



FEBRUARY 23, 2023



THE BEACON HILL TIMES

T H E R E A R E N O T I M E S L I K E T H E S E T I M E S

CYNTHIA BARKER COX GUEST SPEAKER AT BEACON HILL WOMEN'S FORUM



Veterinarian, Cynthia Cox, presenting, "Gastrotomies to Gonads: Valentine's Day with a Veterinarian," on February 14 at the Hampshire House. See Page 7 for story and more photos.

USA Today names Esplanade among nation's Top 10 Best Riverwalks for '23

By Times staff

The Charles River Esplanade finished in eighth place in the category of Best Riverwalk in USA Today's latest 10Best Readers' Choice Travel Awards, according to the Esplanade Association.

Over the course of four weeks, votes were tallied for the 20 nominees in the Best Riverwalk category, which were chosen by an expert panel from the newspaper.

"The Esplanade allows visitors to enjoy the natural, picturesque beauty of the Charles River while being only blocks away from the heart of historic Boston," according to the Esplanade Association's press release announcing the news. "Visitors can forget the hustle and bustle of the city as they stroll around the lagoons and watch the sailboats along the river. This Boston riverwalk provides opportunities for individuals to engage with the outdoors whether it is a causal walk, playing on the playgrounds,

attending an event, or relaxing with a picnic."

Moreover, the press release reads: "The Esplanade Association (EA) is proud that the Charles River Esplanade was voted among the top 10 riverwalks for the second year. EA is excited to continue the enhancement, revitalization, and maintenance of Boston's iconic riverwalk park. The team looks forward to a year filled with robust programming, outdoor events, and more. The park will continue to promote outdoor fitness and health with the year-round free fitness series as well as plan for major projects like the Charlesbank Landing building, Pathway Safety and Improvement Plan, Gronk Playground, and much more."

Visit <https://www.10best.com/awards/travel/best-riverwalk-2023/> to see USA's list of the country's 10 best riverwalks for '23.

Duckling Day event set to return on Sunday, May 14

By Dan Murphy

Continuing a beloved annual Mother's Day tradition of more than 30 years, the Friends of the Public Garden will again partner with the Boston Parks Department for the Duckling Day event on

Sunday, May 14, from 10 a.m. to noon.

"We are delighted to be able to honor and celebrate our neighbors and families with this event that has become a true hallmark of springtime in Boston," said Liz

Vizza, president of the Friends of the Public Garden. "We hope this year's Duckling Day sparks a renewed sense of delight in all that's possible in our cherished outdoor spaces."

(DUCKLINGS Pg. 2)

Wu announces citywide outdoor dining program

Special to the Times

Mayor Michelle Wu announced the City of Boston's Permanent Outdoor Dining Program, in coordination with the Office of Economic Opportunity and Inclusion (OEOI), the Streets Cabinet, and the Disabilities Commission. The permanent program creates a predictable, streamlined process for business owners that will expedite

application review and allow for annual renewals. It incorporates the activation of public space enjoyed during the temporary program, but addresses issues such as barriers to accessibility and concerns from public safety officials. The application to participate in the permanent program will be made available later this month with the goal of restaurant patios opening as early as May 1.

The new program will include a monthly fee for all participants to help fund efforts to further expand outdoor dining more equitably across the City.

"Outdoor dining expanded as a way to keep our businesses open during the pandemic, and has turned into a popular opportunity to enjoy our streets and each

(DINING Pg. 2)

HILL HOUSE CELEBRATES VALENTINE'S DAY



COURTESY OF HILL HOUSE

Hill House held its Valentine's Day Party, featuring games, crafts, and a singalong, on Wednesday, Feb. 8, at the Firehouse on Mt. Vernon Street. See Page 3 for more photos.

DINING (from pg. 1)

other's company," said Mayor Michelle Wu. "The Permanent Outdoor Dining Program is a multi-departmental collaboration to reimagine our public space for the benefit of residents, business owners, and visitors. We've taken what we learned over the last couple years to inform the permanent program, and we're committed to working with our neighborhoods to make this program a success."

"The outdoor dining program served as a lifeline to many small businesses in the City to ensure that they could keep their doors open throughout the pandemic," said Segun Idowu, Chief of Economic Opportunity and Inclusion. "With the success of the program, I am excited for the program to continue to operate and to keep our neighborhoods vibrant moving forward."

Business owners will be able to apply via an online portal which will be open starting on February 23, 2023. Through this portal, businesses will be able to submit their applications, track application progress, and renew the Outdoor Dining Permit annually. The application to apply will be available here.

"We were so excited to hear about the return of outdoor dining. For us, as a small restaurant the pandemic forced us to get creative, and the outdoor dining program has been a critical component to our sustainability and

recovery. We saw changes in consumer behavior when we were forced to rethink the way we use public spaces," said Andy Fadous, co-owner of American Provisions & Gray's Hall. "With our two businesses on East Broadway & I Street in South Boston, we were able to provide an outdoor space for the community in both the morning and evenings, open longer hours and employ more staff."

The permanent program requires businesses to submit professionally engineered site plans for outdoor dining setups on the street and sidewalk to ensure all patios meet the requirements of the state building code. The COVID-19 temporary program allowed for hand-drawn site plans and portable ramps under a temporary variance from the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board (MAAB). The City has prepared multiple sample templates, which have been informed by the Disabilities Commission and approved by the MAAB for permanent use. The City has designated a staff member to help restaurant owners with technical assistance on engineering plans.

"With spring around the corner, we're very excited for the return of the city's outdoor dining program here in Allston," said Alex Cornacchini, the Executive Director of Allston Village Main Streets. "The last few years have shown that our restaurants have benefited from

the added seating capacity, residents have benefited from the safer seating options during COVID, and the whole neighborhood has benefited from the added vibrancy these pop up patios produce."

