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PHOTO BY DEBORAH KARSON PHOTOGRAPHY



WENHAM STREET CINEMA CELEBRATES

Neighbors and friends gathered on Friday, March 18th to celebrate the addition of a new mezzanine level at Wenham Street Cinema. The mezzanine was done by master carpenter Dean Kupstas of Dedham. See Page 5 for more photos.

JP Centre/South Main Streets celebrates 20 years with in-person annual meeting

BY LAUREN BENNETT

JP Centre/South Main Streets held its annual meeting in-person at the First Church in Jamaica Plain on March 23. The event also marked the 20th anniversary of the organization, and neighbors and supporters came out to enjoy local food, beer, and each other's company. The keynote speaker was Segun Idowu, Chief of Economic Opportunity & Inclusion for the City of Boston.

After a Year in Review video was shown, Ginger Brown, Executive Director of JP Centre/South Main Streets, treasurer Craig Panzer, and board member Michael Epp spoke about the organization's three working teams, which include the Racial Equity and Justice Team, the Economic Vitality Team, and the Design Team.

Panzer said that the Racial Equity and Justice Team has held a workshop series and spoken with

business owners in the district. This year, the team will feature an "Uplift JP" series, where it celebrates BIPOC businesses. The celebration began on March 19 with Cada Dia Mini Cafe.

Brown said that the Economic Vitality Team has done a number of things, including beginning a study of employee benefits that "small business owners are able to offer, want to offer, and currently offer," she said. Additionally,

Continued on page 15

MBTA holds design update meeting for Forest Hills station improvements

BY LAUREN BENNETT

With 30 percent of the design complete, the MBTA held a public meeting for the Forest Hills Station improvements project on March 9, at which questions and comments from residents were addressed following the presentation. The project goal is to increase accessibility at the station, which was built in 1987.

MBTA Project Manager Arthur Gillis began by speaking about the existing conditions at Forest Hills Station. There are three entrances: one on South St., one on New Washington St., and one on Washington St./Hyde

Park Ave.

In 2019, upgrades were completed on the upper busway, and the northwest headhouse was finished as well, he said.

The Casey Arborway project has caused a "need for full station accessibility upgrades," Gillis said.

The station also currently features non-ADA compliant, uneven steps, elevators that need to be replaced, drainage structures in need of replacement, and the exterior of the building is also worn down.

Continued on page 14

Progreso en el proyecto de Forest Hills

BY LAUREN BENNETT

El 9 de marzo, la MBTA presentó una reunión pública sobre las actualizaciones de la estación Forest Hills. El proyecto tiene como objetivo aumentar la accesibilidad.

Según Arthur Gillis de la MBTA, el proyecto Casey Arborway ha causado una "necesidad de actualizar por completo la accesibilidad de la estación".

El proyecto está completo en un 30 por ciento. Actualmente, hay tres entradas: South St., New Washington St. y Washington St./

Hyde Park Ave. En 2019, se terminaron la vía de autobús superior y la casa principal noroeste.

La estación todavía necesita reemplazar su escalera, ascensor, estructuras de drenaje, entradas, superficies para caminar y alarmas de seguridad. El exterior del edificio, la vía de autobús inferior y la iluminación también necesitarán mejoras. La distancia entre las vías de autobús superior e inferior se reducirá de 450 pies a 130 pies, lo que permitirá que más pasajeros hagan sus conexiones.

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JP OBSERVER

Ending homelessness here benefits from strong social services

By SANDRA STOREY / SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE

Part 2 of a 2-part Series

Boston fights homelessness by providing housing first, plus an array of support services for the people in need of housing. The City of Boston—through the Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC) Homeless Services Bureau (HSB), and the Mayor’s Office of Housing—with many local nonprofits, like the legendary Pine Street Inn—are key to Boston’s efforts.

Add the contributions of individuals, businesses, policy-makers, funders, and understanding communities, and Boston is doing

a thorough, confidence-inspiring job dealing with an incredibly complicated problem.

“Homelessness is a social issue that requires a social solution to the lack of affordable and appropriate housing that everyone deserves,” Gerry Thomas, director of the Homeless Services Bureau of the BPHC of the City of Boston and a member of the BPHC senior leadership team, wrote in answer to a written question from the Gazette.

Boston is doing well at dealing with homelessness, largely because of that shared attitude by

a large network of cooperating agencies and policy-makers here.

Boston ranked 27th in the numbers of homeless people compared to other cities in 2018, according to the City Mayors Society website, though Boston has been one of the top three most expensive housing markets in the country (after San Francisco and New York) for a while.

“It will take all of us—government, individuals, businesses—to play a part. We need policies, resources and the will to end homelessness,” Barbara Trevisan, vice president of marketing and communications for Pine Street Inn, wrote in answer to a written question from the Gazette.

In the 2021 Annual Homeless Census taken in the City of Boston, 170 single adults were counted on the street; 1,176 were in emergency shelters; and 245 were in supportive permanent housing, according to the City of Boston Census Memo.

Altogether, there were about 25 percent fewer homeless people counted here in 2021 than the census found in 2020.

In terms of homeless families, 863 were in emergency shelters and 51 were in supportive housing in 2021. None were in hotels or motels or on the streets. The state oversees the care of homeless families.

The Homeless Census is an annual requirement of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to be eligible “as a key component of Boston’s \$38 million federal grant for housing and services for households experiencing homelessness,” according to a recent release.

“Boston continues to have the lowest percentage of unsheltered homelessness of any major city, as of 2020, the most recent year for which HUD has published national area-by-area data,” a press release stated.

On average, 2,115 single adults experience homelessness on a single night, according to the City of Boston website. Yet only two percent of them are sleeping outside—the lowest rate of any major city. Over 1,000 chronically homeless individuals are housed, according to the site.

“On a single night in 2021,” it

was reported in a release, “more than 326,000 people experienced homelessness in the U.S.”

The 42nd homeless census just took place in Boston on Feb. 23, and results are due in coming months.

According to a recent press release, Mayor Michelle Wu “led a reduced [due to Covid] group of volunteers, including HUD officials, City and state officials, homelessness service providers and public health and first responders” in conducting the census of Boston neighborhoods, transportation facilities and parks.

“Collaborating with cities like Boston to understand the needs of communities is crucial to our goal of making homelessness a rare, brief, and one-time occurrence,” the city’s 2022 census press release quoted Richard Cho, Senior Advisor for Housing and Services at HUD, as saying.

“We continue to look forward to partnering with cities across the nation to ensure that every person has the security of safe and dignified housing,” he said.

Given Boston’s incredible success in dealing with homelessness, it would serve the whole country if the many cities and towns across the country still struggling with chaotic attitudes, policies and practices regarding the complex issue, could learn from our local network’s approach.

A fundamental concept here is that of “housing first,” the idea that everyone deserves and does better with permanent housing without preconditions like sobriety or treatment. Resources are used to develop housing and match individuals who need them with services right away.

Some of the housing and services are directed to veterans, senior citizens, youths and chronically homeless people.

Except for some government funding provided, homelessness itself has been treated historically in this country as a problem for each locality to deal with mostly on its own, and different places have come up with very different, often less than successful, controversial approaches than Boston.

HUD seems to now be recognizing the need for more information sharing and strategic planning

across the nation.

Although we don’t want our Boston homeless service providers and their resources to be stretched thinner than they already are, it would be fabulous if the rest of the U.S. could learn and benefit from Boston’s success in an organized, ongoing way. Hundreds of thousands of lives—whole communities—would be changed for the better.

“Let’s End Homelessness in Boston,” was the challenging headline on an opinion piece in the Boston Globe in February written by Lyndia Downie, president and executive director of PSI, and the Rev. Ray Hammond, a trustee of the Yawkey Foundation. They advocated that covid-related American Rescue Plan Act Funds could be used to jumpstart the process.”

Downie has often been called upon to present at local and national conferences.

Praising “supportive housing” as “a proven method” and citing Boston’s low street homelessness numbers compared to other cities, Downie and Hammond made a convincing case that homelessness could be ended here—implying maybe everywhere in the U.S. eventually.

“Pine Street Inn’s retention rate in housing homeless individuals who move into housing and stay housed is 95 percent,” the piece pointed out about the 53-year-old nonprofit.

Thomas of the HSB, echoes PSI that ending homeless is their goal, and the City of Boston website headlines its programs and services with “Ending Homelessness.”

“Finding available and affordable units is the hardest thing by far in Boston,” according to Trevisan. “Dealing with stigma about homelessness also makes it hard to build more supportive housing,” she said.

People who become homeless are unique individuals with unique life stories, advocates emphasize, but over the years, seasoned agencies here in Boston have learned about issues and needs that some homeless people tend to share.

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JPNC discusses Poor Clare Sisters' monastery; committee updates

By LAUREN BENNETT

The Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council (JPNC) met virtually on March 22, where the main topic of discussion was a letter to be sent regarding the situation with the Poor Clare Sisters' monastery located at 920 Centre St. Marvin Mathelier of the JPNC's Housing & Development Committee reported that the monastery was the "biggest topic of discussion" at the committee's March meeting. The committee discussed sending a letter requesting that a community process be held regarding the building.

