the program to run.

She also said, “Funding for these programs allows JP students not just to build relationships with peers and courageous mentors, but — in many cases — to receive support year-round from the teachers they depend on during the school year.”

As for what the funding means to the program, Bodde said, “It is transformative for us. I mean, we couldn’t do what we do without Boston After School & Beyond and Boston Public Schools.”

She also discussed the strong desire to better serve kids in Jamaica Plain and said, “It’s all about equitable access.”

For more information about Courageous Sailing, visit <https://courageoussailing.org/>.

While this funding is excellent news for local organizations, more is slated to come soon. “An additional six JP programs, serving more than 500 kids, have applied for \$100,000 in state funding, which will be released later this month,” wrote Smith.

For those looking for kids’ programs throughout the city, visit Boston After School & Beyond’s program locator at <https://bostonbeyond.org/after-school-programs/>.

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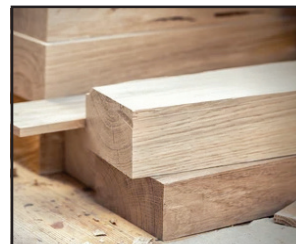
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# Healey-Driscoll administration extends state financial aid priority deadline to July 1

SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE

In alignment with the Biden-Harris Administration's call to support students in completing their Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), the Healey-Driscoll Administration announced that the Department of Higher Education (DHE) has moved the priority deadline for its largest state financial aid program, MASSGrant, from May 1 to July 1, 2024. This later deadline gives Massachusetts students more time to complete their FAFSA for the 2024-2025 academic year.

MASSGrant is a need-based financial aid program that helps to cover educational expenses at state public and private colleges and universities. During FAFSA Week of Action, the administration is encouraging students to complete their FAFSA as soon as possible.

"Massachusetts is home to the greatest higher education institutions in the world, but we need to make sure that students are able to access that education. That's why our administration has taken action to significantly expand financial aid," said Governor Maura Healey. "We are extending the MASSGrant deadline to ensure that students who qualify for this financial aid have enough time and support to apply and do not leave money on the table."

"Many students' post-high school plans rest on whether or not they receive the financial aid needed to make going to college a reality," said Lieutenant Governor Kim Driscoll. "This year's updated deadline supports students who have reported challenges completing this year's new FAFSA, and the move is part of larger efforts to remove financial barriers to the life-changing opportunities that higher education offers."

The extended priority deadline for MASSGrant comes in response to challenges that students are facing as they work to complete the significantly updated FAFSA. Students who qualify for MASSGrant and apply by the July 1, 2024 priority deadline are guaranteed to receive financial assistance from this program. Students who cannot complete the FAFSA due to their immigration status can complete the MASFA to apply for state need-based financial aid.

"We're happy to allow more time for FAFSA completion this year to support our students, families, and those in our K-12 schools and educational community who work tirelessly to help with FAFSA completion," said Secretary of Education Patrick Tutwiler. "The Healey-Driscoll Administration, in partnership with the Legislature, is committed to helping students access higher education. We are hopeful that students will apply for financial aid and take advantage of the many expanded opportunities to attend college more affordably."

"Our message to students and families continues to remain the same: fill out the FAFSA as soon as possible," said Commissioner of Higher Education Noe Ortega. "This year's extended deadline responds to feedback from students, campuses and other partners about this year's unique challenges with FAFSA completion. We want students to know there are significant financial aid dollars available for those who qualify, and that persevering through completing the FAFSA is worth it."

"This updated MASSGrant priority deadline is welcome news," said Elementary and Secondary Education Acting Commissioner Russell D. Johnston. "I hope students, especially first generation college students, will see the extended deadline and the Administration's significant expansion of financial aid and realize that public higher education is within reach."