In 2020, the Outdoor Dining Pilot Program was created under temporary state legislation as a business relief response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Prior to any of the temporary outdoor dining programs, fees were collected for the City's Sidewalk Cafe Program, which predated the pandemic.

Going forward, all approved businesses participating in outdoor dining will be required to pay \$399 per month if they have a liquor license and \$199 per month if they do not. Fees will go toward technical assistance for hiring architects to draft site plans, with the goal of expanding the program to businesses that would not otherwise be able to participate.

The City will not be permitting on-street outdoor dining in the North End this year. Restaurants in the neighborhood with adequate sidewalk width will be eligible to apply for outdoor dining if their proposal complies with accessibility and licensing requirements. Restaurants with privately owned spaces seeking to have outdoor dining patios are encouraged to apply through the Inspectional Services Department.

The scheduled closures of the Sumner Tunnel and continued

congestion around the North Washington Street Bridge construction project are expected to put a greater strain on North End traffic this summer and make it harder for residents and first responders to navigate the area. With about 95 restaurants in just over a third of a square mile, the North End has the densest per capita number of restaurants in the state. This has brought unique challenges and quality of life issues expressed by residents over the course of the temporary programs, including increased traffic, sanitation issues, and accessibility problems for older residents and those with limited mobility. The City will be creating a task force to determine how these issues could be remedied in future iterations of the permanent program. This year, the City will buy back jersey barriers from North End restaurant owners and provide relief for costs related to storing these items.

The City previously held two Citywide meetings to brief business owners and residents on the permanent program and collect feedback. City officials have heard from residents throughout the temporary program and used neighborhood concerns to inform the permanent program. Restaurants applying for the program are encouraged to actively involve residents, community members, and civic groups to discuss future plans for outdoor dining patios on any

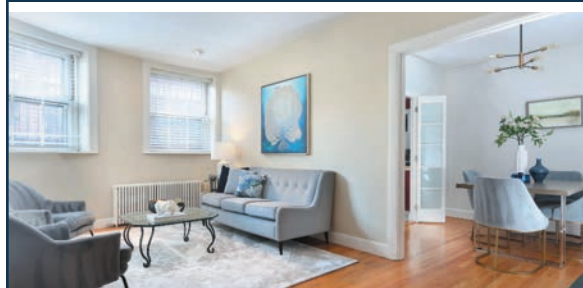
public space. Residents and community members can share their comments regarding restaurants applying to the program to the dedicated outdoor dining email address (outdoordining@boston.gov) before the business's Boston Licensing Board hearing date. Residents and community members with feedback are also encouraged to attend the scheduled Boston Licensing Board hearing.

The Permanent Outdoor Dining Program builds off of Mayor Wu's commitment to reimagine how Boston streets work for residents and visitors and how reconfiguring public spaces can foster community. In January, the Boston Planning & Development Agency (BPDA) announced findings from the Copley Connect pilot in summer of 2022. Following the success of the pilot, transportation planners with the BPDA and BTM intend to study permanent improvements to Dartmouth Street between the Boston Public Library and Copley Square Park that would improve the public realm between three of Boston's most iconic civic spaces and formally unify Copley Square. Additionally, the Boston Transportation Department will be announcing more Open Streets events in the coming months following the success of last year's events creating more than a mile of car-free space in Jamaica Plain, Roxbury, and Dorchester.



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DUCKLINGS (from pg. 1)

Every year, hundreds of participating children, dressed as their favorite characters from Robert McCloskey's classic children's book, "Make Way for Ducklings," join the parade led by the Harvard Marching Band. The parade route begins on the Boston Common at the Parkman Bandstand and ends in the Public Garden near the Make Way for Ducklings sculpture.

While Nancy Schön, who created the iconic Ducklings sculpture won't be on hand for the event, she said, "I think that it's wonderful that children of all ages dress up for Duckling Day, and that they're honoring their mothers while at the same time honoring Mrs. Mallard and her babies."

Playtime on the Common will take place ahead of the parade and include Interactive Circus Games with Esh Circus Arts; Jenny the Juggler; Peter O'Malley, magician; Jump, climb, and play with Knucklebones; a chance to meet the giant Duck; a visit with

the Harvard University Band; a "Make Way for Ducklings" reading station; and a goody bag for every kid filled with Duckling Day-themed items.

"All families are welcome to decorate their wagons or strollers, bring a picnic, and enjoy springtime in Boston's most beloved parks," according to the Friends.

Participants are strongly encouraged to be vaccinated and boosted if they are eligible. For the safety of our most vulnerable attendees, all event staff and volunteers have been vaccinated against COVID-19.

The registration fee is \$35 per family in advance (before May 12) and \$40 per family the day of the event. Each child who registers will receive a special goody bag. Register at <https://friendsofthepublicgarden.org/2022/12/01/ducklingday2023/>.

For more information on Duckling Day, visit <https://friendsofthepublicgarden.org/events/duckling-day/>.

PLEASE VISIT WWW.BEACONHILLTIMES.COM

Hayden announces recent appointments to leadership team

Suffolk District Attorney Kevin Hayden today announced several appointments to his leadership team as he shapes the direction of the office for his four-year term. The appointments include:

- **Byron Knight, Second Assistant District Attorney**—Byron has been in private practice specializing in criminal defense since 2015. Prior to that he served deputy legal counsel in the office of the governor’s legal counsel and held numerous prosecutor and investigator positions in the Suffolk district attorney’s office and Massachusetts attorney general’s office.

- **Maria Romero, Chief Legal Counsel**—Maria has served as assistant general counsel in the Suffolk sheriff’s office since 2001.