The Poor Clare Sisters have filed a demolition delay review application with the Boston Landmarks Commission, citing their religious beliefs as the reason why the building needs to be demolished. The application states that the property will be bought by Holland Properties, which wants to build 26 townhouses on the lot.

There was some disagreement among council members about what the letter should state.

"The letter sounds awfully like we were asking them not to demolish the building," Omer Hecht said. "I wholly understand the reason why they want to demolish it. What happens later is a different conversation."

Dave Baron said that "I understand that the Poor Clares have said that their religious freedom gives them the right to do whatever they want to do with their property." He added, however, that the "zoning code applies equally to everybody" as does the public process that surrounds development projects in the city.

"We're talking about advocating for a robust community process around what happens with this building," he said.

Bernie Doherty agreed that he doesn't "believe the nuns or anybody else has the right to override the zoning laws..." He also agreed that a public process is needed.

Mathelier said that a community meeting around this is scheduled for April. Michael Reiskind said that the "26 townhouses will have a full commu-

nity process as far as I can tell."

Further discussion included the fact that some people feel the existing building could be repurposed for housing rather than be knocked down for something else to be built on the lot.

Ultimately, the JPNC did vote to move forward with the letter drafted by the committee.

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMITTEE

Public Service Committee Chair Michael Reiskind discussed a proposal by Little Cocoa Bean, a baby food company that wants to open a location at 114 South St.—the space formerly occupied by Esperanza Travel & Tours.

Reiskind described Little Cocoa Bean as an "innovative business" that sells food for babies and toddlers. He also said that they want to open a cafe for parents to be able to feed their children on site while they enjoy coffee or tea.

Little Cocoa Bean is requesting a Common Victualler License as well as a take out license with proposed hours of operation from 7am-7pm.

"Everybody was in favor," Reiskind said, adding that "the big question was parking and

parking for the strollers."

The JPNC voted to approve this request.

The JPNC also voted to approve initiatives for the committee for the next two years, which include things like continuing the subcommittee on police procedures and discussing whether space savers should be banned in the neighborhood.

ZONING COMMITTEE

Zoning Committee Chair Dave Baron reported that only one matter was heard—a request at 29 St. John St. to add a two-story addition to the existing single family home. He said that the home is owner-occupied, and the owners want to expand the kitchen and install a mudroom as well as a rear entrance into the kitchen.

He said that neighbors who attended the meeting were not opposed, but some had questions about the proposal. No change in occupancy or use of the building is proposed.

The JPNC voted to approve the proposal.

PARKS+ COMMITTEE

The Parks+ Committee has been revived, and met again for the first time on March 14. Trevor Wissink-Adams reported that

the group "discussed a few items but didn't have any votes to bring to the council." He said they discussed the Shattuck Campus as well as the dog park issue in JP and neighborhood trash pick-up. The next meeting will be on April 11.

NEW MEMBERS AND NEW CHAIR

Paige Sparks, who also currently serves on the Steering Committee for the Stonybrook Neighborhood Association, nominated herself to fill the vacancy in Area B, where she resides, and was voted in by the Council.

JPNC Chair Samantha Montañó announced that she would be stepping down as chair to run for State Rep. so Vice Chair Bernie Doherty acted as chair for this meeting.

Omer Hecht nominated himself for the position, Michael Reiskind nominated Will Cohen for the position, and Gert Thorn nominated Bernie Doherty. Each spoke about why they would be a good fit for the role, but Doherty ultimately withdrew his nomination, saying he would prefer to remain the vice chair.

Will Cohen won the vote and will be taking over as the new JPNC Chair moving forward.

Jamaica Plain's weekly COVID positive test rate increases

By JOHN LYNDS

After leveling out earlier this month, Jamaica Plain's weekly COVID positive test rate decreased last week. The weekly positive test rate also declined citywide so it's safe to say removing Boston's mask mandate and canceling proof of vaccination for indoor venues has not caused a huge spike in cases over the past month.

Last week, 1,107 Jamaica Plain residents were tested for the virus last week and 2.3 percent were positive--this was a 8 percent decrease from the 2.5 percent that tested positive as reported by the Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC) on March 14.

Twenty-nine additional Jamaica Plain residents contracted the virus between March 14 and March 21 and there are now 7,459 confirmed cases in the neighborhood since the start of the pandemic.

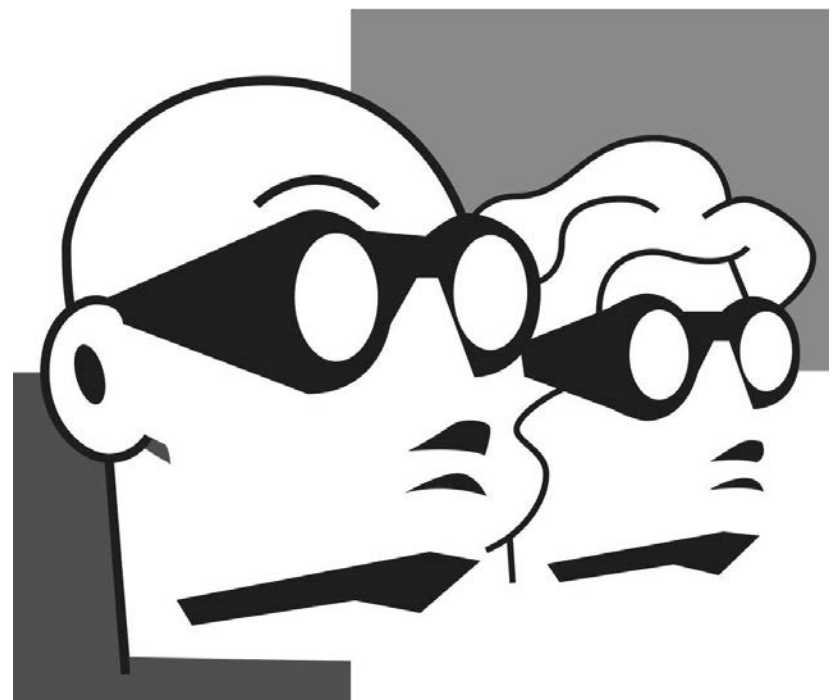
According to the BPHC 12,982 residents were tested citywide last week and 2.3 percent were COVID positive--this was a 4 percent decrease from the 2.4 percent that reportedly tested positive for the week ending on March 14.

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

Citywide positive cases of coronavirus increased 0.31 percent last week and went from 166,722 cases to 167,241 confirmed since the start of the pandemic.

There were three additional deaths in Boston from the virus in the past week and the total number of COVID deaths is now at 1,434. Deaths decreased 25 percent in Boston last week with one less death compared to the four deaths reported by the BPHC two weeks ago.

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SNA hears about Arborway Yard; proposal for 3514 Washington St.

By LAUREN BENNETT

The Stonybrook Neighborhood Association (SNA) discussed two projects at its March 14 meeting, including one on the Arborway Yard proposal, as well as one at 3514 Washington St., which members voted not to oppose.

ARBORWAY YARD

Scott Hamwey and Alexandra Markiewicz of the MBTA were on hand to present the proposal for electrifying the bus facility at the Arborway Yard.

The MBTA has begun construction on the modernization of the Quincy bus facility, so “Arborway is very much our priority now that we’ve got Quincy under construction,” he said.

Markiewicz said that once complete, the Arborway Yard will house “all battery electric buses,” and “almost entirely eliminate emissions from buses in all service in Mattapan, Hyde Park, Roslindale, West Roxbury, and Jamaica Plain.”

The fleet will be expanded from 118 to 200 buses, and capacity will be increased for 60-foot buses as well. She said that Route 32 will be “upgraded to larger buses.”

She then spoke a little bit about existing conditions at the Arborway Yard. Right now, the facility features bus maintenance and outdoor storage on Washington St., as well as the MBTA archive and materials lab in the building at 500 Arborway. The

Pole Yard is used for snow and ice operations as well.

The concept for the new building includes space for 200 electric buses indoors, as well as underground employee parking and eight acres “for future community use.”

The design will also be “sustainable and resilient,” the MBTA said. “We are anticipating that buses would charge in their storage spots,” Markiewicz said.

There was a suggestion to daylight the culvert as a “landscape feature,” and Markiewicz said that the MBTA would “have to look at how deep the culvert is, but they are open to looking into other landscape options as well for the area.

Other concerns were raised about traffic and the need for more housing and retail in that area.

For more information, visit mbta.com/projects/bus-facility-modernization and/or email arborwaybus@mbta.com.

3514 WASHINGTON ST.

Omer Hecht came back before the SNA with his proposal to add two residential units on top of the commercial space at 3514 Washington St., which is now home to his photography business, catLABS.

He said that the building will feature bay windows on Washington St. as well as balconies in the rear and back to back roof decks.

The entrance to the units will be on Washington St., while there is also a vestibule on the street level for catLABS.

SNA member Fred Vetterlein said that “the facade of that building right now is fairly generic.” He continued, “I just think you could do something a little more interesting.”

Hecht said that he has a glass door instead of a steel door on the street as well as a large window for the store. He said that he “can guarantee” that vinyl siding will not be used on the addition.

“I think it’s great that we have a small business coming in,” said SNA member Jennifer Uhrhane, but “sounds like this is a placeholder for what you want to do in the future.” She said that “nothing changed in the last month,” though the SNA did provide feedback at the last meeting regarding the design.