Along with Massachusetts' longstanding MASSGrant program, the Healey-Driscoll Administration has brought historic increases in student financial aid. In August 2023, the administration launched MassReconnect, which makes community college tuition and fees free for students ages 25 and older without prior degrees, regardless of income. Then in November 2023, the administration launched MASSGrant Plus Expansion that provides free tuition and fees to Pell Grant-eligible students at all Massachusetts public colleges and universities (not including room and board) along with a \$1,200 allowance for books and supplies. The expansion of MASSGrant Plus also cuts tuition and fees in half for middle-income families earning an adjusted gross income

between \$73,000 and \$100,000 annually.

"Extending the MASSGrant deadline puts higher education within reach for more students and families in our Commonwealth at a moment when we should be doing everything in our power to make college accessible to every resident. I'm proud to live in a Commonwealth where education is a priority, and I applaud the Healey-Driscoll Administration for extending this deadline and giving families more time to complete their FAFSA," said Senate President Karen E. Spilka (D-Ashland).

"As a former public school teacher, I understand firsthand the importance of ensuring equitable access to education," said House Speaker Ronald J. Mariano (D-Quincy). "I applaud the Healey-Driscoll Administration for extending the state's application deadline as it will be impactful for students most in need of financial support to make college a reality."

"I applaud the Healey-Driscoll Administration's action to ensure as many students as possible have the opportunity to complete a FAFSA and to keep the doors to higher education wide open to students regardless of their financial situation," said Senator Jo Comerford (D-Amherst), Senate Chair of the Joint Committee on Higher Education.

"The college application process has always been a challenging time for students and their families, this year made more difficult by the new FAFSA form rollout," said House Chair of the Joint Committee on Higher Education Dave Rogers (D-Cambridge). "I commend the Healey-Driscoll Administration for extending the MASSGrant priority deadline and, more generally, for partnering with the House to expand access to higher education significantly."

"We should be doing everything in our power to make applying to college and financial aid as accessible and simple as possible, said State Senator Jason Lewis, Senate Chair of the Joint Committee on Education. "I am proud that the Healey-Driscoll Administration and the State Legislature have been allocating significant funding and resources to make public higher education more accessible in Massachusetts. Extending the priority deadline for MASSGrant

will allow more students to receive this financial support from the state to be able to attend college."

"I join with my colleagues in the House of Representatives as we welcome all tools available to aid students and their families to meet the challenges of financial concerns and, more importantly, the great opportunities of higher education," said State Representative Denise Garlick, House Chair of the Joint Committee on Education.

How to complete the FAFSA for students and their families

- High school students are encouraged to inquire with their school counselor about applying for financial aid and applying to college. Additional resources are available for students looking for assistance completing the FAFSA, including the below contacts:
- MassEdCO serves students who are low-income and first-generation to college. Students can find local assistance with college access by entering their zip code on the MassEdCO website: Massachusetts Education & Career Opportunities, Inc. (MassEdCo).
- Watch the "FAFSA How to" videos.
- FAFSA Day Massachusetts: [fafsaday@gmail.com](mailto:fafsaday@gmail.com)
- The Massachusetts Educational Financing Authority (MEFA): (800) 449-MEFA (6332), [collegeplanning@mefa.org](mailto:collegeplanning@mefa.org)
- The Department of Higher Education's Office of Student Financial Assistance (OSFA): (617) 391-6070, [osfa@osfa.mass.edu](mailto:osfa@osfa.mass.edu)

Students are encouraged to attend an upcoming free, virtual FAFSA Day MA event, where they can receive personalized help from a financial aid professional. DHE recommends these three steps to students and families:

1. Create an FSA ID. At least a week before attending a FAFSA completion event, create your Federal Student Aid (FSA) ID if you don't have one. This ID allows you to log in and complete a FAFSA. It takes a few days for your account to be activated, so please start this process a week in advance of trying to complete your FAFSA. For instructions on creating the FSA ID, visit [studentaid.gov](http://studentaid.gov). If applicable, have your Social Security number ready.
2. Sign up for a FAFSA completion event. Sign up for a virtu-

al, free FAFSA Day MA event on April 30 or May 13 by following this link. You can look for similar events on the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's (DESE) website. Another option is to ask your school counselor if there are any upcoming FAFSA completion events in your community.