Maria began her career in the Suffolk district attorney’s office, first in Dorchester district court and then on the general felony team and the narcotics and asset forfeiture unit.

- **Joseph Janezic, III, Chief, Crime Strategies Bureau**—Joseph has led the gang and community prosecutions unit in the Plymouth district attorney’s office since 2016. Prior to that he served as deputy chief and then chief of the Suffolk DA gang and Safe Neighborhood Initiative units and as an assistant attorney general.

- **Jennifer Zalnasky, Chief, Integrity Review Bureau**—Jennifer has been chief of the appeals unit in the Berkshire district attorney’s office since early 2021. She served

as an assistant attorney general from 2014 to 2021 in the criminal bureau-appeals division and from 2008 to 2014 as assistant general counsel for the Sex Offender Registry Board. Prior to her state service Jennifer spent seven years in private practice.

- **David McGowan, Chief, Appeals Unit**—David began his career in the Suffolk district attorney’s appeal unit in 2007 and subsequently served in the major felony bureau, narcotics and asset forfeiture unit, domestic violence and sexual assault unit and senior trial unit, and homicide unit. He has also served as chief of arson and fire investigations since 2013.

- **Marc Tohme, Chief of Municipal and District Courts**—Marc

has served as deputy chief of district courts since January 2020 and has been acting chief since December 2022. Marc started his career in 2013 as an assistant district attorney in Dorchester BMC and also served on the gang unit.

- **Linda Champion, Municipal and District Court Legal Counsel**—Linda has served as assistant general counsel for the Massachusetts Department of Industrial Accidents since 2013. She worked as a superior court and district court assistant district attorney in the Suffolk district attorney’s office from 2011 to 2013 and has extensive private practice experience.

- **Tracy Litthcut, Special Advisor, Youth Initiatives and DEI**—Tracy has over 20 years of public

sector experience with the Boston mayor’s office and other organizations in policy development, coalition building, proposal writing, violence prevention programming and family/youth engagement.

“I’m extremely fortunate to have such an accomplished group of professionals helping me to achieve the many objectives I have for the office, including greater community engagement, continued emphasis on firearm crimes and juvenile and young adult alternative resolution initiatives, data-based prevention and intervention strategies, and conviction and sentencing integrity,” Hayden said.

HILL HOUSE CELEBRATES VALENTINE’S DAY

Local families shown at Hill House's Valentine's Day Party, featuring games, crafts, and a singalong, on Wednesday, Feb. 8, at the Firehouse on Mt. Vernon Street.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF HILL HOUSE



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EDITORIAL

JIMMY CARTER:

A WONDERFUL, AMAZING MAN

The reports that former President Jimmy Carter has returned home for hospice care came as sad news for all Americans this week.

Ever since the self-described peanut farmer burst onto the national scene shortly after he was elected governor of Georgia, it is not an overstatement to say that Jimmy Carter served as the conscience of America for the past half century.

Jimmy Carter served four years as president from 1977-81. But that term of office was just a small mark left by this wonderful man during his decades of service to our country and the world.

He became the face of Habitat for Humanity, the organization that builds housing for low-income persons. He served as an official who oversaw numerous elections in foreign countries to ensure that they were run honestly and above-board. He also undertook a campaign to eradicate the Guinea worm, a human parasitic infection that plagued 3.5 million people across the globe annually 40 years ago, but thanks to the efforts of the Jimmy Carter Center, there were just 13 reported cases world-wide in 2022.

For his many years of service to the world, Carter was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2002 "for his decades of untiring effort to find peaceful solutions to international conflicts, to advance democracy and human rights, and to promote economic and social development."

It is fair to say that no former American president had as great an impact on the world after he left office than Jimmy Carter -- it's not even close.

But the most remarkable aspect of Jimmy Carter's life has been his incredible humility, which no doubt was informed by his faith as a Christian minister in his small hometown church in Plains, Georgia, where he gave a sermon every Sunday.

It often is a cliché to say that someone will be missed. But in the case of our former President, Jimmy Carter, a man who spoke the truth -- even if America did not want to hear it (such as when he said in 1979 that America must end its dependence on fossil fuels) -- his absence truly will be a great loss for all of us.

The Independent Newspaper Group reserves the right to edit letters for space and clarity. We regret that we cannot publish unsigned letters. Please include your street and telephone number with your submission. The Independent Newspaper Group publishes columns, viewpoints and letters to the editor as a forum for readers to express their opinions and to encourage debate. Please note that the opinions expressed are not necessarily those of The Independent Newspaper Group. Text or attachments emailed to editor@reverejournal.com are preferred.

GUEST OP-ED

Start solving the vocational admissions problem: Improve access, create more seats

By Steven C. Sharek

It's no longer a secret that Massachusetts vocational-technical and agricultural high schools are a great option for students of all backgrounds who want to learn a trade and pursue a career. Unfortunately, there simply isn't enough space in these schools to accommodate the huge demand.

Right now, there are roughly 55,000 students in Chapter 74 state-approved vocational-technical and agricultural programs, with another 6,000 students on wait lists. At the same time, business and industry are crying out for skilled workers.

We can be proud of these schools. They excel in academic performance, graduation rates, and expanded programming that includes fields like environmental science; information technology; and medical, health, and dental assisting. Students excel because they enjoy the engaging, hands-on learning.

We are at a tipping point. With this lack of available seats and strong demand for vocational education, advocates, elected officials, and editorial writers are understandably concerned about whether students are being admitted equitably into our schools. Vocational school leaders are, too.

The current debate is centered on admissions policies and whether the adoption of a lottery system is the silver bullet for fixing any inequities, real or perceived. The reality is that a lottery does nothing to address the lack of capacity and it does not guarantee desired enrollment outcomes.