“I would hope that you’d be able to come back to us as you move forward with things and keep us updated as you get an idea of final drawings and what-not of the exterior,” said SNA Steering Committee member Jonathan McCurdy.

“I’m going to ask the SNA to take a vote today regardless,” Hecht said, adding that the renderings presented are “quite close to what we’re hoping to achieve.”

SNA Steering Committee member Paige Sparks said “I think that the building isn’t the most exciting thing I’ve ever seen in my life, however, I think there’s a good amount of thought that’s been put into it.” She said with the need for housing in the neighborhood and the energy efficiency of the proposal, she is in support.

“I was a little disappointed,” Uhrhane said. She said she wanted to see some changes made between last time and this time, but none were made. “He took our time last time to present and did absolutely nothing with our feedback,” she said. She added that she does like the fact that his local photography business has moved in and that there will be new housing as well.

“I’m a little torn on this one,” said SNA member Bill Reyelt. “It seems like there would have been at least some changes from what was presented at the last meeting,” but he also agreed with Sparks’ point of view as well.

SNA member Fred Vetterlein also said that he believes there are “a number of good things” about this proposal and he would be supporting it.

McCurdy said that he would like to see rear drainage added and for the SNA to see final designs once they are available, as well as for the proposal to include dark sky lighting.

The SNA voted 15-1-0 to not oppose the proposal.

SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES

Jennifer Uhrhane provided an update on the mural to be painted on the Extra Space Storage building, saying that the painting is expected to begin by the end of the month.

“That’s huge news,” she said. Weather permitting, the painting will take two to three weeks and a celebration event will occur sometime in May. The SNA is planning that event now as well as working on additional signage for the building.

Fred Vetterlein talked about the Southwest Corridor expansion project, which will connect the new garden to the Southwest Corridor and create a dog park in the area. “We have a list of designers,” he said, and he has emailed “the actual department that distributes land to MassDOT,” which he said needs to be involved to move the project forward.

At 35 Brookley/10 Stonley, which is now being developed by the Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Development Corporation, Uhrhane said that the project has received some of its funding and the team has reached out to the SNA subcommittee on this project “to let them know that things are moving along.”

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The attention of all bidders is directed to the provisions of the Invitation for Bids and contract documents, specifically to the requirements for bid deposits, insurance, and performance bonds as may be applicable. All bids for this project are subject to M.G.L. c.30, s. 39M and in accordance with the terms and provisions of the contract documents.

Sealed bids shall be filed electronically no later than **4:00 pm on Friday, April 8, 2022** by login onto the City of Boston Procurement website as listed and accessing the above listed event number. The contract awarded pursuant to this invitation for bid will **commence on or about Monday, April 18, 2022**.

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Wenham Street Cinema celebrates new mezzanine level

BY MATT SHUMAN

Last Friday, March 18, the Wenham Street Cinema celebrated the addition of a mezzanine level with a champagne-fueled ribbon cutting ceremony. The soiree was attended by Dean Kupstas, master carpenter, who built the mezzanine, as well as Sam Montaña, candidate for state representative for the 15th Suffolk, and Cody Sanders, Minister of the Old Cambridge Baptist Church who blessed the new construction with a toast and collective state-

ment of gratitude.

The mezzanine level of the Wenham Street Cinema will be used as a pre and post event gathering space. At over 300 square feet the space will house a grill area, sitting area, European-style cafe table and chairs, as well as what most architectural observers agree is the piece de resistance, a double-hinged mahogany gate that leads to the Smiling Hound Pub and Gallery (@TheSmilingHoundPubandGallery on IG).



Neighbors mingled with one another on Wenham Street Cinema's brand new mezzanine level and enjoyed last Friday's warm weather.



Sam Montaña, a candidate for state representative for the 15th Suffolk, speaks to guests at Wenham Street Cinema.



Tom Rust enjoys some off-label Champagne at the Wenham Street Cinema mezzanine ribbon-cutting ceremony.

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NEWS BRIEFS

VIGIL IN SUPPORT OF BLACK LIVES MATTER

The April Vigil in Support of Black Lives Matter will be held on Thursday, April 7, from 5:30-6:30pm on the lawn of the First Baptist Church of Jamaica Plain, 633 Centre St. We are pleased to have as our speaker, Celina Miranda, Executive Director of Hyde Square Task Force. Following her remarks, participants

will stand out for 20 minutes in silent vigil, to witness against white supremacy and for racial justice and human rights. Everyone is welcome.

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

LOCAL ARTISTS IN AREA EXHIBIT

Art Exhibit and opening reception of paintings and photography by Jamie Kendrioski and Pradit Sakkara at PD Gallery, 606 Centre Street in JP.

Exhibit Dates: April 1- May 31, 2022

Opening Reception: Friday April 1, 2022 from 6-9pm

JP resident and artist Jamie Kendrioski is partnering with Pradit Sakkara, photographer and owner of PD Gallery, for a joint exhibition of paintings and photography. The exhibit will run April 1- May 31, 2022 at PD Gallery, 606 Centre Street in JP.

The community is invited to attend an Opening Reception on Friday April 1, 2022 from 6-9pm

The opening reception will feature live music performed by singer/songwriter Ralph Haddad, originally from Beirut, Lebanon and now a resident of Brookline.

Since the opening of PD Gal-

lery's JP location in May 2021, Sakkara's photographs have been the main draw. This joint exhibit reflects Sakkara's desire to support and create a platform for other local artists. Both Kendrioski and Sakkara are members of the JP Artists Association.

Learn more about:

- PD Gallery and Pradit Sakkara: www.pd.gallery, [instagram.com/pdgallery99999](https://www.instagram.com/pdgallery99999)
- Jamie Kendrioski: [jamiekendrioski.com](https://www.jamiekendrioski.com), [Instagram.com/jskpaintings](https://www.instagram.com/jskpaintings)
- JP Artists Association: jpaa.org

SUPREME JUDICIAL COURT ISSUES ORDER RELAXING MASK MANDATE IN STATE COURTHOUSES

The Supreme Judicial Court (SJC) issued a new order on Mon-

day regarding access to Massachusetts state courthouses, which relaxes the requirements with respect to the wearing of masks, effective March 23, 2022.

The order continues to encourage the wearing of masks inside courthouses to protect against the transmission of COVID-19, especially by those who are at increased risk for severe disease or are not up to date on COVID-19 vaccinations. Masks are no longer required, however, except under certain identified circumstances.

The order also continues to prohibit entry into courthouses by persons who have tested positive for COVID-19 within the previous 5 days, have symptoms consistent with COVID-19, are not up to date on vaccinations and have been in close contact with someone with COVID-19 within the last 5 days, are awaiting test results after experiencing symptoms, or should be in isolation or quarantine.



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Observer

Continued from page 2

cording to the HSB, often include: trouble finding low-cost housing, mental illness, physical illness, alcohol or substance abuse, or they are suffering from the effects of abuse, lack of education, lack of job skills, unemployment, and/or lack of a support system.

Health care is crucial to serving homeless people. The Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program (BHCHP) provides a range of health care services where shelter guests and program clients can access a wide range of health care services, according to the BPHC website.

BHCHP provides medical respite care, “short-term medical and recuperative services, for homeless people who are far too sick for life in shelters but not sick enough to occupy a costly acute care hospital bed...The Barbara McInnis House is BHCHP’s 104-bed medical respite facility now located on Jean Yawkey Place on the campus of Boston Medical Center,” according to its website.

The Stacy Kirkpatrick House in JP on Walnut Avenue is a 20-bed step-down respite facility, welcoming patients previously recovering from surgeries, long-term treatments, and other ailments at the McInnis House.

When mental health institutions closed down largely in the 1970s, Trevisan said, people were released without a follow up plan. “Many of those people wound up on the streets.”

City Homeless Services began in 1987 with the opening of a 100-bed shelter at the then Boston City Hospital. BPHC assumed responsibility for the services following the 1995 merger and formation of the Boston Medical Center. Currently HSB has about 188 employees.

“There are deep racial inequities among those utilizing our services and high rates of poverty and disability,” Thomas reported. For example, 62 percent of homeless men and 57 percent of homeless women are BIPOC. Their incomes (mainly SSI and SSDI) are between 28.7 and 46.7 percent. Between 70 and 75 percent of Boston’s homeless report having at least one disabling condition.

“People experiencing homelessness face many health challenges, some of them related to being homeless and being able to manage their medications or

sometimes their health issues (mental health and/or substance abuse issues) lead to their homelessness,” Thomas wrote. “Generally speaking, health concerns are behavioral: substance abuse disorders, trauma, brain injury, and mental health disorders, and medical: chronic conditions (hypertension and diabetes), poor oral health, and wound and skin infections” she wrote.

HSB’s Wise Street Men’s Recovery Home, Valentine Street Housing Program for Women, and Porter Apartments are subsidized congregate living homes for people in recovery in JP and Egleston Square.

The HSB also operates two emergency shelters: Woods-Mullen Shelter for women over 18 and Southampton Street Shelter for men over 18 in the South End. Both shelters operate 24 hours a day 365 days a year and provide guests with a bed, linens, showers, three meals, case managers, and a number of community and housing resources to move beyond shelter to stable housing.