3. Gather your documents. Visit this link for a list of documents you should have with you when you complete the FAFSA. You do NOT need to submit these items to the federal government, but you may need the information on them.

"Extending the deadline of the MASSGrant financial aid program by the DHE is another example of how the Healey-Driscoll Administration is putting the Commonwealth's students first," said John D. Keenan, President of Salem State University and Chair of the State University Council of Presidents. "With FAFSA delays, this has been a challenging year for all students but particularly for those that attend state universities as so many of them are first generation to college. The MASSGrant extension will provide families with a clearer picture of how they can obtain their bachelor's degree, a dream within reach for many."

"I applaud the Healey-Driscoll Administration for allowing Massachusetts college-bound students and families more time to complete the FAFSA and to qualify for the MASSGrant program," said UMass President Marty Meehan. "Our goal is to ensure that qualified students can leverage every bit of financial aid that is available to them, and this extension will help realize that. In a similar spirit, UMass campuses have also extended their deposit deadlines for entering students."

"Given the challenging rollout of FAFSA, any and all support and additional time we can provide to students and families in the Commonwealth is crucial," said Rob McCarron, president and CEO of the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities in Massachusetts. "Attending and graduating from a college or university can bring life-changing opportunities, and state financial aid programs, such as MassGrant, provides much-needed support, making financial aid critical for all deserving students."



## COMMUNITY EARTH DAY CELEBRATION

PHOTOS BY DEREK KOUYOUMJIAN

Boston Building Resources, a non-profit home improvement store at 100 Terrace St., celebrated Earth Day with workshops, music, food, activities, and more.



*The Mighty Silverbacks: Drummer David Karaus is a memento of Boston Building Resources*



*A table was set up to teach how to make tie-dye shirts.*



*Angella Theirse, founder of the non-profit organization Tears To A Smile Against Titty Cancer, enjoys a hamburger. A survivor of breast cancer, her organization helps in the fight against that deadly disease. She reminds everyone: "Don't forget your mamogram".*



*Northeastern University students Matthew Trent and Trishna Belagaleti were planting sunflowers and offering advice on growing them and other plants for urban gardens.*



*Volunteers with The Trustees Kelsey Briggs and Pandora Hess promote urban gardening.*



*Beloved friends Sasha Lewis and Alex Wong are making tie-dye shirts together.*



*Brian Lowery gets an onion planting too take home to his garden.*

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### Gazette Pet of the Week

by Sarah Carroll



### BRAD

Brad is an adorable pup who loves the company of his favorite people (but not everyone is his favorite!) He enjoys being carried around and cuddling on the couch. He's fine around other dogs for walks but doesn't like to share a home. Brad is about 2 years old and weighs 17 lbs.



*Sam Kooharian of Energysave offers information on solar panels.*



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# COMMUNITY EARTH DAY CELEBRATION



Boston Architectural College instructor Ashley Tannenbaum with Rea Dagher



Volunteer Shauna Orandi makes a tie-dye shirt.



Sakhiwe, Sakheni, and Akhiwe Francois check out all of the family friendly activities to explore.



Caroline Bowes and James Drew.



Renee Kim comps down on a hot dog with her parents Julie and Dennis.



Volunteer with The Trustees Jackie Cefola provides gardening information to with Buke and Keith Lynn.



Boston Building Resources provides building materials donated by supporters and vendors at a discounted price.



BAC student Lisa Cohen with diagram of city chatting how people commute to leisure activities.



Strawberries and mint.



Perennial Share



BAC student Deng Panliu, presents an exercise on interior design aesthetics.



In spite of the difficult weather that day, many visitors came to Boston Building Resources to have some fun and find out more information regarding the environment.



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## EDITORIAL

## Earth Day since 1970: Winning some battles, but losing the war

For those of us who were around for the first Earth Day in 1970, the steady but sure demise of our environment over the past 54 years has been nothing less than depressing.