As educators, we'd like to offer enrollment to everyone. We

simply can't. We don't have the space. No lottery will ever change that. A lottery will just rearrange who sits in the seats, with 6,000 kids still on the outside looking in. With that in mind, we are working hard to conduct our admissions processes as fairly and equitably as possible:

-Since admissions regulations were revised by the state in 2021, 97% of vocational-technical and agricultural high schools have made changes in their admissions policies, personnel, or training. Clearly, our schools are serious about this effort.

-Grades are now less of a factor. Many schools now give equal consideration for grades of C or above, unlike before when student grades were more heavily emphasized.

-Disciplinary issues are now less of a factor. Minor disciplinary issues are no longer factored into the admissions process.

-Most schools require a recommendation, typically from a guidance counselor, and a brief interview to gauge a student's interest in vocational education. We are training interviewers on eliminating bias and are providing supports and accommodations for those applying, including easier access to interviews and translation services.

-The admissions changes only took effect recently so we have limited data to gauge whether the changes we've made are making a real difference. One year of data doesn't make a trend. Moreover, our schools have no access to demographic information about the students who do not enroll. We need help from the state on this so we can make best-informed decisions.

-Finally, there's no guarantee that a lottery would actually help the protected groups of students that all of us want to help. In fact, simulations run by some of our schools have demonstrated that a lottery would yield exactly the opposite result. That is, a lottery would result in lower numbers of enrolled students in some protected groups (just as one school experimenting with a lottery recently discovered).

Vocational-technical schools are continuously striving to serve under-represented populations. Consider special education. Five of the 10 school districts in Massachusetts with the largest percentages of students with disabilities are vocational-technical and agricultural high schools.

While there is strong sentiment on the both sides of the lottery

(Op-Ed Pg. 5)

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Livingstone named House Chair of Joint Committee on Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities

By Dan Murphy

Rep. Jay Livingstone has been named the House Chair of the Joint Committee on Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities.

“I greatly appreciate the faith that Speaker Mariano has put in me by giving me this appointment,” said Rep. Livingstone, “and I look forward to working to improve the social safety net in Massachusetts.”

The Committee on Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities, according to the Massachusetts state legislature website, considers “all matters concerning child welfare, juvenile justice, public welfare, and children and adults with physical, developmental or intellectual disabilities” while overseeing the Departments of Children and Families, Developmental Services; Transitional



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OP-ED (from pg. 4)

debate, what all advocates of high quality vocational-technical education can agree on is this: The state can do more to help vocational schools and our potential students:

First, the state needs to make a massive capital investment in vocational school construction to create more seats. Second, our schools need unfettered access to our middle schools so we can

inform students, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, about the value of vocational education. Put another way, we need better access to reach the very students our detractors say are being excluded.

As demand for limited seats continues, we must work together to create opportunity and bright futures for all our high school students. Vocational-technical and

agricultural high schools in Massachusetts will continue to do their part.

Steven C. Sharek is Executive Director of the Massachusetts Association of Vocational Administrators, a professional association of educational leaders who administer and advocate for high-quality vocational-technical and agricultural education.

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Park Street School students celebrate science!

Special to the Times

On Wednesday and Thursday, February 15 and 16, 2023, Park Street School (PSS) Elementary School students (Kindergarten – Grade 6) presented engaging Science topics to parents, faculty and staff, peers and other PSS students during our dynamic 2022-2023 Science Fair exhibition.

Kindergarten, Grade 1, Grade 2 and Grade 3 Exhibits: Wednesday morning, February 15: 8:30-10:30 a.m.

From displaying handcrafted 3-D larger-than-life models of unusual insects from around the world in second grade to an engaging exploration of the Rainforest, its animals and their habitats, from creative, thought-provoking posters of vertebrate animals in third grade to a robust study of the solar system, its planets, and space travel in first grade, Park Street School's youngest students brought Science to life on Wednesday, February 15. Visitors were treated to quizzes by budding entomologists in second grade about insect facts, learned knowledge of the solar system through games and presentations by first grade experts and were guided through the Rainforest by local Kindergarten explorers, who shared the knowledge they have

acquired. "What Am I?" posters were on display for visitors to guess the vertebrates their third grade experts were describing. (And, yes, the students kept track of what guesses were made of their back-boned creatures!) QR codes on each desk led to visitors hearing a presentation by the third graders on what their animals were, and what their favorite things about them were.

Grades 4-6 Exhibits: Thursday morning, February 16: 8:00-8:30 a.m. and 9:30-10:00 a.m.

For Grades 5-6 on Thursday, February 16, students produced individual science experiments, and research papers, which were displayed and presented to parents and visitors. The topics investigated by Grade 5 and 6 students included questions such as, "Balance and Exercise: Do Specific Exercises Help Dancers Improve Their Weak Side Balance?"; "pH and Drinking Water: Does the pH of Water Influence Water's Taste?"; "I Love Ice Cream, But It Doesn't Love Me: A Study of the Ability of Probiotics to Reduce Symptoms of Lactose Intolerance"; "Softball Bats and Hitting Distance: Do Composite Bats Produce Greater Hit Distance?" and "Stealthy Aircraft: How Does Body Shape



Entomologist Vivienne in Grade 2 showcases her handcrafted bee! She and partner, Hudson, developed a tough quiz of facts for visitors to guess. True or False?



Sloths designed by Kindergarten-2 students hung out in the Rainforest, waiting for visitors to arrive!