Those services are pretty much invisible to the public, but they are often the necessary bridge between a person living on the street and their living independently maintaining safe, secure, housing that is affordable to them.

“Every story is different, and every path is different,” Trevisan of PSI said when I asked about a “process” from homelessness to housing. There is no single process front-line agencies follow. But all of them have the first goal of getting each person into housing.

Becoming homeless “can happen to anyone,” Thomas and Trevisan both said in separate interviews.

To get an idea of how supporting homeless people generally works in Boston, as described by leaders in the effort, imagine for a few minutes that you or a friend or family member have become homeless.

Early on, a person from PSI’s street outreach team that travels Boston neighborhoods 365 days a year gets out of a van that just pulled over. He or she offers you and others who are around a snack and suggests you might want to go to an emergency shelter.

You maybe say “No, thanks,” to the outreach workers, worried about what a shelter would be like. “Some people don’t like the idea of coming inside with other strangers, following shelter rules, etc.,” Trevisan said.

The outreach team talks with you and others around the city nightly, giving out blankets, food, etc., “to encourage [you] to come into shelter or, in some cases, into housing right from the street,” she added. EMTs are called in if you need medical assistance or hospitalization.

After a few weeks, or when the weather gets cold, you might decide to go to a shelter. “No one has been turned away from shelter during the cold weather. There may not be a bed for everyone, but people are encouraged to come inside where they are made comfortable,” Trevisan said.

A staff person at a shelter asks about what options you may have for housing besides a shelter. If you don’t have any, staff works with you to access housing often with other formerly homeless people who live there with support to make “strong community connections.” You may pay only partial rent; the rest will be subsidized. And, if you are like many people who were once homeless here, you may eventually move on to live totally independently.

Staff also helps you find employment and other training, including financial literacy and other education programs; works with you on plans to help you access various services you might need, like mental health; medical assistance; substance use recovery services; and job training, often in food services and house-keeping. Staff also helps you find employment and other training, including financial literacy and other education programs.

Serving Ourselves (SOS) is operated exclusively by the HSB of BPHC. Classes and in-person learning take place in the Career Center located at 1022 Mass Ave., according to Thomas. Participants are hired as Client Workers (CW) to help support operational needs including janitorial and food service work.

“We operate a commercial kitchen at 196 Quincy St. serving 2,000 meals every day and 50-60 CWs are employed here,” she said. CWs are paid minimum wage, currently \$14.25/hr. Most of the CW come directly from our two shelters, but we do accept outside referrals on occasion. Once housed, a CW can remain employed as a CW.

“The goals are to employ folks short-term under a year and help them transition to supportive or competitive employment and of course, get housed,” Thomas said.

Many shelters also have their own or are affiliated with train-

ing workforce development initiatives.

“The network of homeless service providers in Boston is extraordinary,” Thomas said. “The partnerships and projects we collectively work on is endless from housing through Boston Continuum of Care (COC),” overseen by the City of Boston. Many of us share grants. Sometimes BPHC is the lead and contract with Boston Healthcare for the Homeless Program or PSI. Sometimes BHCHP and PSI are the leads.

“Our experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic best reflect this work where we held daily calls, shared promising practices, set-up non-congregate sites, created a city-wide transportation system and most importantly, provided testing and vaccines for shelter guest and staff,” she said.

Friends of Boston Homeless (FOBH), whose office is located on Wise Street here in JP, is a long-standing partner to the HSB. The nonprofit can provide support to individuals that government may not be able to. Their priorities are housing and workforce development. FOBH provides direct financial support to BPHC. BPHC provides case management and general support to the FOBH community houses, Thomas said.

BPHC’s HSB is supported through a mix of state and city funds, as well as grants. Pine Street’s funding comes from government sources (city/state/federal 58 percent), plus 25 percent from donations from individuals, corporations and foundations. The other 17 percent comes from a combination of rental income, social enterprise income, in-kind donations.

Boston’s Way Home Fund, managed by PSI, raised \$10 million during the height of the pandemic that will be used to close the gap on homeless support services between what the public sector covers and the actual cost here. Funds came from mostly corporate donations. \$1 million donors include Bank of America, Liberty Mutual Insurance, MassGeneral Brigham, Massachusetts Mutual Insurance Company (MassMutual) and Suffolk Cares, according to Trevisan.

Funding homeless people with housing and supportive services is actually cost-saving to society, according to knowledgeable advocates like Trevisan. “When people are housed, there are documented savings of over \$10,000 per person/per year in emergency rooms, hospital stays and other emergency services,” she said.

The websites of Pine Street Inn, The City of Boston Mayor’s Office of Housing “Ending Homelessness” and the Boston Public Health Commission as well as the many other agencies and nonprofits working to end homelessness in Boston are extensive and excellent.

In addition to much more information about Boston’s successful work for the homeless, people facing homelessness themselves or who know someone who is can find information and resources there. People who would like to find out how they can support homeless people in Boston can also find how to do that just by searching for the organizations’ websites on the internet.

Sandra Storey is the founder and former publisher of the Jamaica Plain Gazette.

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Mayor Wu announces members of the Special Commission to End Family Homelessness

STAFF REPORT

On her ongoing efforts to address the issue of homelessness in Boston, on March 17 Mayor Michelle Wu announced the formation of a Special Commission to End Family Homelessness made up of non-profit leaders and experts from both city and state agencies. The commission will study local family homelessness and will be tasked with developing a plan to prevent and end family homelessness in Boston.

“Boston’s housing crisis has been pushing families out of our city,” said Mayor Michelle Wu. “I’m grateful to the members of this Commission and look forward to their work to prevent

and end family homelessness in Boston.”

In 2020, a city ordinance was passed to establish a Special Commission to End Family Homelessness. The purpose of the Special Commission is to develop an actionable and measurable plan to end family homelessness in Boston. The ordinance names members for the commission including the Mayor of Boston, the City’s Chief of Housing, the City’s Chief of Health and Human Services, the Boston Public Schools Superintendent, as well as state seats including the Governor of Massachusetts, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Secretary of the Department of Housing and Community De-

velopment, representatives from the Boston Legislative Delegation, homeless service providers and individuals with lived experience of homelessness or housing insecurity.

“As the Chair of Public Health, Homelessness and Recovery, I am proud to be a member of the Commission on Family Homelessness,” said Erin Murphy, Boston City Councilor At-Large. “I look forward to our work ahead as we collaborate together to create a coordinated plan to end family homelessness in Boston. There is such a negative impact on the health and educational progress of children who are homeless, so we need to come up with a concrete action plan to end this crisis. I am ready to partner with the other members on this Commission to make ending family homelessness a reality.”

Boston currently works with nonprofit and community partners to coordinate housing and services for homeless individuals in Boston. It applies for and distributes grants, collects and reports data about homelessness in Boston, and sets system-wide policies and goals. Since 2015 the City of Boston has reduced individual chronic homelessness by 19 percent, reduced Veteran homelessness by 32 percent, and has transformed the homeless services system into a coordinated network focused on helping the most vulnerable households across our City. The City has helped to house over 15,000 people experiencing homelessness, housed over 1,000 chronically homeless individuals and more than 1,300 homeless veterans.

“Mayor Wu’s Special Commission is a tremendous leap forward for Boston in understanding, planning, and tackling the unique housing and support needs of homeless children and their parents,” said Larry Seamans, President of FamilyAid

Boston. “As one of the city’s oldest and largest providers of housing supports for homeless families, we look forward to working with the commission to further the goal of ending family homelessness in Boston.”

“During my time on the council, I was proud to pass the legislation to create the Special Commission to ensure our City always had an actionable plan to end family homelessness,” said former City Councilor Annissa Essaibi-George. “I believe that this Commission is essential to tackling the racial, economic, and institutional barriers to supporting our most vulnerable families experiencing housing insecurity. I am so grateful for the members of this Commission for their dedication to Boston families and ending family homelessness.”

The City of Boston contributes significant resources to ending family homelessness, including BHA’s preference for homeless families, MOH’s homeless set-aside policy, and homelessness prevention programs managed by the Office of Housing Stability. The Massachusetts DHCD funds and manages a statewide shelter system for families and invests in short and long-term housing resources to house homeless families out of shelter. To execute the strategic plan that the commission recommends, Boston will need to collaborate with the state to build a well-coordinated system to ensure resources reach the households with the greatest needs. A coordinated system will promote a housing-centered response to family homelessness, strengthen housing pathways and expand eviction prevention partnerships to prevent and end family homelessness in Boston.

The United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley agreed to convene the Commission, and the Mayor’s Office of Housing has hired the Technical Assistance Collaborative (TAC) to work with the Commission to develop a strategic plan to end homelessness among families in

Boston on the following timeline. February 2022: Preliminary Map of Resources and Responsibilities

March 2022: Data analysis and Gaps Analysis

April 2022: Facilitate focus groups and planning meetings with core constituencies and stakeholders to review gaps analysis and use it to establish shared vision, goals, recommendations, and strategies to end family homelessness in Boston.

May 2022: Review draft recommendations with Commission or other decision-makers.

June 2022: Finalize feedback of recommendations and draft plan.