When the first Earth Day was celebrated on April 22, 1970, Americans on all sides of the political spectrum were united in the effort to clean up the environment in the wake of the disastrous oil spill off the coast of Santa Barbara, California, in January of 1969 and the spectacle of the chemical-laden Cuyahoga River in Cleveland catching fire a few months later.

Congress passed a bill, signed by Richard Nixon, creating the Environmental Protection Agency in December, 1970, and soon thereafter enacted the Clean Water Act, the Clean Air Act, and the Endangered Species Act, all of which have accomplished a great deal to make our environment a healthier place both for us and the plants and animals with whom we share this planet.

However, with 50 years of hindsight, it is apparent that we fell victim to the well-worn axiom that we didn't see the forest for the trees. All of the good that was accomplished by improving our air and water quality and saving some species from extinction has been far outweighed by the insidious onslaught of climate change that threatens to make the planet uninhabitable for almost every living thing, other than perhaps for cockroaches (which have been around for more than 300 million years).

Global warming, both of the air and the oceans, poses an existential threat to life as we know it, and is accelerating faster than even the worst-case scenarios that some climate scientists had predicted. Climate change epitomizes what scientists refer to as a positive feedback loop: The hotter we are today, the hotter we will be tomorrow.

Ocean temperatures have set heat records every day for the past year, and still are climbing. As a result, more than 50% of the world's coral reefs presently are "bleached" and dying.

But with the world's energy needs growing exponentially thanks to the industrialization of underdeveloped nations and the need in developed nations for ever-increasing sources of energy to run our AI computers, the chances of reducing our reliance on fossil fuels is all but zero for the foreseeable future. Even more insidiously, we literally are drowning in a sea of plastic waste. For those of us who grew up in the '60s, it is sadly ironic that the catch-word for the future in the movie, *The Graduate*, was, "Plastics!" -- and now, 60 years later, we have learned that microplastics are accumulating in our tissues and in every organ in our bodies because they are in the food we eat and the water we drink.

Perhaps the coup de grace for the planet's demise is that environmental groups are now their own worst enemies. The push to build wind and solar farms has been met by pushback from groups who insist on mandatory environmental reviews -- established by those laws in the 1970s -- that can hold up the installation of transmission lines for these clean energy projects for more than a decade.

In short, we have won many battles in the effort to clean up our environment and to save endangered plants and animals since the first Earth Day. We can swim and fish in Boston Harbor and even in the Charles River (the subject of the 1960s rock anthem, *Dirty Water*). The seal (and great white shark) population, which was non-existent in this area in 1970, has returned to Cape Cod in the tens of thousands each summer.

Although our air and water are free of many of the substances, such as leaded gasoline, emissions from coal-fired power plants, and DDT, that were poisoning the earth in 1970, their removal was just low-hanging fruit, amounting to nothing more than Pyrrhic victories.

The inconvenient truth is that climate change, an unheard-of concept in 1970, has left all living beings (except for the cockroaches) in a far more precarious place than we were 54 years ago.

## Batten down the hatches

The Department of Atmospheric Science at Colorado State University has released its annual forecast for the 2024 hurricane season and it is nothing less than frightening, with a prediction that the 2024 Atlantic hurricane season will have activity well above average. Their summary is as follows:

"We estimate that 2024 will have 23 named storms (average is 14.4), 115 named storm days (average is 69.4), 11 hurricanes (average is 7.2), 45 hurricane days (average is 27.0), 5 major (Category 3-4-5) hurricanes (average is 3.2), and 13 major hurricane days (average is 7.4). The probability of U.S. and Caribbean major hurricane landfall is estimated to be well above its long-period average. We predict Atlantic basin Accumulated Cyclone Energy (ACE) and Net Tropical Cyclone (NTC) activity in 2024 to be approximately 170 percent of their long-term averages."

The reasons behind the forecast are two-fold: The first is that the El Nino weather pattern of the past few years has changed into a La Nina pattern, which means that the upper-atmospheric wind shear conditions of El Nino that prevent hurricanes from forming will dissipate, thereby creating conditions favorable to hurricane formation.