Grade 3 student Lillian waits for a second grade friend to read all of the clues about her vertebrate animal and guess what it is from her "What Am I?" poster

Announcement and Presentation of Grade 5 and 6 Winners:

On Thursday afternoon, February 16 at 1:30 p.m., the names of the winners in Grades 5 and 6 were announced. These middle school students' individual projects were assessed by judges external to the school, prior to Thursday. The judges' scores were tallied to produce five awards, First Place through Fifth Place. The winners presented their five projects on stage to parents and

visitors. Interspersed between each of the winning presentations were innovative live advertising "commercials," written, designed and produced by fourth grade students based on their product testing. The awards were presented to the following students: First Place: Grade 6 Caleb Kim; Second Place: Grade 6 Claire Booker; Third Place: Reed Fullerton; Fourth Place: Kieran Tella; and Fifth Place: Emmeline Jabro. Congratulations to ALL our budding scientists!

Affect Light Reflectance?"

Grade 4 students presented work on product testing done in teams, researching and testing consumer household items such as cereal, hand soap, ice cream, and garbage bags. During the morning and afternoon exhibit times, all students were stationed at their exhibits, ready to engage and interact with parents, staff and faculty, peers and younger students.



First grader Alex shares the information he learned about the planet Neptune with his third grade sister who came to see his exhibit!



Kieran of Grade 5 was our Fourth Place winner with his topic, "Does Parachute Size Matter?" His love of parachutes led to a robust study of whether the size of a parachute effected its descent time.



Science Lead Mr. Loeffstedt listens to Kindergarten Rainforest explorers Samira and Lucy as they describe the planets in the Rainforest and how they grow.



Second place winner Claire describes her process of testing whether or not age affects reaction time to a parent. While her hypothesis proved to be incorrect, she has new ideas for next time!



From a love of dancing, Grade 5 student Sana explains her findings about what the best exercise to help improve balance on a dancer's weaker side, hoping to "pointe" dancers in the right direction.



Grade 6 student and first place winner Caleb presents his question "Is there a more environmentally friendly way to bottle different liquids than using plastic bottles?" to Park Street School parents and students.

CYNTHIA BARKER COX GUEST SPEAKER AT BEACON HILL WOMEN'S FORUM

Photos & Story by Marianne Salza

Cynthia Barker Cox progressed from studying Buddhism to organic chemistry on her journey to becoming an animal doctor. Now she works as a shelter veterinarian at MSPCA Animal Care and Adoption Center, in Jamaica Plain, which is recognized for its focus on infectious diseases, public health, forensic medicine, and surgery.

"MSPCA is your local, amazing organization. I've been there for 20 years. If you have animals that need specialized vet care, they have MRIs, cardiologists, and neurologists," explained Cox. "They also have an amazing animal shelter that I was the first medical doctor for."

Cox presented, "From Gastrotomies to Gonads: Valentine's Day with a Veterinarian," during the February 14 Beacon Hill Women's Forum (BHWF) at the Hampshire House, where she encouraged listeners to adopt if they wish to make an addition to their furry families.

"Valentine's Day is a great time for this talk because I think it's an appropriate day to talk about



Courtney Jones and Erin Moore.

castration," opened Cox flatly, with an outburst of laughter from members.

Cox boasted about her "obscenely fast" gonadectomy skills while wearing one of her favorite birthday presents: prosthetic, testicle earrings.

"Shelter numbers are down because we've spayed and neutered so many that we don't get as many shelter animal intakes," said Cox. "We're able to offer more low-cost public services to people who are low-income. I strongly believe that access to pet care is social justice. Animals give a lot of



Co-Membership Directors Sarah Hidey and Lisa Purcell, Jayne Damesek, public relations, Cynthia Kelly, and Julia Morse.

love and stability to people. I see the difference they make in hard lives."

Cox also conducts frequent gastrotomy procedures, surgically

(BHWF Pg. 12)



Janine Jay, treasurer, and Jackie Knapp, vice president.



B Nutritious Owner Monaz Shaikh, Neighborhood Narrative speaker.



Founder Lisa Macalaster and her husband, Spencer



Hannah Schur, Katherine Kennedy, Connections Co-Director Richelle Gewertz, Lisa Rosser, and Christy Milner.



Co-President Wendy Oleksiak, Cynthia Cox, and Co-Programs Director Cindy Sullivan.

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Proposed closing of portion of Dartmouth Street raises questions and concerns

By Dan Murphy

With the city authorizing further study on the permanent closure of a section of Dartmouth Street near the Copley Branch of the Boston Public Library to vehicular traffic, the question remains about what this would ultimately mean for the future of traffic in the neighborhood.

Between June 7 and 17 of last year, the Boston Planning & Development Agency and the Boston Transportation Department engaged in their Copley Connect pilot, which shut down access of Dartmouth Street between Boylston Street and St. James Avenue to motor vehicles to create expanded pedestrian space.

“For the first time, Copley Connect unified two of

Boston’s most iconic civic spaces—Copley Square and the Boston Public Library McKim Building Plaza—into a grand civic space, bookended by Boston Public Library’s McKim Building to the west and H.H. Richardson’s Trinity Church to the east,” according to a BPDA board of directors memo dated Jan. 19 of this year. “This new public space maintained the existing bike lane and featured café seating, food trucks, performances, block parties, outdoor yoga, dance lessons, and programming for library activities.”

At its Jan. 19 monthly hearing, the BPDA board of directors voted to authorize a request for proposals (RFP) to engage a consultant design firm for a one-year term for an amount not to exceed \$100,000 to assist the city in the preparation of the “Copley Connect Design Services planning study.”

The RFP will allow for the hiring of a consultant to build on the



COURTESY OF THE CITY OF BOSTON

A car-free section of Dartmouth Street between St. James Avenue and Boylston Street is seen last June during the city’s Copley Connect pilot.

pilot program by developing a range of possible design alternatives for future use of the street. BPDA staff is currently refining the language in the RFP, which will be shaped by conversations the city’s Transportation Department is having with stakeholders in the neighborhood.

