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Vol. 35 No. 2

Printed on
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Jamaica Plain GAZETTE

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JANUARY 23, 2026

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HYDE SQUARE TASK FORCE HOSTS THREE KINGS DAY CELEBRATION



Guests celebrate Three Kings Day together.



Jose Masso III proclaims "let's give it up for the teachers" with Hyde Square Task Force Music Teaching Artist Cynthia Perez at his side.



DEREK KOYOUNJIAN PHOTOS
Guests look over the food offerings for the Three Kings Day celebration.



The Three Kings, the Magi who bring gifts to the infant Jesus in the manger, arrive. They are portrayed by Lenny Martinez, Moya Ellingboe, and DiCarlo Hernandez.



Yoelis and Iris celebrate. See more photos on Pages 4 and 5.

Developer provides update on Doyle's project

BY ADAM SWIFT

Lee Goodman of Watermark Development, the developer of the former Doyle's Cafe, which closed in 2019, presented an overview of the project and an informational update regarding the final phase of the long-standing and ongoing development to the Stonybrook Neighborhood Association (SNA) at its monthly meeting last week.

SNA members raised questions about the location of possible off-site affordable housing units, as well as the cost of the market rate units which some members will be up to 30 percent higher than comparable market rate units in the neighborhood.

The scope of the project includes four distinct parts: a new

restaurant at the former Doyle's; an adjacent five-story building with 16 condo units and ground-floor retail space in the former Doyle's parking lot (those two projects encompass 3478-3484 Washington St. and is known now as 1 Gartland); a new, four-story residential building containing seven condo units at 60 Williams Street (which essentially is behind the former Doyle's); and a new six-condo building (which formerly had been a one-family home) across the street at 69 Williams St. The Williams Street portions of the project have been completed and are occupied.

To kick off the SNA meeting, Goodman reviewed the parking

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JPNC Zoning Comm. gives thumbs-up for 48-unit affordable housing at 282-294 Hyde Park Ave.

BY GAZETTE STAFF

The Zoning Committee of the Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council (JPNC) held its most recent meeting on Wednesday, January 7, via Zoom. Chair David Baron presided over the session that also was attended by fellow committee members Alcurtis Clark, Willie Mitchell,

Kevin Moloney, Peg Preble, David Seldin, Kevin Leahy, Kendra Halliwell, Purple Reign, Alessia Shelley, and Jerry O'Connor.

Melissa Beltran, Director of Constituent Services for Ward 6 City Councillor Ben Weber, also was on hand for the meeting.

The first matter on the agenda

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From the State House

Tax Relief legislation overwhelmingly passes Senate

SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE

Last week, Massachusetts State Senate voted to make housing more affordable in Massachusetts, approving new tools that give cities and towns the ability to lower the cost of property taxes and put money directly back in residents' pockets.

"Last week my colleagues and I passed the vast majority of what was included in the Mayor's home rule petition, with the exception of the proposed tax increase on small businesses," said

37-1 vote to approve property tax relief for homeowners, seniors and small businesses

Senator Nick Collins. "The Senate acted to advance meaningful tax relief for seniors, homeowners, and small businesses across Boston and the Commonwealth."

If signed into law, the mea-

sures together would prevent residents from being blindsided by sharp tax bill spikes, make it easier for seniors to access tax deferral programs, allow cities and towns to implement tax re-

bates, and create a new program for qualifying seniors to lower their tax bills.

S.2900, An Act relative to municipal tax relief, would allow cities and towns to offer enhanced rebates to taxpayers who already receive a local residential tax

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Doyle's

Continued from page 1

situation at One Gartland.

"The parking for One Gartland is in the building for the residents ... there are car stackers that move around," said Goodman. "So 1 Gartland and 60 Williams, the green building, both have parking in that garage, behind garage doors," said Goodman. "The parking that's currently being used at grade at 60 Williams is actually public parking for the restaurant for whoever attends, so there is scattered public parking between the three sites, about 25 spaces."

Goodman said there is dedicated parking, one per unit, for each condominium.

"There's 29 units across the three buildings, 29 parking spaces," he said.

There is stacked parking for 1 Gartland and 60 Williams, with parking at 69 Williams having parking at grade under the building for the residents.

"There's parking along the strip on Meehan Street, which has always been Doyle's parking, and that's being restored and reused for the same purpose (for commercial spaces)," Goodman said.

Goodman was also asked about the funding and the AHA (Affordable Homes Act) agreement for the project.

"It was updated and amended, so there is still an AHA," said Goodman.

SNA steering committee member David Brewster said he believed the vote itself was to terminate the agreement and give the head of the BPDA the

ability to rewrite a new agreement.

"Technically, you are correct, but the ... decision of how it is going to be rewritten is made before they agreed to vote on it," said Goodman. He said there was already an agreement to transfer two of the AHA units offsite before it was taken to the board.

"They won't take anything to the board without the powers to be agreeing to it, vetting it, etc.," said Goodman.

"There is a new agreement in place?" Brewster asked.

"They are redrafting it," Goodman said.

Brewster said that would imply to him that there was a change in financing for the project since it was before the Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council last October.

"It's taken so much longer so there's been a significant increase in the amount of interest," said Goodman. "When you lay out a project, leaving aside the construction cost increases for a second – which are real – but

that's not the main driver of the problem. If you think you are going to build something in 24 months and you expect, just hypothetically, that it is going to be 10 grand a month for 24 months, that is \$2.4 million ... but it ends up taking five years, so it is 60 months instead of 24, you are still paying interest along the way."

The majority of the issues with the extended time to complete the project were with the city, Goodman said, and that was why he said the city was receptive to a change in the requested AHA agreement.

"Without going into the gory details, I think most people at the BPDA would say, yes, we (messed) this up really bad and it's on us, and this is why we are willing to help you and change this AHA," said Goodman. "It happened at a time when mayors were changing, there was a lot of turnover in agencies ... and it just kind of got lost in the transition. What happened was something that was supposed

to be approved in three or four months took almost 20 months; and that was the biggest driver of the delays and that was why they were so receptive to the request."

Goodman said Needham Bank agreed to extend more money to cover the interest for the project, and they wanted more equity or collateral posted to cover that extension.

"The way you post more collateral is that you sell more units at market rate vs. affordable, so the main issue was they wanted to see the pie grow, and you can't grow the pie by saying we are going to sell these for more, don't worry," said Goodman. "I can't guarantee that, it's unlikely ... so the only way you can increase that is by having two units offsite and having additional collateral through the additional sales. That allowed them to say they would extend an additional \$1.7 million of interest line item."

Brewster noted that the condos that have currently sold in the project under the AHA agreement have come in at around \$300,000, while the units not under the AHA have sold for about \$1.3 million. He said he understood the concept of building more housing so there is more on the market to eventually lead to more affordability, but added that he didn't see why the market rate units had to be priced so high.

Rossmore Road resident Jonathan McCurdy said he was concerned about where and when the affordable units would be built, and whether they would be in Jamaica Plain or another neighborhood in the city.

"The neighborhood tried very, very hard to get these units in the building at the site, so again, I am disappointed, I understand things happen, and I appreciate folks showing up in person," he said.