The second major factor is that ocean water temperatures are soaring beyond anything ever seen before. Warm water temperatures are the fuel for hurricanes, but the unprecedented high ocean temperatures we are experiencing all around the world -- every day literally is setting a new record -- will provide the rocket fuel that will feed tropical storms that will propel them to strengthen into major hurricane status. While the change from an El Nino weather pattern to a La Nina pattern is a normal occurrence, the dramatic increase in ocean temperatures is attributable to climate change thanks to the ever-increasing amount of fossil-fuels that the world continues to spew into the atmosphere.

We haven't had a major hurricane in our little corner of the world in a while, so we are overdue -- and thanks to the effects of climate change exacerbating every meteorological event, we could be in for a long, hot -- and dangerous -- summer and autumn.

## OP-ED

## Happy Earth Day!

BY SEN. ED MARKEY

There are a lot of reasons why I'm honored to serve the great Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and its natural beauty holds a special place in my heart. From the world-famous beaches of Cape Cod to the breathtaking Berkshires, Mother Nature is here in all her glory in our communities. When I'm working on Capitol Hill alongside the members of the Massachusetts congressional delegation fighting for the people of the state, I always keep in mind the importance of protecting our natural environment and ensuring a livable future.

Under President Joe Biden, we've taken historic strides to protect our air and our drinking water, to promote environmental justice, and to reduce the harmful pollution fueling the climate crisis. The Inflation Reduction Act is the largest climate and clean energy bill ever to pass in American history, and it is already helping to deploy the solar, wind, energy efficiency, offshore wind, battery, and other clean energy technologies that will help bring an end to fossil fuels. But we know there is much more work to do.

Friend, as you know, there is no Planet B. We can't afford to kick the issue of climate change down the road. We need an in-

tersectional, intergenerational movement mobilizing and organizing to address this global challenge. That's why, five years ago, I partnered with Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez to introduce the Green New Deal, a resolution that is transforming our national climate agenda by creating new union jobs, delivering long-overdue justice, and reducing emissions. It's a winning strategy: 89% of Americans support at least one of the policies put forward in the Green New Deal. We're already seeing these popular policies take effect in Massachusetts: in Boston, a Green New Deal was put into place for all public schools, and every new or renovated municipal building must operate without fossil fuels.

Friend, this Earth Day, I'm proud of the work we've done, and I'm energized for the work that lies ahead. In every race, up and down every ballot, it is critical that we vote for candidates who recognize that it is our responsibility to combat the climate crisis and enact solutions in all of our 351 cities and towns. In 2024, let's resolve to protect and defend every inch of our state's natural beauty for generations to come.

*Senator Ed Markey is a U.S. Senator representing Massachusetts.*

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

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OP-ED

# Retail theft impacts consumer and employee safety, residential quality of life

By DA KEVIN HAYDEN

Two women are facing shoplifting charges after police recovered approximately 200 stolen clothing items in the vehicle they used to flee after shoplifting on Newbury Street Monday, and an Everett man was charged Tuesday for stealing over \$5,000 worth of designer sunglasses from Faneuil Hall Marketplace, District Attorney Kevin Hayden announced.

The shoplifting arraignments come amid an effort by Hayden's office to work with retailers, police and the business community to increase consumer and employee safety and to help address closures of Boston stores. Four Walgreens pharmacies have closed in the city over the last two years.

"Store-based theft, especially targeted theft by repeat offenders, is a factor we must address in our effort to provide our residents convenient access to pharmacies and other retail stores. It's an issue that affects quality of life for everyone and it's an issue we're taking seriously, both by addressing the crimes themselves and the underlying circumstances," Hayden said.

Monet Williams, 28, of Lowell was charged with shoplifting by asportation and common and notorious thief. Kayla Harris, 29, of Mattapan, was charged with shoplifting by asportation.

Judge James Coffey ordered both Williams and Harris to stay away from the Zara on Newbury Street. Both are due back in Central BMC on May 29.