“The pilot found that the vast majority of those who completed surveys had very positive opinions of Dartmouth Street being made a permanent car-free space, and a majority of respondents were highly likely to visit more often with such a change,” according to a the BPDA’s Jan. 19 board memo. “An analysis of motor vehicle routes in the area found that travel times during the pilot were generally comparable to pre-pilot travel times. Motor vehicle traffic decreased substantially north of the pilot block on Dartmouth Street, which made for more comfortable walking and biking conditions.”

This matter was among the topics discussed at the Neighborhood Association of the Back Bay’s board of directors meeting on Wednesday, Feb. 15, at the French

Library, according to Elliott Laffer, chair of the NABB board.

Ted Schwartzberg, a senior planner with the Boston Planning & Development Agency, and Jacob Wessel, the city’s public realm developer, made a presentation on the city initiative.

Also on hand for the meeting were Rep. Jay Livingstone, City Council President Ed Flynn, City Councilor Kenize Bok, and Tiffany Chu, Mayor Michelle Wu’s chief of staff.

“It was an interesting discussion, and there was a lot of unanimous concern expressed by the NABB folks in the room and elected officials on the impact of closing the street,” said Laffer. “We certainly appreciate the city coming to talk to us and appreciate the elected officials and the representatives of elected officials coming to the meeting. We hope that this increases the understanding of what the severe negative impact of closing that block would have on the traffic network in and around the Back Bay.”

Despite published reports to the contrary, Laffer said city representatives on hand for the meet-

ing maintained that “nothing is baked” concerning the proposed permanent street closure.

“The study is designed to find out what the impacts will be,” he said.

As Laffer sees it, though, the impact of closing Dartmouth Street is already evident.

“The real impact isn’t what happens on Dartmouth Street but what happens to the network,” he said. “Berkeley Street is really the key to the whole thing.”

While on average, the closure wouldn’t have much impact on Berkeley Street traffic, the problem, Laffer believes, is when it does have an impact during times of heavy traffic, the effect would be severe.

“And Berkeley Street gets pretty messed up to begin with,” he added.

There are only five ways to drive from south of Stuart Street and Huntington Avenue to the heart of the Back Bay, said Laffer, including Berkeley Street, which is already “very congested”; Dartmouth Street, which would be cut off per the plan; Ring Road, a private street that provides very limited access between Huntington Avenue and Boylston Street; the combination of Belvidere and Dalton streets, which is “a very long route around and a very narrow street”; and Massachusetts Avenue, which, he said, is a long way from Dartmouth Street.

“To take out the essential connector, it’s almost inevitable that those who can’t use Dartmouth Street will use Berkeley Street,” said Laffer. “Berkeley runs so close to capacity, if anything blocks it off – if a car double-parks, if a repair needs to be made in the road, anything like that – traffic backs up from that point to the South End really quickly because the road is so close to capacity.”

The key intersection at Berkeley and Beacon streets, which carries traffic to Storrow Drive and also from Beacon and Charles streets and the rest of Beacon Hill, would get even more backed up that it already does, Laffer predicts.

“This is a very challenging intersection all the time for cars, bikes, and pedestrians,” he said. “It’s

dangerous and frequently congested on a not particularly terrible day from Comm Ave to Beacon, and on a really bad day, for much longer than that. Frustrated people stop in the intersection on Commonwealth Ave and then Comm Ave gets back up is a very frequent occurrence.”

Laffer added: “It’s a very important issue that impacts more than the Back Bay. It will impact anyone who gets off the Turnpike at Copley Square and isn’t going to the South End.”

Still, Laffer said there’s “a lot of acceptance” on finding a more visually appealing connector between Copley Square and the Copley library branch than the existing blackout.

Moreover, Laffer said it wouldn’t be “unreasonable” for the city to continue temporarily shutting down a portion of Dartmouth Street to accommodate special events on Boylston Street, such as the Boston Marathon or First Night.

But to close Dartmouth Street during regular commuter hours, Laffer said: “Nobody in the Back Bay or anyone else I’ve talked to think that closing the street would be an acceptable outcome.”

Like Laffer, who also pointed out that Copley Connect didn’t accurately reflect the normal year-round vehicular traffic patterns, since the study was conducted in June, as well as during the pandemic, Meg Mainzer-Cohen, president and executive director of the Back Bay Association, was in agreement on the need for a more comprehensive and protracted traffic study surrounding the initiative.

“We have asked the city about what they plan to study because the most important element... is that they do a deep-dive, Back Bay-wide traffic study of impacts this would have on all 12 months of the year,” said Mainzer-Cohen, who wasn’t on hand for the Feb. 15 NABB board meeting.

Mainzer-Cohen said the study would need to closely consider the fact that every business in the Back Bay needs to receive deliveries of some type.

(CONCERNS Pg. 11)



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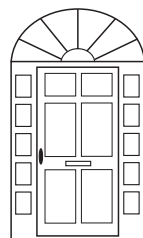
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Rep. Santiago named as First Cabinet-Level Veterans' Secretary

Special to the Times

Governor Maura T. Healey and Lieutenant Governor Kimberley Driscoll announced that they are appointing State Representative Jon Santiago to serve as Massachusetts' first ever Secretary of the Executive Office of Veterans' Services. Representative Santiago is a major in the U.S. Army Reserve, an emergency medicine physician at Boston Medical Center, a former volunteer in the Peace Corps, and has served as State Representative for the 9th Suffolk district since 2019.