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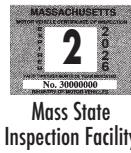
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Tax Relief

Continued from page 2

exemption. If a city or town takes advantage of this tool, the local government would determine residents' eligibility and set its own thresholds around assets, income, or other factors.

In addition, amendments adopted as part of the bill would strengthen existing senior property tax relief by allowing municipalities to further expand eligibility, increase the personal property tax exemption to provide relief for individuals and small businesses, and extend the filing deadline for property tax abatements by 45 days for properties that have been improperly assessed.

"I'm pleased to see that the State Senate passed an increased elderly exemption as an amendment that will allow seniors to see their exemption tripled and eligibility requirements loosened to 50% AMI and the asset level raised to \$80k for singles and \$110k for couples," said City Councilor Brian Worrell. "This is much-needed relief for our seniors and will help more of those on a fixed-income stay in their community, which is why the City Council also passed it unanimously last year as a standalone measure and has included it in other legislation."

As part of this broader legislative effort, the Senate passed four other related measures to enhance municipal tax relief, expand senior exemptions, and protect homeowners and small

businesses from rising costs. Collectively, these actions reinforce a statewide commitment to housing stability and affordability.

S.2899, An Act to prevent property tax bill shocks, gives cities and towns the ability to shield their most vulnerable taxpayers from the shock of an extraordinarily high tax bill in a year when the community's residential property tax levy is rising by more than 10 per cent.

S.2901, An Act relative to senior property tax deferral, would expand eligibility for the Senior Tax Deferral program by lowering eligibility to seven years of state residency, instead of the current ten-year requirement, to keep more money in seniors' pockets at a time when property values and tax bills are steadily climbing.

"Seniors across the Commonwealth have called for relief from rising property taxes that threaten their economic security and ability to age in their homes and communities," said Rosa Bentley, President, Massachusetts Senior Action. "S.2901 addresses critical issues in the property tax deferral process that have prevented many from using this option. These changes will reduce barriers to this valuable program and meet a critical need in relief efforts. We look forward to further action to expand relief for those burdened and to enable revenue streams that support that expansion."

S.2902, An Act authorizing the establishment of a means tested senior citizen property tax exemption, would make it easier for municipalities to offer

local property tax exemptions to seniors. It builds on the success of the recently-increased Senior Circuit Breaker. The bill creates a statewide opt-in program that prioritizes longtime residents and gives controls to local authorities.

"We know that property taxes can be burdensome for many older homeowners," said Jen Benson, Massachusetts State Director, AARP. "We appreciate the Massachusetts Senate taking action to help mitigate financial pressures so our older residents can stay in their homes and communities and continue to age with dignity."

S.1948, An Act relative to veteran property tax work-off, bolsters the targeted tax relief offered to veterans and spouses of deceased or disabled veterans. Eligible residents could receive up to \$2,000 per year in property tax reductions for municipal volunteer service, up from \$1,500, under an optional local program.

"These policies largely align with the Mayor's own proposals for Boston and reflect priorities we share," Senator Collins added. "We disagree over specific components, but the broader goal of providing relief to residents is something we definitely agree on. I hope the Mayor will consider putting her support behind these proposals so we can move forward quickly and deliver the relief that Boston residents need."

Now that they have been passed by the Senate, all five bills head to the House for further consideration.



Dressing smart and planning well can make winter walks longer and more fulfilling for both you and your dog.

CITY PAWS

Winterize your dog walks

BY PENNY & ED CHERUBINO

It's tempting to look out on a winter day with snow, rain, icy sidewalks, or below-freezing temperatures and decide to forgo a substantial walk with your dog. Just a quick trip to do their business has to be enough on the worst of days. However, with proper dress for both of you

and picking your time with the help of radar, those days can be limited.

We also know that some dogs hate walking in the rain and snow. However, there are pups like our Poppy who love the quiet and calm that snowy days can bring. All these factors enter

Continued on Page 7



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HYDE SQUARE TASK FORCE CELEBRATES THREE KINGS DAY WITH COMMUNITY



Hyde Square Task Force Music Teaching Artist Cynthia Perez performs Caribbean and Latin American music.



The Three Kings were available for guests to take photos with them.



Everyone celebrates the last holiday of the Christmas season.



Manuela is from Columbia and is an au pair living with a family taking care of their children. The arrangement immerses herself with them and they both learn from each others' cultures.

PHOTOS BY DEREK KOYOUMJIAN

The Hyde Square Task Force hosted a Three Kings Day celebration, also known as Día de los Reyes or The Epiphany, which



Anais and her daughter Giaila have fun at the crafts table.

remembers the Three Kings presenting gifts to the infant Jesus after following the star that heralded his arrival. The event marks the end of the Christmas holiday season and had gift giving, food, music, dancing, and the community celebrating together.



Boston City Councilor Ben Weber.



Divina Masso is crowned royalty at the party.



Guests form a dance line to welcome in the Three Kings, or Magi, to the party.



Gia Ortiz with Hyde Square Task Force Theater Programs Coordinator Josie Ross.



Hyde Square Organizing Manager Ken Tangvik with Boston City Councilor Ben Weber and his Director of constituent services Melissa Beltran.

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Hyde Square Task Force Arts Manager Nicholas Perez performs Caribbean and Latin American music.



Massachusetts State Rep Sam Montaño.

HYDE SQUARE TASK FORCE CELEBRATES THREE KINGS DAY WITH COMMUNITY



Many neighbors came together to celebrate Three Kings Day.



Liaro Hernandez celebrates quietly in a calm nook of the room.



Phiona and Hana.



Ruby shows off the crown she decorated at the crafts table.



Shirley is proud to be Trini Strong.



Shown above, the crafts table drew many interested guests looking to have some creative fun.

Shown to the left, Eury with her favorite dance partner, her dad, Ezry.

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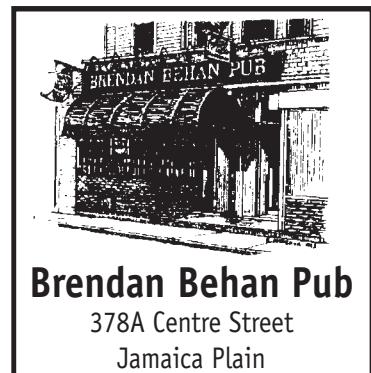
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Building Boston 250

Momentum grows for the city's semiquincentennial

SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE

Boston is preparing to mark the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution—honoring the people, ideas, and places that sparked independence. Led



by the City's Commemoration Commission, planning for Boston 250 is building toward an inclusive, citywide celebration that highlights Boston's leadership in shaping a new nation.

On March 19, 2025, the Boston City Council voted to amend the ordinance establishing the Commemoration Commission as first discussed in July 2024 and as proposed by commissioner vote in October 2024. This revision reduced the number of voting members from 44 to 37, in an effort to alleviate how often the Commission ran into the inability to have a quorum. In addition, advisory committees / stakeholder groups replace the original subcommittee struc-

ture. These groups will take no official votes but may share ideas and recommendations in a non-binding fashion. In an effort to strengthen and support the amendments to the ordinance, Commemoration Commission staff is working on bylaws to develop frameworks for the Commission to be successful in the endeavors they have been tasked with. These bylaws will exist inside of a handbook that commissioners can reference routinely.