At about 12:25 p.m. on April 8, Boston police responded to Zara at 212 Newbury Street for a larceny in progress. Officers were informed by a store employee that the suspects took six items worth \$163.40 and then got into a navy Jeep driven by a third person and fled toward Massachusetts Avenue.

Officers conducted a traffic stop and observed the driver, later identified as Harris, the front seat passenger, later identified as Williams, and a male passenger seated in the rear driver side seat and multiple trash bags filled with clothing items.

Harris told officers they were in Zara but did not take anything and her jacket had set the alarm off. Williams told officers none of the items in the car were from Zara and she was planning to bring the clothes to a baby shower later in the day.

Officers recovered all of the stolen items described except for a white T-shirt. Officers also recovered approximately 200 additional items from the vehicle from brands such as Nike, Target, and Old Navy with price tags still attached without any receipts. These items were mostly contained in white trash bags or loosely strewn about the vehicle. A pair of wire cutters were recovered from Williams' jacket

pocket.

Williams has open cases in West Roxbury BMC and Lowell District Court, including larceny and assault and battery.

Richard Payne, 48, of Everett was charged with larceny over \$1200 by single scheme and common and notorious thief as a result of an ongoing investigation into multiple larcenies from Sunglass Hut between December and April, in which 16 pairs of Versace sunglasses were stolen with a total estimated retail value of \$5530.

Judge James Coffey ordered Payne held on \$2,500 bail and to stay away from Sunglass Hut. Payne is due back in Central BMC on May 7.

At about 1:20 p.m. on April 8, Boston police observed Payne enter Sunglass Hut in Faneuil Hall Marketplace. As the detective walked into the store, he announced "Boston police" which caused Payne to remove the sunglasses from his pants and place them back on the display case. Payne was wearing the same distinctive pom-pom knit hat, black framed glasses, black ski-mask, and black shoes from the previous incidents.

On December 16, 2023, Payne took two pairs of Versace sunglasses and returned on December 18, 2023, and took two more pairs, with a retail value of \$1,444. Payne was seen wearing the same shoes, backpack, glasses, and ski-mask on both days.

On January 14, Payne was seen walking into the store with a multi-colored knit hat, a black

ski-mask, black shoes and black glasses holding a notebook. Payne took three pairs of Versace sunglasses and returned on January 16, and took four more pairs, totaling \$2,482 worth of stolen merchandise.

On March 30, Payne was seen wearing a multi-colored knit hat with a pom-pom on top, and a black ski-mask, black glasses and clothing and took three pairs of sunglasses, worth \$975.

Police recovered two pairs of sunglasses, worth over \$600 from the April 8 incident.

Police also recovered a multi-colored knit cap with a pom-pom, a black ski-mask, a dark colored backpack, a notebook, a gray and black jacket, and black glasses from Payne, all items he was seen wearing during the previous reported incidents.

Payne has a 29-page board of probation record dating back to 1992 with numerous larceny and shoplifting convictions.

Hayden's office is working with regional retailer groups and small business owners to discuss safety concerns and to help store managers strategize responses to shoplifting and retail larcenies. The meetings have come amid increasing national and local frustrations around retail crime, along with concerns over the closure of stores serving minority communities in Boston.

"We want shoppers to feel safe going into stores and we want retailers and their employees to feel safe in their work environments. Many consumers still enjoy an in-store shopping experience and we want to help retailers continue to provide it to them," Hayden said.

All charged individuals are presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

Suffolk County District Attorney Kevin Hayden's office serves the communities of Boston, Chelsea, Revere, and Winthrop, Mass. The office handles over 20,000 cases a year. More than 160 attorneys in the office practice in nine district and municipal courts, Suffolk Superior Court, the Massachusetts Appeals Court, the Supreme Judicial Court, and the Boston Juvenile Courts. The office employs some 300 people and offers a wide range of services and programs to serve anyone who comes in contact with the criminal justice system. This office is committed to educating the public about the services we provide, our commitment to crime prevention, and our dedication to keeping the residents of Suffolk County safe.

*Kevin Hayden is the District Attorney representing Suffolk County.*

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