In 2022, the Massachusetts Legislature passed An Act relative to the governance, structure and care of veterans at the Commonwealth's veterans' homes in response to the devastating tragedy at the Holyoke Soldiers' Home in 2020. The legislation made a number of key reforms, including creating the Executive Office of Veterans' Services to be led by the Secretary of Veterans' Services. Among the Secretary's responsibilities include serving as the ultimate appointing authority of the superintendents of the state's two veterans' homes. The secretariat will be established on March 1, 2023, which is when Rep. Santiago will be sworn in as Veterans' Services Secretary.

"Representative Santiago has dedicated his life to serving his country – whether that's volunteering for the Peace Corps in the Dominican Republic, working in the emergency room throughout COVID, being deployed overseas with the U.S. Army Reserve, or advocating for increased access to housing, public transportation and substance use disorder treatment in the State House," said Governor Healey. "His public health expertise and military service make him uniquely qualified to serve as Massachusetts' first ever Secretary of Veterans' Services. I'm confident that he will be the leader our veterans need and deserve and will always stand up for their health, safety and wellbeing."

"As the daughter of a Navy veteran, I'm so proud that Massachusetts is taking this critical step to ensure that our veterans are well cared for and prioritized by creating the Executive Office of Veterans' Services," said Lieutenant Governor Driscoll. "I'm grateful to the veterans, legislators and advocates who worked so hard to see this through – and I'm grateful to Representative Santiago for stepping up to take on this enormous responsibility. I know our veterans will be in good hands under his leadership."



COURTESY OF THE MASSACHUSETTS STATE LEGISLATURE

Jon Santiago appointed the Secretary of the Executive Office of Veterans' Services.

"I'm honored that Governor Healey and Lieutenant Governor Driscoll have placed their trust in me to assume this historic position," said Representative Santiago. "Our veterans deserve the absolute highest quality of care, but they are far too often underserved. The Healey-Driscoll Administration is committed to meeting the complex needs of those who have bravely served our country, and I look forward to the opportunity to continue my own service as Secretary of Veterans' Services."

Jon Santiago was born in Puerto Rico and received his undergraduate degrees in biology and religious studies from the University of Texas at Austin. After college, he volunteered for the Peace Corps where he organized sugarcane workers and communities in the Dominican Republic, and later was a Fulbright Scholar in Paris. He completed a Master of Public Health from the University of Washington at Seattle after returning from abroad. A graduate of Yale School of Medicine, he now works as an emergency medicine physician at Boston Medical Center, the city's safety net hospital. He also serves as a major in the U.S. Army Reserve and has been deployed overseas twice.

In 2018, he was elected State Representative for the 9th Suffolk District located in Boston. During his time in the Legislature, he advocated to increase funding and services to address the substance use epidemic, affordable housing, and tackle health disparities. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, Representative Santiago doubled his hours in the emergency room and served as a member of the House of Representatives COVID-19 Working Group and Vice-Chair of the COVID-19 and Emergency Preparedness & Management to advise policymaking and ensure

state government accountability.

He lives in the South End with his wife Alexandra and son Rafael.

The Veterans' Services Secretary will work closely with the newly constituted Veterans' Homes Council, which was also established by legislation. The Council's responsibilities include recommending improvements and policies for veterans' homes to the Secretary of Veterans' Services, submitting recommendations for appointments and removal of Veterans' Homes Superintendents, and developing an annual report reviewing the Veterans' Homes' demographics, finances, staffing levels, efficacy, equity, and resident well-being. Governor Healey and Acting Health and Human Services Secretary Mary Beckman announced their appointments to this council last week.

Statements of Support:

"Representative Santiago's service to his country, as a healthcare professional, and in the House of Representatives makes him uniquely qualified to serve in this new position. I want to thank Representative Santiago for his hard work during his time in the House, and I wish him all the best going forward." -House Speaker Ronald J. Mariano (D-Quincy)

"The Healey-Driscoll administration should be commended for moving quickly to elevate Veterans' Services as a stand alone agency with direct report to the Governor. We congratulate them for selecting Jon Santiago as its new leader. Rep. Santiago is an Army veteran, dedicated legislator and an accomplished medical physician. He has demonstrated a strong commitment to our Country and Commonwealth and his leadership and compassion for helping those in need is unquestioned. The Disabled American Veterans look forward to working with him to serve and support our veterans and their families. DAV also wishes to thank current Secretary Cheryl Poppe for her many years of service and dedication during very challenging times and we know our veterans will continue to be well served by Secretary Santiago." -Coleman Nee, former Massachusetts Secretary of Veterans' Services (2011-2015) and National Line Officer for Disabled American Veterans.

"Representative Santiago's medical background will be a significant asset to the role of Veterans' Services Secretary, as he has firsthand knowledge of what it takes to meet veterans' complex health needs. I'm confident that he will always put the health and wellbeing of our veterans first." -Dr. Thea James, Vice President

of Mission, Associate Chief Medical Officer, Associate Professor of Emergency Medicine, and Director of the Violence Intervention Advocacy Program at Boston Medical Center

"Representative Santiago has been a strong, effective representative for our South End district, as well as for the Latino community throughout his career, and I'm excited to see him take on this important role in the Healey-Driscoll Administration. He will bring empathy, integrity and expertise to the job, and our vet-

erans and Commonwealth will benefit enormously from his leadership." -Vanessa Calderón-Rosado, CEO of Inquilinos Boricuas in Acción

"Representative Santiago has been a champion of equity throughout his career, and he will bring compassion and expertise to this new role. We can count on him to make sure veterans are receiving the care they need and deserve, especially veterans of color." -Tony Molina, President of the Puerto Rican Veterans Association of Massachusetts.

CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

North Washington Street Bridge construction look-ahead through March 4

This is a brief overview of construction operations and impacts for the North Washington Street Bridge Replacement Project. MassDOT will provide additional notices as needed for high-impact work and changes to traffic configurations beyond those described below.