The Commission swore in one new member and will fill three additional seats.

The commissioners worked on an interim report that recommends commemorative activities that can be undertaken and

explored for Boston 250 titled Interim Recommendations of the Boston Commemoration Commission: Commemorative Activities for Boston 250, which is now being edited based on feedback provided on the first draft.

In an effort to highlight Boston's diverse historical resources, the Boston Commemoration Commission has compiled a list of repositories, historical collections, projects, museums, and other places where people can learn about Boston's history. With support from the Boston Public Library, this list will be made publicly accessible as the Boston Historical Collections and Resources Database, a simple, searchable database on the

Library's website. We envision this as a launching point for Boston residents and visitors alike who seek to deepen their understanding of our shared history. This is envisioned as a living resource, and once it is publicly accessible, users will be able to fill out a similar web form to help us fill in any gaps.

2026 is a big year for the City and for the Commemoration Commission as we mark the 250th anniversary of the Siege of Boston, the 250th Evacuation Day, Independence Day, and more. We are working hard to create unforgettable experiences, and we are looking forward to Boston 400 on the horizon!

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**PLEASE RECYCLE
THIS NEWSPAPER
WHEN YOU ARE THROUGH**

City Paws

Continued from page 3

into your decision to take longer winter walks.

Ways To Keep Warm

If your companion is a short-haired, skinny canine, like a Whippet or Italian Greyhound, look for signs that it is too cold for this dog to walk far. Some of those are obvious, like shivering or trembling, a tucked tail, or a hunched posture.

We recently discovered heated vests thanks to a friend who uses them on cool days in Flor-

ida and on her cruises to northern destinations. These are also available for dogs. We both wear shoes and boots with Arctic Grip Vibram soles to keep from slipping on icy sidewalks. These are available on many shoe brands and really make a difference, even on black ice.

You can choose shorter walks, layers of fabric to insulate, or heated vests. Even with these precautions, you have to be aware when you are not walking an Alaskan Malamute or Siberian Husky.

We see people walking dogs without hats or gloves. Your dog may be made for winter with a double coat that insulates and

sheds moisture. You have to create your own insulation by layering materials and using winter accessories to cover sources of heat loss and protect vulnerable spots like your fingers and ears. Many of these accessories also come in heated versions.

Choose Your Route

Many of us have normal walking routes that are either a long loop or a straight-out-and-back path. These need to be adapted for nasty days. Consider smaller loops that will take you back to your home to decide if you or your dog has had enough for that day. You can always do a second or even third loop.

Windchill is real, and your route can be adjusted for it. Ed is especially good about checking all aspects of the weather before he sets out on a walk with Poppy. If the wind is going to be in your face for part of the walk, start out in that direction. Then you'll have it at your back when you are beginning to feel the cold. You can also use side streets to zig-zag and give yourselves breaks from the wind.

Consider taking some warming breaks along the way. If your area has some dog-friendly shops, transit stations, hotels, malls, or other warm places, visit them to take a break. If you do, please be considerate of these

havens by being as unintrusive as possible. Pause at the entrance to let your dog shake off snow and ice, support the business with your patronage, and be aware that being there is a privilege, not a right, in most cases.

Planning well, having the right warming gear, and knowing your dog will set you on the right path for cold winter walks.

Do you have a question or topic for City Paws? Email Penny@BostonZest.com with your suggestion.

JPNC

Continued from page 1

da was a request from the owner of 101-103 and 107 School St. to expand the first-floor units into the basement.

The structure at 101-103 School is a two-story, duplex with two apartments on each side. The proposed expansion of the first floor units in each would add three bedrooms, a full bath, and an additional living room space.

The structure at 105-107 School St. is a three-story duplex. The owner is seeking to expand only the first-floor unit at 107 into the basement, which would add two more bedrooms.

Tim Burke, the architect for the project, told the members that the existing basements in these buildings are dry and a "decent amount" above ground. "These are rentals and the plan is to keep them as rentals," Burke said. "These new apartments would be great for use as family units."

Burke said the current basement windows will have to be redesigned in order to satisfy the fire codes as a means of egress.

Baron said a letter was received from the Stonybrook Neighborhood Association (SNA) which generally was favorable toward the project. Carolyn Royce from the SNA was on hand for the meeting and suggested that "it would be a good idea to consider making energy upgrades to the buildings." Clark also urged the owner to consider making energy upgrades as part of the renovation project.

Royce further suggested add-

ing a sprinkler system for the three-story units at 105-107.

"Our main concern is parking in the neighborhood," said one of the neighbors who was on hand for the hearing. Burke said it may be possible to add some off-street parking spaces that the owner is considering.

Eryn-Ashleigh Bailey, a new member of the JPNC, asked about disruption to the neighborhood from the construction. Burke noted that the impact will be minimal.

The Zoning Committee unanimously voted for a favorable recommendation.

The next matter involved the project slated for 282-294 Hyde Park where the developer, Arx/Urban, is seeking to build a 48-unit, mixed-income rental apartment project on a 12,340 sq. ft. lot that will involve razing the existing two buildings, which Baron described as "abandoned retail space," on the site. A total of nine variances are needed to enable the project to move forward.

Adam Giordano, Director of Development with Arx/Urban, and Daniel Moll, a principal with Arx/Urban, were on hand to outline the scope of the project and to answer questions.

The property at 282-294 Hyde Park Ave. had been owned by the Slotnick family, where they operated their business, Alco Auto Parts, for almost five decades, and who were well-known for their community involvement and philanthropy.

Moll told the members that Arx/Urban has been around for 10 years and specializes in multifamily and mixed-use projects in the Boston area, of which the firm has completed 25 projects

with a focus on affordable housing. He noted that Arx/Urban is a long-term owner and operator of its properties.

"This is our first foray in Jamaica Plain," Moll said.

Giordano said that 90 percent of the 48 units will be affordable housing for tenants with incomes ranging from 30% to 80% of the area median income (AMI), with the rest at market rate. Moll noted that this range of affordability allows for upward mobility within the building so that if a tenant's income increases, they will be able to remain in the building as units become available.

Giordano highlighted that the building, which will be fully-electric, will be designed and constructed to meet "peak sustainability" standards. He also added that his firm often seeks to commission local artists to install art on the site.

The building will be six stories high and will consist of nine studio units, 20 1-bedrooms, 14 2-bedrooms, and five 3-bedrooms. There will be 17 parking spaces and 1:1 bike storage. Giordano said his firm has analyzed parking data from its other properties and that 0.3-0.4 parking spaces per unit is the optimal amount for properties located in a Transit Oriented District (TOD) such as this project.

Giordano said Arx/Urban has had 11 meetings thus far with city officials and community groups since September, a brisk schedule that, said Baron, "shows that the city has been shortening the timeline for Article 80 projects."

Giordano then discussed the changes to the project that have occurred since the inception of

the community process, including a reduction from the originally proposed height of seven stories, adding a stepback design for the upper floor, and reducing the overall footprint of the building to increase the rear setback and the width of the sidewalk along Hyde Park Ave.

Giordano also noted that there will be a community room available for neighborhood groups.

However, neighbors from the adjacent streets, including Wachusetts, Northbourne, and Eldridge, in the Woodbourne neighborhood district, while supportive of the development of affordable housing in JP, expressed their concerns about the size and height of the building, as well as the effects on parking and traffic in the area.