Commission Members

- City Councilor Erin Murphy

- Jim Greene, Assistant Director for Street Homelessness Initiatives, Mayor’s Office of Housing, City of Boston

- Sheila Dillon, Chief of Housing, City of Boston

- Brian Marques, Senior Director of Opportunity Youth, Boston Public Schools

- Kate Bennett, Boston Housing Authority Administrator

- Alvina Brevard, Associate Director for Division of Housing Stabilization, Department of Housing and Community Development

- Kate Barrant, President and CEO, Horizons for Homeless Children

- Catherine D’Amato, President and CEO, Greater Boston Food Bank

- Shiela Moore, CEO, Hildebrand Family Self Help Center, Inc.

- Larry Seamans, President, Family Aid Boston

- Danielle Ferrier, CEO, Heading Home Inc.

- Linn Torto, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Interagency Council on Housing and Homelessness

- State Senator Lydia Edwards

- State Representative Brandy Fluker Oakley

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Contact Information

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The City of Boston (the City), acting by the Commissioner of the Boston Centers for Youth & Families, hereinafter referred to as the Official, invites sealed bids for the performance of the work generally described above, and particularly set forth in the Invitation for Bids. **The bid documents will be accessible online from Monday, March 21, 2022, through Friday, April 08, 2022** by visiting the City of Boston Public Procurement website at boston.gov/procurement/ and clicking on the supplier portal button to access event ID # **EV00010431**.

The attention of all bidders is directed to the provisions of the Invitation for Bids and contract documents, specifically to the requirements for bid deposits, insurance, and performance bonds as may be applicable. All bids for this project are subject to M.G.L. c.30, s. 39M and in accordance with the terms and provisions of the contract documents.

Sealed bids shall be filed electronically no later than 4:00 pm on Friday, April 8, 2022 by login onto the City of Boston Procurement website as listed and accessing the above listed event number. The contract awarded pursuant to this invitation for bid will commence on or about **Monday, April 18, 2022**.

Marta E. Rivera, Interim Commissioner
(March 21, March 28, April 04)



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JP's cannabis dispensary and social justice cannabis museum celebrates one year in the community

BY JOHN LYNDS

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

Core Cannabis's SEED Dispensary and attached Social Justice Cannabis Museum opened at 401 Centre St. in Jamaica Plain with a ribbon cutting that included the dispensary and museums founders, staff and Reggae Icon Peter Tosh's wife, Melody McIntosh.

The unique dispensary has gained national recognition for being the first dispensary in the US with a social justice museum attached to the project. Since McIntosh, member of the dispensary's Social Justice Cannabis Museum's Curating Council and her and Tosh's daughter, Boston native Niambe McIntosh, cut the ribbon on Core museum, it has become a very unique aspect of this cannabis shop.

To celebrate, Core hosted a birthday bash last week that included food, music, museum tours guided by Core CEO, April Arrasate and special guests.

"Before all of the fun began, we hosted a private brunch elsewhere for our investors, vendors, staff, and all who made our first year possible," said Emily Crowne, Core's Events and Outreach Director. "Mimosas poured all morning and we served tasty breakfast food, catered by The Boston Catering Co. We also had the treat of the music stylings of The Ray Liriano Experience as we celebrated."

Crowe said some of Core's incredible vendors came out to the event.

"These included Bailey's Buds which we introduced on our Birthday weekend," said Crowe. "We had support from Fernway, Levia, Northeast Alternatives, Gold Green Group, PAX, Good Chemistry, and Revolutionary Clinics. Needless to say, we shared a lot of fun with our customers throughout the day! Follow us on Instagram and our

website for more exciting events to come. Overall, an incredible day and milestone for SEED."

At Core, eighty-two percent is owned by locals, 72 percent women owned and the owners of the company have spent collectively

over 10 years incarcerated by the war on drugs.

Aside from the museum, Core has over 6,000 square feet of space that houses all the adult-use cannabis products that are for sale to consumers.



Core's Lisa Marien, Tomas Gonzalez, Kristen Picard, Phillip Bailey.



To celebrate its first anniversary, Core hosted a birthday bash that included food, music, museum tours guided by Core CEO April Arrasate and special guests. There was also plenty of SEED merchandise given out during the event.



Customers pick up some products at Core Cannabis's SEED dispensary in Jamaica Plain.



The staff cut the cake during Core Cannabis's SEED dispensary and attached Social Justice Cannabis Museum one year anniversary in Jamaica Plain.

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REAL ESTATE TODAY

Real estate market remains hot in JP

BY LAUREN BENNETT

Heading into spring, the real estate market is in full swing, and inventory remains low in Jamaica Plain. The Gazette spoke with four real estate professionals to learn more about the status of the market and trends they have seen.

“Sales are booming,” said real estate broker Rachael Kulik, adding that “rates are way up.” She said this trend has also affected the rental market as well, as she’s seen people break their leases to buy instead, and many renters are exploring whether they should continue renting or just purchase a home.

The pandemic has also shifted how many people go about the process for renting an apartment. Kulik said she works closely with doctors who are coming to Boston for their residencies, and “virtual tours were really coming into play.” She said she has even bought her own gear to shoot the tours herself and puts them up on her website.

“It’s a really great solution to a really great problem,” she said. During the height of the pandemic, many people were uncomfortable with in-person tours, and even as things have improved somewhat, these virtual tours are immensely helpful for those who currently live far away from Boston.

“Everything is going so quickly now,” Kulik said. “Some landlords raised the rent by \$400.”

For those who still do want an in-person tour, Kulik said that she still requires everyone to wear masks and she does not show a rental unit until she receives written confirmation that the client has seen a virtual tour.

“That’s made a huge difference for the need of in-person showings,” she said. “It’s decreased the amount of people that are

just sort of window shopping.”

Though the number of people who want to see apartments in-person has increased, she said that “people are actually losing out on apartments because people are renting virtually now.” She said that sometimes she can’t even guarantee an in-person showing because the apartment might already be taken off the market by someone who applied after just seeing the virtual tour.

She said for things like shower heads and sizes of rooms, the virtual tours allow dimensions and measuring to occur so many people don’t feel the need to see an apartment in person before applying.

On the sales side, she said that “multi-families are a big deal right now,” adding that many people in Jamaica Plain especially are “emotionally at-

tached” to properties.

She also said that condos are hot right now, but the multi-families are in the shortest supply and many people have had them in their families for generations.

Kulik spoke about the property at 32 Gartland St., which she said is currently under agreement. She said that she has worked with the landlord “for years,” helping him to rent the units, and the property has been in his family since 1920. “It didn’t last the open house and tenants were relieved about it,” she said.

“Basically, I think overall, the market is doing great,” she said, “and for me, it is really encouraging to see people thriving after the pandemic.”

Real estate team Ellen Grubert and Janis Lippman agree that the inventory remains low for buyers, but “from a seller side, it’s pretty active and property is moving fairly quickly,” Grubert said.

Lippman added that “because of low inventory and multiple offers, oftentimes inspections and work contingencies are being waived.”

She said that many properties are selling between 10 and 20 percent over the asking price.

She said that buyers should “make sure that they’re working with very well respected agents that know the market.”

Grubert said that just getting

as much information from real estate professionals as possible will be helpful for buyers in this market so they are making an informed choice about what they should do.

“JP is a wonderful community and a very supportive community, and when you’re a first time homebuyer or a younger couple just starting out, JP is a terrific place to land,” Lippman said. She said that it is also “very competitive in the suburbs,” as there are a number of sellers who want to sell their condo and move to a larger home in the suburbs. On the other hand, there are other sellers coming from the suburbs who want to downsize in Jamaica Plain.

“JP’s still great,” Grubert said. “There are lots of moving parts and pieces.”

Lippman said that though many “headlines keep talking about interest rates going up and that could be sounding a bit frightening for buyers,” she said that “interest rates are still at a historic low.”

John Maxfield of Maxfield & Company Real Estate said that a number of things from interest rates to the weather can affect the real estate market.

“This year, it’s kind of like some perfect storm,” Maxfield said. “In a lot of cases, if the in-

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REAL ESTATE TODAY

Know your options if your home loan payment suspension is ending

(StatePoint) Is the COVID-19-related payment suspension (also known as a forbearance) on your home loan ending? Ready to resume making mortgage payments? Understanding your options and being proactive can help ensure a smooth process, say experts.

“Loan servicers are currently reaching out to customers through emails, letters and calls to help them with exiting forbearance. Responding to this outreach promptly is crucial,” says Rulon Washington of Wells Fargo, who’s worked with non-profits throughout the pandemic to educate homeowners on what they’ll need to do as their forbearance plans come to an end.

Below, Washington answers common questions homeowners have when exiting their forbearance:



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

Can I move missed payments to the end of the loan term? In most cases, if you were current on your mortgage or home equity payments when the suspension started and are ready to resume

your regular monthly payments, you may be able to move missed payments to the end of the existing loan term. This additional balance won’t accrue interest and will be due when the loan is

paid in full, refinanced, or when the home is sold.

What other options are available? You may have the option to pay off missed payments in full or follow a repayment plan, which divides what’s due into manageable amounts, and adds it to the regular monthly payment.

What if I need help with a lower monthly payment? If you need a reduced payment, you may qualify for a loan modification. Wells Fargo and several investors provide streamlined, no-document modification review processes in many cases.