"Woodbourne is on the National Register of Historic Neighborhoods as a very specific neighborhood designed to be integrated with the natural landscape and the trees," said one resident. "A building this tall -- which will be 65 feet in height in an area zoned for 35 feet -- and that has this much mass will change the character of the neighborhood."

In addition, she said, "It is really dangerous to bike on Hyde Park Ave. and it is pie-in-sky thinking that 17 parking spaces will accommodate all of the cars that will be needed for the tenants, which will result in cars overrunning our neighborhood."

"We'd also like to see a commercial space in this building," she added. "Hyde Park is a dead zone for commerce."

However, other speakers had no problem with the size of the building. "This is the right scale for the urban spine of Hyde Park

Ave.," said Halliwell. "We want to see density. It is an elegant design, it's clean, and it takes the neighborhood context into consideration and applies it to this site in particular. In addition, the proportion of smaller units is good because smaller units are hard to find in JP."

A representative from the Forest Hills Neighborhood Assoc. (FHNA) spoke in favor of the project and noted that the FHNA supports the project.

Another neighborhood resident spoke in favor of the project because of the affordable housing that it brings to the area. "If we can't build this type of project on Hyde Park Ave., where else can we do it?" he said.

The committee voted in favor of recommending the project, with only Clark opposed and Preble abstaining.

The last matter on the agenda involved an application from the owners of a second-floor condo at 185 Wachusetts St. seeking variances to expand their living space into the attic.

Stephen Daly, the homeowner, said the additional space will create two bedrooms and a bathroom to add separate sleeping spaces for his family's growing children.

After two direct abutters, the owner of the first-floor condo unit, and the tenants of the first-floor condo unit all spoke in favor of the project, the committee members unanimously voted in support of the application.

All three of the applicants now will go before the full JPNC to seek the council's approval and then must go before the City of Boston Zoning Board of Appeals in order to obtain their variances.

North Atlantic right whales return to southern New England waters

SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE

North Atlantic right whales have returned to the waters south of Massachusetts, prompting federal authorities to designate a voluntary slow zone.

Scientists from the New England Aquarium's Anderson Cabot Center for Ocean Life were flying an aerial survey on Jan. 5 when they sighted an aggregation of eight right whales 37 miles south of Nantucket. A second survey on Jan. 8 found over 20 right whales. Between both surveys, at least 23 unique whales have been identified so far. The group included two female right whales who have calved in recent years, "Braces" (Catalog #3320) and "Maple" (Catalog #1711), as well as

"Atoll" (Catalog #4714), a young adult female who may be nearing calving age. These three females were all seen in surface active groups, a social behavior that involves several right whales closely interacting at the surface. These surface active groups can also provide mating opportunities, although not always. The majority of whales identified have been adult males including "Batman" (Catalog #1017) and "Dune" (Catalog #3351).

Assistant Scientist Kate LaemMLE, who was one of the observers aboard the survey plane, noted the high number of these social groups in such a concentrated area.

"All around us, we saw groups of whales rolling, splashing, and bursting out of the water," LaemMLE said. "Seeing these criti-

cally endangered right whales on our first surveys of the New Year is a great way to start the season and leaves us hopeful for more whales returning to the area."

The winter/spring season marks the peak time of year for right whale sightings in southern New England waters. In addition to the Aquarium sightings south of Nantucket, the Center for Coastal Studies has also sighted right whales in Cape Cod Bay over the last month. Cape Cod Bay is subject to a mandatory slow zone for boats and ships known as a Seasonal Management Area (SMA) until May 15.

The Jan. 5 whale sightings by the Aquarium triggered the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to implement a voluntary slow speed zone called a Dynamic Manage-



NEW ENGLAND AQUARIUM, TAKEN UNDER NMFS PERMIT #25739
Right whales "Maple" (Catalog #1711) and unnamed Catalog #3742 seen in a surface active group south of Nantucket, MA, on Jan. 8, 2026.

ment Area (DMA) for mariners to reduce their speed to 10 knots to protect the whales. The DMA is in effect until Jan. 20, one of several active voluntary slow zones from Massachusetts to Virginia due to right whale sightings.

Vessel strikes are one of the leading causes of injuries and deaths for this species, which numbers about 380 individuals, making it critical that vessels slow down to the recommended speed.

"These recent sightings are an important reminder that right whales can be found throughout New England waters during the winter and spring. Reducing vessel speed in mandatory and voluntary right whale management areas is one of the most effective actions mariners can take to reduce the risk of vessel strikes and help protect this critically endangered species," said Katherine McKenna, Associate Scientist in the Aquarium's Anderson Cabot Center who was aboard the Jan. 8 survey flight.

For the past 15 years, the New England Aquarium has conducted aerial surveys over the waters south of Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket, collecting data on all marine animals with a focus on protected species of whales and sea turtles. In recent years, the Aquarium has expanded survey coverage in New England including coastal Maine, the Gulf of Maine, and the Canyons along the shelf break. These flights help monitor changes in animal populations, identify various species, recognize trends using standardized data, and monitor aggregations. Determining where right whales occur and how they are using habitats provides crucial information that can be used to better protect endangered species like North Atlantic right whales.

The New England Aquarium is a nonprofit research and conservation organization that has protected and cared for our ocean and marine animals for more than 55 years. We provide science-based solutions and help shape policies that create measurable change to address threats the ocean faces. We inspire action through discovery and help create engaged, resilient communities.

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A Brief Accounting of the history of Jamaica Plain

BY GAZETTE STAFF

Jamaica Plain, often affectionately called "JP," is a vibrant and diverse neighborhood in southwest Boston with a rich tapestry of history stretching back to the colonial era. From its roots as a rural hamlet to its evolution into a bustling urban neighborhood, Jamaica Plain has played an integral role in Greater Boston's development.

Early Settlement and Colonial Roots

The area now known as Jamaica Plain was first settled by English colonists in the 1630s as part of the town of Roxbury. Its name, "Jamaica Plain," is subject to various folk etymologies. Some historians believe it could be derived from "Jamaica End," referencing local agricultural ties to the Caribbean rum trade. Others point to early landholders who were associated with West Indian commerce. Despite uncertain origins, the name "Jamaica Plain" gradually came into common usage by the late 17th century.

Agricultural Community

During the colonial period, the neighborhood's fertile soil made it a center for small-scale farming and orchards. These family farms provided goods such as fruits, vegetables, and dairy products that supplied nearby markets in Roxbury and Boston proper. The rolling landscape, coupled with the presence of what is now known as Jamaica Pond, ensured abundant natural resources for its early inhabitants.

tants.

Rise of Country Estates and 19th-Century Development

By the late 18th and early 19th centuries, Jamaica Plain's idyllic setting and proximity to Boston began to attract wealthy Bostonians. Influential families built country estates where they could spend summers away from the crowded city. Stately mansions and expansive gardens dotted the pastoral landscape, laying the foundation for a more residential character.

As the 19th century progressed, improvements in transportation hastened Jamaica Plain's shift from farmland to a streetcar suburb. The extension of rail lines and horse-drawn streetcar routes connected JP to Boston's commercial heart, making it accessible for commuters. With faster travel times, large estates gave way to subdivisions, and the neighborhood grew more densely populated.

Jamaica Plain, which was part of the town of West Roxbury after it separated from Roxbury in 1851, was annexed to the City of Boston in 1874. This administrative change brought modern municipal services to Jamaica Plain and solidified its status as an integral part of the growing metropolis.

The Emerald Necklace and Green Spaces

One of Jamaica Plain's most distinctive features is its green space, shaped significantly by landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted in the late 19th

century. Olmsted designed Boston's "Emerald Necklace"—a connected system of parks and waterways intended to provide urban dwellers with accessible natural refuges. In Jamaica Plain, this included scenic roads like the Jamaicaway and the conservation of Jamaica Pond as a key recreational asset.

Jamaica Pond is the largest body of fresh water in Boston. A glacial kettle pond, it has served many roles over the centuries: as a source of ice in the 19th century, a popular site for boating and fishing, and a focal point for community events. Its clear waters and tree-lined shores remain a cherished local landmark.

Diverse Communities and Social Activism

Over the 20th century, Jamaica Plain became home to various immigrant communities, adding linguistic and cultural diversity to the neighborhood's fabric. Irish, German, and Italian immigrants settled in the area in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Later, Latin American immigrants, particularly from the Caribbean and Central America, arrived, bringing vibrant cultural traditions and influencing local businesses and restaurants.

Jamaica Plain has long been known for its tradition of civic engagement and social activism. In the mid-to-late 20th century, residents led grassroots efforts to protect green spaces, advocate for affordable housing, and preserve the neighborhood's distinct character. Local organizations championed improvements to public transit and infrastructure, helping maintain the neighborhood's livability and charm.

Today, Jamaica Plain balances its historical legacy with a contemporary sense of community. Stately Victorian homes, brick rowhouses, and triple-deckers share streets with modern developments, reflecting centuries of architectural and social change. The neighborhood's lively commercial corridors—Centre Street, South Street, and others—showcase independent shops, restaurants, and cultural institutions that draw visitors from around Boston.

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years

350 Years of Craft

The Enduring Legacy of the Eliot School

By KANE DIMASSO-SCOTT

In 1676, while the American colonies were still in their infancy, a group of Jamaica Plain residents donated corn and land to establish a local school. They likely could not have imagined that three and a half centuries later, the institution would still be standing—not as a grammar school for colonial children, but as a vibrant center for woodworking, sewing, and fine arts.

This year, the Eliot School of Fine & Applied Arts celebrates its massive 350th anniversary, a milestone that places it among the oldest continuously operating schools in the nation. "Reaching 350 years is an incredible milestone that reminds us of the enduring power of arts education to transform lives and build community," says Angela Lerr, Director of Development and Communications for the Eliot School. "This year, we're focusing on legacy, community, and vision — honoring the generations who shaped The Eliot School, celebrating the vibrant community we serve today, and looking forward to how we can continue evolving to meet future needs."



PHOTO BY JENNIFER CHAN
Members of our Teen Bridge program working on visual art projects.

From Grammar to Manual Arts

The school's history is a mirror of Jamaica Plain's own evolution. Endowed in 1689 by the "Apostle to the Indians" Rev. John Eliot—who donated 75 acres of land—the school spent its first two centuries as a traditional grammar school. Its pivot to the arts began in the late 19th century. Under the influence of visionaries like MIT luminaries Robert and Ellen Swallow Richards, the school broke away from the public system in 1874. It reinvented itself to focus on "manual arts," pioneering vocational training in carpentry and sewing long before "shop class" was a staple of American education.

Amid this evolution, the Eliot School has retained commitment to its core purpose: "providing education that empowers people to create and contribute to their communities." When asked about what's next for the school, Lett said, "Looking ahead, we'll continue expanding access to arts education, embrace new technologies while preserving traditional crafts, and deepen

our role as a community gathering place," adding that the programs and partnerships they are building will help to ensure the Eliot School will continue to thrive in the foreseeable future.

Today, the historic schoolhouse at 24 Eliot Street remains a hive of activity. Despite the prevalence of online learning today, school staff are seeing a shift back towards in-person learning and hands-on experiences. "As technology becomes more pervasive in daily life, many students and adults are actively seeking opportunities to disconnect from screens and reconnect with one another through making and learning together," Lett says, adding "As a result, enrollment at the Eliot School has grown steadily as more people return to the Schoolhouse for classes and workshops. We've also seen significant growth in our partnerships across the city. This year, we are providing art and/or woodworking programs in 13 schools and three community partner sites, including seven Boston Public Schools, many of which we've partnered with for years." She notes that these partnerships allow the Eliot School to bring expert instructors into the schools and community settings, enabling and fostering creativity, expression and more through arts and crafts.

"It was a fitting and inspiring start to our 350th year, reflecting what makes the Eliot School special: creativity, community, skill-sharing, and using art and craft to care for others," said Lett.

Celebrating 350 Years

To mark this tercentennial plus half-century, the school has unveiled a new logo and visual identity for 2026, as well as multiple planned events throughout the year.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF ELIOT SCHOOL
Shown above, a photo of our Schoolhouse taken in 1895.

Shown to the left, a modern photo of our Schoolhouse, taken in 2012 by Lucie Wicker.

Kicking it off a couple of weeks ago with "Sew Many Mittens," which saw more than 260 volunteers come together to sew mittens and distribute them to neighbors through Friends of Boston's Homeless.

In July, the school will be hosting an Eliot School Birthday Party Carnival on school grounds, featuring family fun, yard games, hands-on crafts, tours, snacks and much more. This will be a "a true neighborhood celebration honoring the School and the many students and community members who have passed through its doors over the centuries."

On October 22, the school will



PHOTO BY CRAIG BAILEY PERSPECTIVE PHOTO
Volunteers sewing mittens for Greater Boston's unhoused population at our Sew Many Mittens event.

JPHS hosts five upcoming events to connect you with city's past

SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE

From the radical activism of a Nobel Peace Prize winner to the smoke of a devastating industrial fire that reshaped the neighborhood 50 years ago, Jamaica Plain's history is a rich tapestry of innovation and resilience. This winter and spring, the Jamaica Plain Historical Society (JPHS) invites the public to a series of hybrid events exploring the local landmarks and legendary figures that defined the community. Whether you are curious about the "miraculous" healing waters of Allandale, the pioneering women who led the nation's first kindergarten for the blind, or how to map your own local stories digitally, these upcoming programs offer a unique look at the people and places that make JP extraordinary.

Emily Greene Balch: A Legacy of Radical Peace Thinking/Making

- Saturday, January 24, 2026
- 2:00 PM 3:30 PM
- Connolly Branch of the BPL 433 Centre Street Jamaica Plain

Dr. Catia Cecilia Confortini from the Wellesley College Peace and Justice Studies Program will speak on Emily Greene Balch - who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1946. In this talk Prof. Confortini will reflect on the legacy of Emily Greene Balch, not only as a scholar and thinker but also as a teacher and activist. Her work for peace and justice as a professor at Wellesley College and as a founder and leader of Women's International League for Peace and Freedom are relevant for today's world, which continue to be mired in the violence of racism and imperialism.