What if I can’t afford reduced payments and need to sell? Your loan servicer can work with you as you attempt to sell your home, and in many cases, enable you to take advantage of the strong increases in U.S. home prices.

Who controls how my loan is handled? Many loans are insured, guaranteed or owned by third-party “investors” who set the rules for how loans are managed. Investors include government-sponsored enterprises, like Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac, government agencies, such as FHA, VA or USDA, banks and private companies. While many investors offer similar programs to help homeowners coming to the end of a payment suspension, exact programs may vary.

Will my home be foreclosed if I stay in forbearance or can’t resume payments? Servicers will not move to foreclosure or eviction on anyone who remains in an active, approved payment suspension plan. In the case of Wells Fargo-owned loans, all foreclo-

Continued on Page 12



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REAL ESTATE TODAY

Market

Continued from page 10

terest rates are high, it dampens the market.”

But he said there is “pent up demand” from last year as well still. Though interest rates are still low, they are expected to rise somewhat.

“Right now, it’s a super seller’s market,” he said. “I’ve never seen a seller’s market as strong as this.”

His advice to buyers: “I’ve encouraged anyone who doesn’t have to buy right now to kind

of stay out of the market until things setting down.”

However, he said “if you’re a seller that’s planning on selling, take advantage of selling.”

He also said that he believes there is less inventory in Jamaica Plain than there was at this time last year.

When it comes to what people are looking for in a home, Maxfield said that people are still looking for space to work from home, as many people will continue to do so. He said a “huge percentage” of his buyers are looking for home office space “because they expect that trend

to continue.”

Additionally, outdoor space is also highly sought after, and is “a lot more prevalent now as a result of the pandemic. JP is popular for that reason.”

He said a lot of families are looking to buy as are young professionals.

“There’s been a huge increase in new rentals coming to market,” he added. “That’s really helped out the renters to keep them here.” He also said the number of condos being built has also made a difference in keeping “rentals stable.”

For more information about these real estate professionals, they can be reached at the following contacts:

Rachael Kulik:

978-514-2018

rachael@rachaelkulik.com

Ellen + Janis Real Estate Team:

(617) 971-8940

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John Maxfield, Maxfield & Company Real Estate

617-293-8003

jmax@maxfieldRE.com

Home Loan

Continued from page 11

sure-related activity and evictions have stopped on occupied properties through the end of 2021, except in very specific cases. For loans Wells Fargo services for other investors, we follow the investor’s requirements for customers as they exit payment suspensions.

“We’ll make every effort to reach out to customers to discuss deferral of missed payments, modifications and other available programs before advancing or initiating foreclosure,” says Washington.

What if I’m exiting a COVID-related forbearance but have been impacted by a natural disaster? Contact your loan servicer for options during this difficult time.

Other Resources

No-cost housing counseling agencies approved by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development can help assess your situation, navigate

available programs and even work with your servicer on your behalf. To find an approved agency, call HUD toll-free at 1-800-569-4287 or visit www.hud.gov counseling.

Additionally, states, U.S. territories and Native American tribes are being granted federal funds designated for helping qualified homeowners address payments missed during a suspension and with payments going forward. Check with the appropriate housing finance agencies or contact a housing counseling agency for information about when these funds may be available and to determine if you might qualify for assistance.

Finally, Wells Fargo mortgage and home equity customers can find additional information at wellsfargo.com/repaymentdetails or can call 800-219-9739 to speak to someone who can help review their circumstances.

“If your payment suspension is ending, help is available. Be sure to contact your mortgage servicer for next steps,” says Washington.





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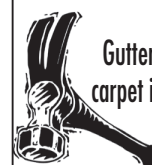
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Forest Hills

Continued from page 1

The scope of work for the project includes constructing a new staircase and elevator between the upper and lower busways, the replacement of elevators, station entrances, and walking surfaces outdoors, the regrading of the lower busway, fire alarm and protection upgrades, repairing the station's roof and exterior, and improvements to lighting and wayfinding.

In 2020, a project design contract was awarded to AECOM for \$6.84 million.

Gillis said that feedback was heard from riders that it currently takes too long to get between the upper and lower busways and people were missing their buses. The new staircase and elevator will be "located in the southeast corner of the station between the upper and lower busway," he

said, and will also decrease the distance between the two from about 450 feet to about 130 feet.

He then spoke about the project timeline, saying that the contract was awarded in late 2020, the 30% design has now been completed, the 75 percent design is expected later this year—after which another public meeting will be held—the 100 percent design is anticipated in early 2023, and construction is expected to begin soon after that, likely in the spring.

The MBTA has conducted public outreach for this project in the form of six in-person surveys and engagement sessions last fall, as well as a multilingual survey about existing conditions that garnered more than 50 responses. Additionally, informational flyers in multiple languages were distributed in the station and the "neighboring area," according to a slide presented.

The MBTA said they will continue in-person outreach and

surveys as the project moves forward.

During the Q&A portion of the meeting, a resident asked about improvements to be made to the commuter rail platform at the station.

Gillis said that the MBTA is hoping to add a tactile ledge strip on the platform as well as "looking at an area of rescue assistance down at the end of the platform." Lighting will likely also be replaced as well as wayfinding signage. The elevator down to the commuter rail station will also be replaced.

Another resident asked if the project could start any earlier than it is projected to, and Gillis said that "we've looked at compressing the schedule," but the rest of the funding for construction still needs to be found. He said that the "project should be ready for the design to be released in very early 2023," which means construction will likely start in the spring of next year.

There was also a question about how these renovations will affect service during construction.

"All the construction will be phased to minimize any impact to customers and ridership," Gillis said. "We're looking at quite an extensive amount of work inside the station, including elevators and elevator updates, so work would be sequenced to maintain some level of elevator to each location." He said the project will require work at night and off hours.

"The goal would be to minimize impact to the customers," he said, adding that "really, that would take place through a phased construction."

Bernie Doherty, who is currently the vice chair of the Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council as well as chair of the Asticou-Martinwood-South Street Neighborhood Association, said that "I think it's great what you're going to be doing." However, he and

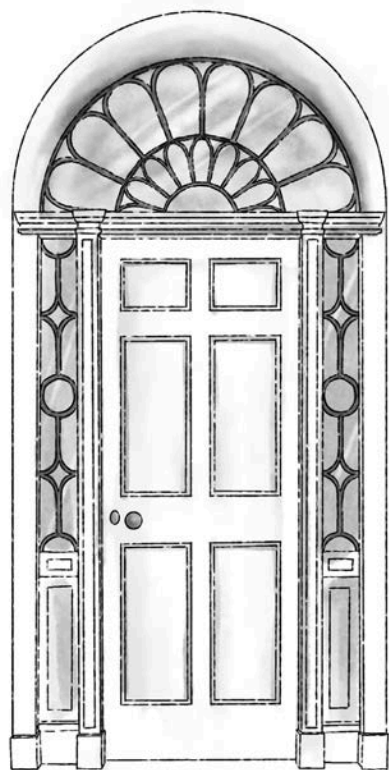
others had concerns about notification from the MBTA about this meeting. He said that a flier had been taped to his handrail the day before. He said that this "is not the way we really want to be getting something."

Doherty also said that "this is the first I've heard about the surveys...I would hope that you would beef these up, especially for the communities that surround the station. He said that moving forward, he would like to be kept up to date on the schedule of the project and how construction might affect neighbors.

Anyone with questions, comments, or concerns about this accessibility improvements project can reach out to the project team at foresthills@mbta.com, and for more information about the project, visit mbta.com/foresthillsimprovements.

The full video recording of this meeting can also be found on the MBTA's YouTube channel.

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Forest Hills

Continued from page 1

iones.

En cuanto a la plataforma del tren de cercanías, la MBTA espera mejorar la seguridad, la iluminación y la orientación, y el ascensor.

En espera de una fuente de financiación, la construcción restante debería comenzar en la primavera de 2022 y se completará para la primavera de 2023. La construcción se realizará por etapas para reducir las interrupciones del servicio y el impacto en los pasajeros.

"El objetivo sería minimizar

el impacto para los clientes", dijo Gillis, y agregó que la construcción puede llevarse a cabo de noche y en horas no pico.

La MBTA dijo que había llevado a cabo un amplio alcance comunitario sobre el proyecto, incluida una encuesta multilingüe. Sin embargo, Bernie Doherty, de JPNC, dijo que no había recibido una encuesta y que solo se había enterado de la reunión el día anterior.

Encuentre la grabación de esta reunión en el canal de YouTube de MBTA. Para obtener más información sobre el proyecto, visite mbta.com/foresthillsimprovements. Se pueden enviar correos electrónicos a foresthills@mbta.com.

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Meeting

Continued from page 1

Brown said the team is looking at all vacancies in the district and trying to fill them, and will also be hosting an entrepreneurial education event about questions surrounding starting a small business.

Epp spoke about storefronts in the district, calling out The Village Works for going above and beyond with restoring the facade of the non-historic building. He also said more storefronts are to come.

Featured speaker Segun Idowu spoke a little bit about his office and how it works to assist Bostonians. Formerly known as the Office of Economic Development, Segun said that the name of the office was changed because he and Mayor Michelle Wu felt that it was “important [that residents] understand who it is and what we’re doing it for.” He also said that the goal is to ensure equitable access to opportunities across the entire city.