This event is free and open to the public. Light refreshments will be served. The program will use a hybrid format. Please attend in person if you would like, or you can sign up to attend via Zoom using this link: https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_wZWiTHBHSUSQ-5dAbrQDLSg

In the event the Boston Public Library closes due to heavy snowfall, the event will only be held via Zoom.

A History of Allandale

- Wednesday, February 4, 2026
- 7:00 PM 8:30 PM

- Jamaica Plain Historical Society PO Box 302924 Jamaica Plain

The section of Jamaica Plain we refer to as Allandale has quite an interesting history. Once a rural farming area it still includes Boston's only working farm. Centre Street has traversed the area since the 1600s and a famous colonial tavern once offered respite to weary travelers. Eventually, large estates came to be built in the area whose inhabitants created history in their own right. And we mustn't forget the Allandale Spring - whose Spring House is still around and who waters were said to cure dyspepsia, dropsy, catareah, and many other ailments.

This talk is being given for the residents of the Allandale Condominium community, however, the public is also invited to attend via Zoom. Please register using this link: https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_rJUJmkKPRuOdCxqyR8c77w

The Rise and Fall of the Thomas G. Plant Shoe Factory in Jamaica Plain

- Sunday, February 8, 2026
- 1:00 PM 3:00 PM
- Spontaneous Celebrations 45 Danforth Street Jamaica Plain

Fifty years ago, in February 1976, a suspicious fire consumed a massive old factory building at the corner of Centre and Bickford Streets in Jamaica Plain. Displacing roughly a hundred artists-in-residence, the old factory had once been home to the Thomas G. Plant Shoe Company, employing up to five thousand workers at its peak. Marking the 50th anniversary of that devastating fire, this presentation explores the origins of the Plant shoe factory in 1896 and its mercurial French Canadian owner, Thomas Plant, known for his pioneering business and corporate welfare practices. We'll also discuss the thousands of immigrant workers who labored there and sometimes challenged Plant's anti-union policies. We'll then follow the story forward to the closing of the plant in the early 1950s, the 1976 fire, and the transformation of the site into the Stop And Shop supermarket and mini-mall in the 1990s.

Our speaker is Dr. Lynn Johnson, Research Professor of History at Boston College and

a contributor to the Global Boston project. This event is free and open to the public. Light refreshments will be served. The program will use a hybrid format. Please attend in person if you would like, or you can sign up to attend via Zoom using this link: https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_UmK0fP7mQzyE4yEDHrAx9Q

Please note in the case of heavy snow this event will only be on Zoom.

The Women of the Kindergarten for the Blind

- Saturday, March 28, 2026
- 2:00 PM 3:30 PM
- Jamaica Plain Branch Library 30 South Street Jamaica Plain

For Women's History Month Jen Hale, Lead Archivist of the Perkins School for the Blind will talk about the remarkable women associated with the Kindergarten for the Blind in Jamaica Plain during the late nineteenth century. The Kindergarten was the first of its kind in the United States and had considerable support from prominent women in the Boston area, including Isabella Stewart Gardner, Louisa May Alcott, and an eleven year old Helen Keller. After opening

its doors to students in 1887, the Kindergarten was staffed by several exceptional women and some of the lasting impacts of their innovations may be surprising to audiences. The Kindergarten for the Blind was located where the MSPCA/Angell campus is today.

This event is free and open to the public. Light refreshments will be served. The program will use a hybrid format. Please attend in person if you would like,

or you can sign up to attend via Zoom using this link: https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_3g_paYtfTNqtkM_1SN-q5Q

In the event the Boston Public Library closes due to heavy snow, the event will only be held via Zoom.

When and Where in Boston: Digital Community History Workshop

- Monday, April 13, 2026
- 6:00 PM 7:30 PM
- Connolly Branch Library 433 Centre Street Jamaica Plain

You know Jamaica Plain's history, now learn how to share it with the world!

Join The West End Museum (WEM) at the Connolly Branch

of the Boston Public Library for an interactive community history workshop. Learn to use the crowdsourced history database When and Where in Boston (<https://whenandwhereinboston.org/>) to create pins on a digital map that tell the story of the who, what, when, and where in the West End's history. Share the details of what makes JP such a unique place to live.

Learn how to research, format, and submit pins that will be reviewed by professional historians before being published online. Spend the evening at a citizen history party with your fellow history lovers, access library research sources, and ask for help from the library and Museum staff.

Bring your own laptop or tablet (or check one at the Branch) and prepare to become a contributor to local history!

This event is part of the WEM's When and Where in Your Neighborhood series, which will visit Boston Public Library branches throughout the City of Boston to share this exciting new resource! It is free and open to the public and light refreshments will be provided.

Jamaica Plain Gazette & Mission Hill Gazette

2026 Publishing Calendar

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JANUARY

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ANNUAL MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. MEMORIAL BREAKFAST



Former Massachusetts State Rep. Byron Rushing with State Reps John Moran, Jeff Turco, and Russell Holmes.



MLK Art Award Recipients were students from the Fenway High School and Mass Art.



Keynote Speaker Nikole Hannah-Jones and US Representative Ayanna Pressley with True Compass Award recipient Byron Rushing. He is a civil rights activist and community organizer as well as serving the Commonwealth as a State Representative. The True Compass Award is given to individuals whose life's work has contributed to the promotion of social justice, racial equality, and civil discourse.



MLK Scholars receiving awards: Able Ebbi from Boston Latin School, Carl Matteus Washington and Daniel Idemudia from Boston Latin Academy, Cliddanie Bellevue, Kelyse Foster, Aeisha Beckford, and Fraydique Alexander Gaiton Rodriguez from the John D'O'Bryant School, Hannah Banh from the Dr Albert D Holland School, and Rebecca Kabeya, Amani Pagan, Ludiane Mayara Pereira Castro, and BjBellie Jean from the Edward M Kennedy Academy for Health Careers stand with US Representative Ayanna Pressley and Keynote Speaker Nikole Hannah-Jones.

SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE

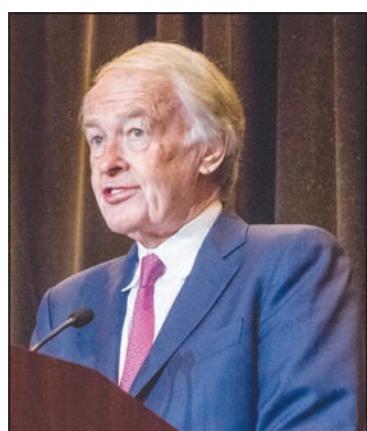
With great reverence and pride in our city, Mayor Michelle



Boston Mayor Michelle Wu speaks: "We are all stronger together...we've got to get together for our people."



Massachusetts Governor Maura Healey spoke of remembering Rev Dr King "celebrating and affirming what Dr King represents... Freedom, equality, decency, dignity, and that we are all God's children"



Sen. Edward Markey.

Wu joined in Boston's 56th annual Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Breakfast.

Mayor Wu offered these thoughts: Dr. King knew that when fundamental rights come under attack—when hard-won progress must be defended again and again—it becomes difficult to imagine a better future.

But he insisted that we are not truly free until we push beyond mere resistance.

He called us toward creation.