Idowu said that this is “one of the largest cabinets in the city,” with nearly 100 full-time employees. Under its umbrella, the office includes the Licensing Board, Small Business Development, Tourism, Sports, and Entertainment, Supplier Diversity, Cannabis Equity, and Business Strategy, as well as resources for businesses as they continue to navigate the pandemic.

Idowu also explained that there are “four buckets that everything we’re doing this year will fall into.” Those include: COVID recovery, shifting city investments, prosperity for all, and neighborhood revitalization.

Idowu said these four buckets will help the office with things like “working to ensure we’re laying the proper infrastructure,” as well as awarding contracts to small businesses run by women, people of color, and veterans. They will also “help with economic competitiveness,” he said, and providing resources to main streets across the city, creating equitable access.

After Idowu Spoke, the meeting shifted to celebrating three anniversaries: the 20th anniversary of JP Centre/South Main Streets, the 100th anniversary of George’s Shoes, and the 200th birthday of Frederick Law Olmsted, creator of the Emerald Necklace parks.

Four founding JP Centre/South board members attended the meeting after being invited, and

Brown said that George’s Shoes is looking forward to a larger celebration this summer. The shoe store has received a technology grant from the Boston Main Streets Foundation to update its POS system, as well as a small business relief fund grant to renovate the inside of the store and create handicap accessibility.

Jen Mergel, Director of Experience and Cultural Partnerships for the Emerald Necklace Conservancy, briefly spoke about the Olmsted Now celebration which will include events around the city related to open space and connectivity.

“We want to enter this work really in equity,” Mergel said, and there will be public dialogues and other types of events for people to attend. April 26 marks Olmsted’s 200th birthday, and there will be a celebration at the JP Boathouse on that date from 6:30-7:30pm.

Parks as Platform is another initiative as part of the celebration. An event is planned at Jamaica Pond on August 20 in conjunction with JP Porchfest, and on September 23, there will

be a picnic that includes the full Emerald Necklace.

Finally, JP Centre/South Main Streets re-elected board member Paul Stamatatos and elected new board member Nicole Gunn, owner of Cada DiA Mini Cafe.

Some upcoming events in the district include:

1. Uplift JP – Sat, April 16, 2022, 12:00-2:00 PM at Nckls & Dimes, 668 Centre St
 2. JP Centre/South Main Streets Monthly Board Meeting – Wed, April 27, 2022, 5:00-6:00 PM via Zoom
 3. JP Centre/South Spring Fundraiser – SAVE THE DATE! Tuesday, May 24, 2022
 - Taste and Tour – A Walk in the Neighborhood; a Guided FOOD Tour of Jamaica Plain with drinks and history highlights!
 4. Entrepreneurial Education Fair – Thursday, June 9, 2022, 7:00-9:00 PM
 - Everything You Wanted to Know about Starting a Business (But Were Afraid to Ask)
- To be added to the JP Centre/South Main Streets newsletter, text JPCSMS to 22828.

Jamaica Plain juvenile and two others arrested after shots fired on Metcalf Court

By JOHN LYNDIS

Three males, including one juvenile from Jamaica Plain were arrested last Friday evening after officers from District E-13 responded to a call for shots fired in the area of 4 Metcalf Court.

The incident occurred just after 5 pm last Friday when officers received a radio call for shots fired on Metcalf Court.

Responding officers located ballistic evidence and witnesses were able to provide a description of the vehicle seen fleeing the scene following the shooting.

A short while later, officers located the vehicle in the area of Ukraine Way.

Officers conducted a stop of the vehicle, and one male, later identified as Anton Clark, fled on foot and was apprehended a short distance away. Given the nature of the call, officers removed the additional two males from the vehicle and immediately observed two firearms in plain view in the vehicle. All three males were taken into custody without further

incident.

Anton Clark, 19, of Boston, Keimody Crockett, 27, of Malden, and a 15-Year-old Juvenile Male of Jamaica Plain were all arrested without further incident.

Clark is to be charged with Unlawful Possession of a Firearm, Unlawful Possession of Ammunition Carrying a Loaded Large Capacity Firearm on a Public Way, Possession of a Large Capacity Firearm, and Resisting Arrest.

Crockett is to be charged with Unlawful Possession of a Firearm, Unlawful Possession of Ammunition Carrying a Loaded Large Capacity Firearm on a Public Way, Possession of a Large Capacity Firearm.

The juvenile male is to be charged with Delinquent to wit Unlawful Possession of a Firearm, Unlawful Possession of Ammunition Carrying a Loaded Large Capacity Firearm on a Public Way, Possession of a Large Capacity Firearm.

All three suspects were arraigned in West Roxbury District Court.

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Former Jamaica Plain resident to run 126th Boston Marathon in honor of diabetes research

This year, 25-year-old Dana Grey will be participating in his very first Boston Marathon, a dream of his since childhood. He will be running as a member of Team Joslin to support Joslin Diabetes Center, a world-renowned diabetes research and care facility in Boston, MA.

The cause is very special to Dana, who was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes (T1D) in May 2020 at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. He began to experience issues with vision that were quickly misdiagnosed at another medical facility as nearsightedness. The diagnosis of T1D overwhelmed and surprised Dana, as his family had no prior history of diabetes. Thankfully, working from home gave him the opportunity to spend more time learning about the care he would now need and adapt to a new lifestyle.

Dana was never a traditional runner, but turned to running after his diagnosis because he liked the routine of it. In the beginning, Dana recalls struggling to run half a mile and manage his blood sugar. But, he never gave up, and

in November 2021, Dana completed the New York City Marathon. It was a huge stride in boosting his day-to-day confidence. "This may sound cliché, but it really was the best day of my life," he said.

Dana wanted to be a part of Team Joslin because of the incredible care they give to each of their patients and because they're located in Boston. "I take pride in Joslin being located in my home city," said Dana, who grew up in Boston's Jamaica Plain neighborhood. Those two factors combined are what Dana called "a perfect marriage" and he couldn't think of a better organization to support while running his first Boston Marathon.

"I feel very grateful and lucky to be a part of Joslin's team," Dana said. His diagnosis felt incredibly draining, knowing this disease was now a part of his everyday life. Running became a safe space for Dana. "In some ways, running saved my life," Dana said. Now, he is really passionate about proving that you can do anything you want with T1D. "I couldn't imagine running a marathon before my

diagnosis," he said. "It gave me the motivation to do more."

By running the marathon this year, Dana's goal is to raise awareness for T1D by sharing his story with others as well as the warning signs. "I went 23 years of my life without knowing much about diabetes, so I want others to be more prepared," he said.

For more information or to support Dana and Team Joslin, visit the link below: <https://www.givengain.com/ap/dana-grey-raising-funds-for-joslin-diabetes-center/>

About Joslin Diabetes Center
Joslin Diabetes Center is world-renowned for its deep expertise in diabetes treatment and research. A federally designated Diabetes Research Center, affiliated with Harvard Medical School, Joslin is dedicated to finding a cure for diabetes and ensuring that people with diabetes live long, healthy lives. We develop and disseminate innovative patient therapies and scientific discoveries throughout the world. For more information, visit www.joslin.org.



DANA GREY PHOTO

Dana Grey showing off his a medal from a previous race.

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Gazette Pet of the Week

by Sarah Carroll



'GORDO' AND 'PELUA'

Gordo and Pelua are a 6 year old pair looking for a home together. They are friendly, affectionate pups. While they



adore their humans and each other, they need a home without other pets. They also need to be walked separately if they are going to pass other dogs because Gordo thinks he needs to protect his sister. They would love a home where they can soak up all the love for themselves!

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Carol Truncale's story leaves us with two of the most contagious messages we know: don't give up, and remember to give back. If Carol's story inspires just one more person to make a difference, then its telling here has been well worth while.



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Massachusetts to begin distribution of premium payments to low-income workers

The Baker-Polito Administration announced the start of distribution of the first round of \$500 payments for low-income workers under the COVID-19 Essential Employee Premium Pay Program. The payments will be mailed to approximately 500,000 people over the next week.

These payments were previously announced last month and represent the first round of a \$460 million program passed by the Massachusetts Legislature and signed by Governor Baker

as part of a \$4 billion spending plan for American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. Under this program created by the Legislature, the Administration was provided flexibility to design the program and develop eligibility parameters to ensure this critical support is provided quickly to workers across the Commonwealth.

Massachusetts residents will be eligible for first round payments if, based on filed 2020 Massachusetts tax returns, their income from employment was at

least \$12,750 – the equivalent to working 20 hours/week for 50 weeks at minimum wage as of 2020 – and their total income put them below 300% of the federal poverty level.

Individuals who received unemployment compensation in 2020 will not be eligible for the first round of payments, nor will Commonwealth executive branch employees who received or will receive a one-time payment from the state as their employer. Eligible individuals will receive the

payment in the form of a check mailed to them. Checks will be mailed in batches in the coming days.

For questions about eligibility, a dedicated call center is available at (866) 750-9803 and is open Monday through Friday, 9am - 4pm.

The legislation creating the Premium Pay program included \$500 million in total for low-income essential workers; this \$460 million program comprises the majority of those funds,

and \$40 million was allocated to fund previous agreements with state employee unions. This first round of payments, worth \$250 million, will be made based on 2020 returns. Following the 2021 tax filing season, the next round of payments will be made using information from 2021 returns.

Information on plans to disburse subsequent rounds of funds will be released in the future.

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EDITORIAL

Spring is in the air for all the senses

This past Sunday marked the vernal equinox, also known as the beginning of astrological spring. It's one of the two days of the year -- the other being the fall equinox -- when day and night are roughly equal in length around the globe.

We would note that "meteorological spring" began March 1, the date used by meteorologists and climatologists to mark the beginning of the spring season.

However, to paraphrase Bob Dylan and Sam Cooke, we don't need a weatherman (or a calendar) to be aware that a change is coming. Our senses have alerted us for the past few weeks to the impending arrival of spring.

We can see the crocuses that have been emerging, providing a burst of color through the barren ground.

Every morning right around sunrise, we can hear the chorus of birds in the trees, loudly chirping and tweeting after their winter of silence.

On clear days, the sun feels warm and strong, especially if we are on the leeward side of a wall or other structure, protected from the still-chilly March wind.

And even in the city, there is an earthy smell we have known since childhood that instinctively informs our brains that there is a change in the seasons.

To be sure, Mother Nature most likely will have some wintry surprises left for us. This April 1 will mark the 25th anniversary of the April Fool's snowstorm of 1997 (we'll write about that next week).

But our senses have told us that Ol' Man Winter is done and spring is here.

What will we do if (when) Putin uses a nuclear weapon?

With the news that Putin's Russian army at best is facing a stalemate in Ukraine, the odds that Putin might use a so-called tactical nuclear weapon are increasing daily.

The thing about autocrats is this: Just when you think they've gone as far (or as low) as they can go, they cross a new threshold of evil.

We were both surprised and dismayed to read that Russia has nuclear weapons that only are about two percent as powerful as the atom bombs that the U.S. dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in WWII.

Both the Soviet Union and the U.S. have long-maintained nuclear arsenals with hydrogen bombs that are 2000-3000 times more powerful than the first A-bombs, but we were not aware that both sides also have developed these mini-nukes.

Indeed, Putin can look at our use of the A-bombs in WWII as an example of how to force an opponent into submission. Japan only surrendered after we used the bombs. With the Ukrainians defiantly resolved to fight to the last person, the use of a small nuclear weapon might be the only option left to Putin to win his war.

So what if Putin were to drop a small nuke over say, Kyiv?

What will be the response of NATO and the U.S.?

The world as we know it is being threatened -- and thereby controlled -- by a sociopath.

The civilized world can impose all of the economic sanctions it wants upon a despot, but in the final analysis, nukes are what matter, which is why the No. Koreans are trying to get them.

We can only speculate about the future path that the war in Ukraine will take us.

We are entering a deep, dark cave with no light at the end of the tunnel.

Hopefully, that light, when it comes, will not be the flash of a nuclear bomb.

OP-EDS

Utility bills, gasoline prices and Ukraine

By Dr. Glenn Mollette

Most of us simply want peace in our lives, nation and world. We enjoy resting in a warm or cool house, with something to eat, free from worry and stress. Peace is not always easy. This winter, chances are that your heating bill was chomping on your checking account and taking a huge bite out of your income. You may have turned your thermostat down and wore extra layers hoping to cut back on literally burning up your money.

People have reported gas and electric bills from \$500 to over a \$1,000 for one month of trying to stay comfortable in their homes.

While you are attempting to stay warm or cool, you are wondering if you can afford to start your car. Americans are seeing gas prices dance between \$4.00 and over \$6.00 for one gallon of gas. Filling up my old truck is pushing toward \$150 at a time. When my wife goes to the grocery store the same staples seem cost

more every time she goes.

The current inflation is not only expensive but is chipping away at our peace. Peace? It's hard to have peace if you go into cardiac arrest every time your utility bill arrives, you buy gasoline or go to the grocery store. If you are renting a place in America then you have a further burden as some Americans are paying over \$2,000 a month to rent a house. If they can find one to rent.

Russia has destroyed Ukraine and has become a major player in driving up our cost of living. We were already experiencing inflation but the entire planet is reacting to what Russia is doing to Ukraine. Do you remember when we heard the news that Osama Bin Laden had been shot by one of our seal teams? When and how will the murderous rein of Vladimir Putin end? We must hope and pray for an end to this evil.

Unfortunately, the world is a difficult place for peace. The

Bible assures us that in the last days there will be wars and rumors of wars. There will be pestilence, famine, and our hearts will fail us from fear. Thus, our peace must come from God who is greater than our problems. There is an internal strength and peace that comes when we focus our minds on Him. Currently millions of Ukrainians have nothing left but the shirts on their backs and whatever internal resolve and fortitude that is keeping them going.

Our peace in America is very unsettling but compare your situation to millions of Ukrainians today. Pray for them and let us all give thanks for what we have.

Glenn Mollette is the publisher of Newburgh Press, Liberty Torch and various other publishing imprints; a national columnist - American Issues and Common Sense opinions, analysis, stories and features appear each week in over 500 newspapers, websites and blogs across the United States.

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

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SIGNS OF SPRING



Above, Pine tree bristles gleam in the rain on Centre Street.



Left, Magnolias are beginning their spring awakening.

DEREK KOUYOUJIAN PHOTOS

The Arnold Arboretum is known for its wide variety of flora and natural life. With the recent rain, the buds are coming out.

CLASSIFIEDS

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Account Executive

65-year agency seeking account executive generalist with minimum 5 years insurance experience, working knowledge of commercial and personal lines, demonstrated analytical skills and ability complete tasks independently. Our business is approximately 50% commercial, 50% personal. Prefer full time but will consider part time for the right candidate. Salary commensurate with experience. Benefit package (full time). Candidates only please. Email resume, including references, c/o jeb@biggioinsurance.com, with subject line: Acct Exec.

Mammograms Save Lives.

All women over 40 should have a mammogram once a year. Breast cancer found early offers the best chance to be cured. Free or low cost mammograms are available.

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LEGAL NOTICES

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

Suffolk Probate
And Family Court
24 New Chardon St.
Boston, MA 02114
(617)788-8300

NOTICE OF PETITION FOR CHANGE OF NAME

Docket No.
SU21C0544CA
In the matter of:
Gabriel Richard
Louis Langfur
A Petition to Change Name of
Adult has been filed by Gabriel
Richard Louis Langfur of Jamaica
Plain, MA requesting that the court
enter a Decree changing their
name to:

Gabriel Rice
IMPORTANT NOTICE
Any person may appear for purposes of objecting to the petition by filing an appearance at: Suffolk Probate and Family Court before

10:00 a.m. on the return day of 04/11/2022. This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance if you object to this proceeding.
WITNESS, Hon. Brian J. Dunn, First Justice of this Court.
Date: March 14, 2022
Felix D. Arroyo,
Register of Probate

3/25/22
JP

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

Suffolk Probate
And Family Court
24 New Chardon
Street
Boston, MA 02114
(617)788-8300
CITATION ON
PETITION FOR
FORMAL
ADJUDICATION
Docket No.

SU22P0500EA
Estate of:
Nobel M.
Garcia
Date of Death:
11/18/2021
To all interested persons:
A Petition for Formal Probate of Will with Appointment of Personal Representative has been filed by Yvonne K. Torres of Attleboro, MA requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition. The Petitioner requests that: Yvonne K. Torres of Attleboro, MA be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve Without Surety on the bond in unsupervised administration.
IMPORTANT NOTICE
You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: 10:00 a.m. on the return day of 04/29/2022. This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a

written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty days (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.
UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE MASSACHUSETTS UNIFORM PROBATE CODE (MUPC)
A Personal Representative appointed under the MUPC in an unsupervised administration is not required to file an inventory or annual accounts with the Court. Persons interested in the estate are entitled to notice regarding the administration directly from the Personal Representative and may petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including the distribution of assets and expenses of administration.
WITNESS, Hon. Brian J. Dunn, First Justice of this Court.
Date: March 18, 2022
Felix D. Arroyo,
Register of Probate

3/25/22
JP



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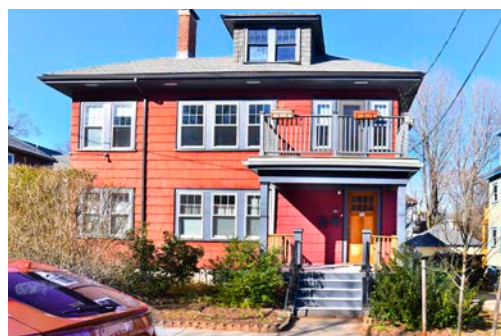
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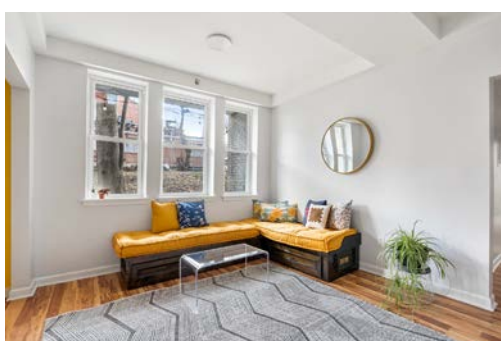
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