He called us to move forward with the brave work of building



The Keynote Speaker was Nikole Hannah-Jones, Pulitzer Prize-winning creator of *The 1619 Project: A New Origin Story*.



WCVB Award winning journalist Brittany Johnson served as Leader of Ceremonies.



The Reverend Kevin Vetiak of St Cyprian's Episcopal Church, one of the organizers of the MLK Breakfast.



Boston Children Chorus Executive Director Andrés Holder.

the Beloved Community—something too strong for fear to tear down.

And that's what we are doing in Boston, with the fierce urgency of now. We choose to go forward.

Because a Boston that moves forward together is a Boston no one can control.

We refuse to be defined by what we oppose.

We choose to be measured by what we create.

If Dr. King's life taught us one thing, it's that history does not move on its own.

So let us march forward together in the footsteps of those who set the standard here in Boston: Prince Hall. Elma Lewis. Melnea Cass. Napoleon Jones-Henderson. Allan Rohan Crite. Reverend Dr. Michael E. Haynes, and so many more.

And let us march with a new generation urging us forward.

Thank you to everyone who came together to celebrate and remember Dr. King this morning.



Lori Harper sings *Lift Every Voice And Sing*, often referred to as the Black American National Anthem.



The Reverend Jay Williams of the Union Combined Parish (United Methodists), one of the organizers of the MLK Breakfast.



U.S. Representative Ayanna Pressley introduces the Awards segment.

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EDITORIAL

Let's go Patriots!

For those of us who are longtime fans of the New England Patriots, it seems like it was only yesterday that the Pats of Brady and Belichick were the dominant team in the NFL.

We were around in the early days of the AFL when the Boston Patriots were run (and eventually run into the ground) by the Sullivan family and their immediate successors, culminating with the depressing late '80s and early '90s before Bob Kraft bought the team.

But time flies (even when you're NOT having fun) and the reality is that it's been seven years since the Pats have had even a reasonable chance of reaching the Super Bowl. After two decades of our Pats grabbing the spotlight during the Brady era, we've been on the outside looking-in for these past six seasons.

But after two of the most dismal seasons ever, head coach Mike Vrabel has turned the team around, along with offensive coordinator Josh McDaniels and 23 year-old, second-year quarterback Drake Maye, into a legitimate Super Bowl contender that unexpectedly is one game away from reaching the big game.

The Pats are back, bringing our region together (even for the non-sports fans among us) in a way that only a shared passion for a sports team can do.

As fans across the country have witnessed during all of the exciting playoff games these past few weeks, the difference between winning and losing often (actually, usually) comes down to one or two outstanding (or freaky) plays.

Some might call it luck -- and whether the football gods have aligned the stars (Josh Allen was eliminated and Bo Nix got injured on the second-to-last play of their game) to create a path for the Pats to reach the big game will not be known until Sunday evening's final score is posted.

But regardless of the outcome of the big game with the Broncos, we'd like to congratulate the Patriots' players and organization for a great season that made our fall Sundays a bit more fun once again.

As we're shivering next week, remember, we're halfway through winter

When the National Weather Service issued its long-range forecast for this winter last fall, it was a good news/bad news scenario. They were predicting warmer-than-normal temperatures for our region, which was the good news (after all, who likes cold weather?), but the bad news meant that this was further evidence of climate change and global warming. Our recent winters in Eastern Mass. had been the warmest on record and that trend seemed poised to continue.

However, Ol' Man Winter had other ideas. Instead of spinning his polar vortex in a nice tight loop around the North Pole (which keeps the cold air contained around the pole), he's been playing a sort of yo-yo effect with the vortex, allowing it to dip south and bring that frigid air to us. December was the coldest December in our region in 25 years.

The chronic instability and disruption of the polar vortex has been a relatively recent phenomenon. Climatologists tell us that the colder air that we experience when the vortex dips south ironically is a sign of overall global warming. The Arctic region has been among the fastest-warming places on the planet (four times faster than the rest of the world, which is why the polar bears don't have enough sea ice for hunting seals in the summer months).

The warming of the Arctic, according to these scientists, is causing a weakening of the vortex and ultimately sending cold air much further south than usual, resulting in the record cold waves of the sort that the weatherman says is coming our way next week.

For those of us who have oil heat, prices thankfully are the lowest they've been in a few years. Users of natural gas have not been so lucky, with prices much higher than in the recent past. Many low-income families are having trouble paying their heating bills, especially with the elimination of the federal energy assistance program.

So yes, it would be nice if this winter were warmer. But as cold as the weather has been, our wintry conditions could be a lot worse (and yes, we're thinking of the Snowmageddon we experienced 11 years ago!).

On the bright side, we've already passed the halfway point of meteorological winter (the three months of December, January, and February) and the sun has been setting later and later every day (sunset is now 30 minutes later than it was on December 1), noticeably lengthening our days amidst the cold.

Hopefully, the worst of the winter of 2026 will be behind us after next week -- and we'll be on a path to glide through the month of February en route to warmer days ahead.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU...

The Gazette welcomes letters to the editor. Word limit: 500.

Deadline: Friday at 5 p.m. one week before publication.

Letters may be emailed to

news@JamaicaPlainGazette.com.

Please include address and telephone number for verification purposes.

Anonymous letters will not be published.

More information: 781-485-0588

OP-ED

Your Property Matters: FY 2026 Boston Residential Tax Exemption can save you up to \$4,353.74 on your property tax bill

BY DIANA COLDREN

Did you know that qualified taxpayers can apply to effectively save up to \$4,353.74 on their real estate tax-bill for fiscal year 2026?

If the residential exemption does not appear on your Fiscal Year 2026 third quarter tax bill (recently mailed in December and due Feb. 1), you may still file an application by April 1, 2026 for the fiscal year 2026 exemption.

It is not too late to save on your Fiscal Year 2026 Boston Real Estate Taxes! The City of Boston operates on a fiscal year that starts on July 1 and ends on June 30. For Fiscal Year 2026, the maximum portion exempt from taxation is \$351,108. At a rate of \$12.40 per thousand, this translates to a potential savings in real estate taxes of \$4,353.74.

According to the City's Residential Exemption application, "Every taxpayer in the City of Boston who owns residential property as of January 1, 2025 and uses that property as his

or her principal residence for their calendar year 2024 Massachusetts income taxes, may be eligible for the Fiscal Year 2026 residential exemption. In certain circumstances, you may be eligible if you obtained your principal residence on or before January 1 and June 30, 2025."

The printable online application is now available and the deadline for submission is Wednesday, April 1, 2026. Even if you have received the exemption in the past, you may want to double check to see if the exemption is still in effect for your property. It is important to review your tax bill every year to make sure the exemption is in force.

If you have questions, Please contact the Boston Taxpayer Referral and Assistance Center at 617 635- 4287 or at assessing@boston.gov

Diana Coldren is a real estate agent with the CPC team at Compass and has been a Beacon Hill Resident for 25 years.

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

Jamaica Plain GAZETTE

Circulation 16,400

Published 26 times a year in Jamaica Plain by Independent Newspaper Group

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Advertising Manager

Sandra Storey
Founder/Publisher Emerita 1990-2011

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The Jamaica Plain Gazette is delivered free to households and businesses in the neighborhood 26 times a year on Friday and Saturday. It is for sale in stores for 25¢. Subscriptions: \$75 for First Class Mail. Independent Newspaper Group will not assume financial responsibility for typographical errors in advertisements. Questions or complaints regarding advertising must be sent in writing to the billing department within seven days of publication in order for adjustments to be made to the account. We reserve the right to use our discretion in accepting or rejecting advertising copy.

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The Museum of African American History marks a century of Black history commemorations throughout February

SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE

In 2026, Black History Week will celebrate its 100th anniversary. The observance was expanded into a monthlong celebration in 1970, reflecting the growing recognition of the importance of Black history and culture. To honor this historic milestone, the Museum of African American History | Boston & Nantucket (MAAH) invites the public to take part in a vibrant series of programs, many offered at no cost, at its 46 Joy Street location on Boston's Beacon Hill. From wellness and music to poetry and thought-provoking discussions, these events honor Black history, creativity, and community across generations. All programs are open to the public. To RSVP and for additional information please visit maah.org/events.

Threads of Legacy: Pop Up Shop

Throughout the month of February, a pop-up shop inside MAAH will feature a limited-edition collection of silk scarves honoring the resilience, and lasting impact of the Black women leaders who lived on Beacon Hill's North Slope during the 19th century. Developed through a collaboration between MAAH and the Bee Blunt fashion brand, the designs incorporate historic maps, architectural details, and symbolic references to activism. The 25"x 25" scarves are available for \$55 each or \$160 for all three while supplies last.

Jump Into the Past: Teen Takeover

Sunday, Feb. 1, 1-3 p.m.
FREE

MAAH and the Mayor's Office for Youth and Engagement welcome teens to an afternoon of food, fun and entertainment. Young people aged 11 to 18 will take part in a scavenger hunt, connect with friends, explore exhibits a, tour the African Meeting House, and meet Boston's Youth Poet Laureate, and enjoy a performance.

Saturdays with Sheila: Yoga at MAAH

Saturday, Feb. 7, 11 a.m.-12 p.m.
FREE

Join yogi Sheila Thorne of Bous Yoga for an all-levels yoga

class which is held on the first Saturday of each month. Arrive early to secure a mat or bring one from home.

Children's Storytime:

We Go Slow

Saturday, Feb. 7, 1 – 2 p.m.
FREE

Artist, poet, and author Mariahessa Ekere Tallie will read from her award-winning picture book *We Go Slow*, which follows a young girl and her grandfather as they take a walk through their neighborhood. Ideal for children ages 4–8, this gentle and contemplative story celebrates the quiet joy of slowing down and noticing the world around us. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

A Little History for Kids: An Interactive Workshop Celebrating Black Historical Figures

Sunday, Feb. 8, 1 – 2 p.m.
FREE

Violinist Caden Burston of Castle of Our Skins, a non-profit celebrating Black artistry through music, introduces children to historical figures including author Phillis Wheatley, inventor Garrett Morgan, and President Barak Obama. Elementary school aged children are encouraged to sing, clap, move, and imagine as they explore the stories of trailblazing figures. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

New Guinea Joy Walking Tour: A Tour Through Boston's Black Heritage

Sunday, Feb. 8, 2-4 p.m.
\$30 for adults, \$15 for youth 18 and under.

Together, MAAH, the West End Museum and Afrimerican Academy trace Boston's earliest Black roots, from the North End's historic New Guinea Settlement to Joy Street on Beacon Hill which by the 1800s was the center of the city's burgeoning Black community. This tour looks at the lives of the free Black Bostonians who shaped history from the colonial era though abolition and beyond.

Flower Arranging With Pilon Fleur

Wednesday, Feb. 11, 5:30–7:30 p.m.
FREE

Just in time for Valentine's

Day, Wendy Alexis-Janvier, founder of Pilon Fleur, will guide participants as they create colorful bouquets with refreshments provided. The session will cover basic floral design techniques, including flower selection, color balance, and arrangement. Everyone will leave with a one-of-a-kind bouquet, and refreshments will be served. Donations are welcome and encouraged.

From Ideas to Institutions: The Process of Making Black History

Friday, Feb. 13, 5:30 – 8:30 p.m.
FREE

Discover how Black history is created, preserved, and celebrated. Angela Tate, Chief Curator and Director of Collections at MAAH; Kyera Singleton, public historian and Executive Director of the Royall House and Slave Quarters in Medford; and educator Jennifer Turner, board director for Communitas, an organization fostering inclusive and engaged communities in Greater Boston, will share the stories, strategies, and visions behind the institutions that honor Black history.

The program will be followed by a celebration of Frederick Douglass' 208th birthday, featuring music and refreshments.

Digging Deeper into Black Voices of the Revolution

Tuesday, Feb. 17, 5-7 p.m.
FREE

Hear the stories that history often overlooks. UMass Boston Professor Dr. Nedra Lee and MAAH's Chief Curator and Director of Collections will discuss the creation of the Museum's newest exhibition, Black Voices of the Revolution. From rare artifacts to AI-driven displays, this exhibit invites visitors to engage with history in a new way.

Storytime at the Museum: Joy Takes Root

Thursday, Feb. 19, 10-11 a.m.
FREE

Author Gwendolyn Wallace will share her children's picture book, *Joy Takes Root*, which follows a young girl as she connects with the earth, learns to grow plants, and honors her family's gardening traditions. Reviewers have called *Joy Takes Root* "a beautiful ode to both the natural world and intergenerational cul-

tural wisdom..." Recommended for children ages 3–8. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

MAAH Lunch Club, A Taste of the Diaspora

Saturday, Feb. 21, 12-3 p.m.
\$50 per person

Enjoy Southern hospitality at its best. Savor a flavorful meal created in collaboration with Heritage Market and award-winning chef Larry J of Larry J's BBQ Café followed by a performance and poetry workshop featuring Boston poet Amanda Shea.

Black Wellness Retreat

Sunday, Feb. 22, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
\$40 per person

This half-day retreat invites adults 18 and up to focus on rest, creativity, and connection. Through movement, storytelling, and shared meals, participants will explore ways to nurture themselves and build community. The Haus of Glitter, a dance company and performance lab, offers a space to refresh, recharge, and engage with others in meaningful ways.

US Premiere: In Search of Phillis Wheatley Peters

Thursday, Feb. 26, 6-8 p.m.
FREE

Executive Producer and Director Leslie Askew, founder of Askew Films, and Executive Producer Turlough White, the company's head of production, will host the premiere of their new documentary *In Search of Phillis Wheatley Peters*. The filmmakers will examine the remarkable life of Wheatley Peters, the first African American woman—and only the third American woman—to publish a book of poetry. Enslaved in Boston and later emancipated, she mastered English, Greek, and Latin, composing elegant verse on religion, freedom, and historic figures.

Suite for a Minor Meeting, Live Performance

Feb. 28, 5-7 p.m.
FREE

Join Tufts University Art Galleries and MAAH for *Suite for a Minor Meeting*, a new site-specific performance by Jonathan González, a *Magical Thinking of Systems and Belief*—commissioned artist who works at the intersections of choreography, sculpture, text, and media. This special presentation, featuring Ogechi Okoye and Valentine Umeh, takes place at the African Meeting House on the MAAH campus.

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