Scheduled Work

- Installation of tub girders and structural steel
- Installation of bridge deck formwork
- Installation of sidewalk steel and formwork
- Installation of electrical utility conduits on bridge structure
- Installation of gas and water utilities on bridge structure

Work Hours

- Most work will be done during weekday daytime hours (6:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.)

Contraflow Pilot

- The MassDOT-implemented contraflow pilot will continue to be in effect during evening peak traffic (3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.), Monday through Friday.

- Police details, lane markings, temporary barriers, traffic cones, signage, and other tools will be used to control traffic during set up and operation of the contraflow.

Travel Tips

For everyone using the temporary bridge, please help share the space: walk to the right, walk bikes, and be mindful of people coming from both directions, if walking in a large group.

Drivers should take care to pay attention to all signage and move carefully through the work zone. Police details, lane markings, tem-

porary barriers, traffic cones, signage, and other tools will be used to control traffic and create safe work zones.

The Tudor Wharf Walkway (under the bridge next to the water in Paul Revere Park) will be intermittently closed for safety during construction operations, with access provided via the Water Street underpass. The Boston Harborwalk under the bridge and eastern/harborside bridge sidewalk remain closed until rebuilt.

The contractor is coordinating with the TD Garden and local police to provide awareness and manage traffic impacts during events. For your awareness, the following TD Garden events are scheduled during this look-ahead period:

- BRUINS: March 2 at 7:00 p.m., and March 4 at 1:00 p.m.
- CELTICS: March 1 at 7:30 p.m. and March 3 at 7:30 p.m.
- ALL OTHER EVENTS: Feb. 24 at 11:00 a.m., 3:00 p.m., and 7:00 p.m., Feb. 25 at 11:00 a.m., 3:00 p.m., and 7:00 p.m., Feb. 26 at 12:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m.

How can I find more information?

Stay up-to-date and informed by following the @MassDOT twitter account and Mass 511 for real-time updates, visiting the project website, or emailing us with any questions.

You can also sign up to receive project updates via email by clicking this link.

Project website: Mass.gov/north-washington-street-bridge-replacement

Project email: NorthWashingtonStreet@dot.state.ma.us

Real Estate Transfers

BUYER 1 BACK BAY	SELLER 1	ADDRESS	PRICE
Okcu, Burak	Geraghty, James A	259 Beacon St #72	\$810,000
Bfs1209 LLC	Chambers, Herbert G	220 Boylston St #1209	\$12,500,000
Stone Ark Nt	Hegenbart, Joseph J	776 Boylston St #E12E	\$2,800,000
Smith, Anthony H	Mallon, Elizabeth A	16 Exeter St #1	\$5,200,000
Gardner, Jordan	Mepani, Amol	199 Marlborough St #102	\$1,125,000
Gutierrez, Gloria M	Stagshorn Ventures LLC	305 Commonwealth Ave #2	\$8,400,000
Cuzzupoli, Joseph	Rinehimer Jr, Willard C	340 Commonwealth Ave #2	\$1,550,000
BEACON HILL			
Rens, Neil	Browne, Camellia	10 Bowdoin St #208	\$381,095
Luo, Andrew	Starlight Holdings LLC	2 Hawthorne Pl #7P	\$350,000
Robbie, Benjamin	Shanti Acquisition LLC	36 Temple St #40	\$765,000
BAY VILLAGE/SOUTH END/KENMORE			
Condon, Dennis	Bjb103 LLC	1 Charles St S #PH103	\$3,275,000
407122 Columbus Avenue Nt	Husain, Shaheen	219-223 Columbus Ave #704	\$1,765,000
48 Montgomery St Renaissa	Sherwood, Robert A	48 Montgomery St	\$2,025,000
Jacob Wirth Nt	Gemutlichkeit LLC	31-45 Stuart St	\$5,267,805
Jacob Wirth Nt	Gemutlichkeit LLC	33 Stuart St	\$5,267,805
Jacob Wirth Nt	Gemutlichkeit LLC	35 Stuart St	\$5,267,805
Jacob Wirth Nt	Gemutlichkeit LLC	37 Stuart St	\$5,267,805
Jacob Wirth Nt	Gemutlichkeit LLC	39 Stuart St	\$5,267,805
Bruce, Robert J	Columbus Condo LLC	565 Columbus Ave #1	\$1,175,000
Louie, Dana M	Columbus Condo LLC	567 Columbus Ave #2	\$1,062,500
Trustees Of Boston Univ	Rref li Kenmore Lessor I	11-19 Deerfield St	\$56,000,000
Trustees Of Boston Univ	Rref li Kenmore Lessor I	19 Deerfield St	\$56,000,000
Kessler, Andrew I	Carl M Geupel RET	21 Father Francis Gilday St #114	\$1,120,000
Wang, Hongmei	Zhang, Kristy J	465 Park Dr #6	\$392,000
Raghuram Ft	Leech, Paul	50-52 Rutland Sq #5	\$2,100,000
Wong, Brian C	Cooper, Todd	25 Saint Stephen St #2	\$585,000
Sukal, Marlon	Bogdanok, Anna	12 Stoneholm St #511	\$455,000
Comptdaer, Gabriela	Wilfong, Christopher M	663 Tremont St #1	\$880,000
Slan Abhaile Nt	Bennette Jr, James P	1313 Washington St #701	\$2,425,000
WATERFRONT/DOWNTOWN			
Macklin-Dib RET	Mp Mtb Units LLC	1 Franklin St #3403	\$4,750,000
Colburn, Virginia V	William M Lyons 2018 RET	165 Tremont St #702	\$1,749,000

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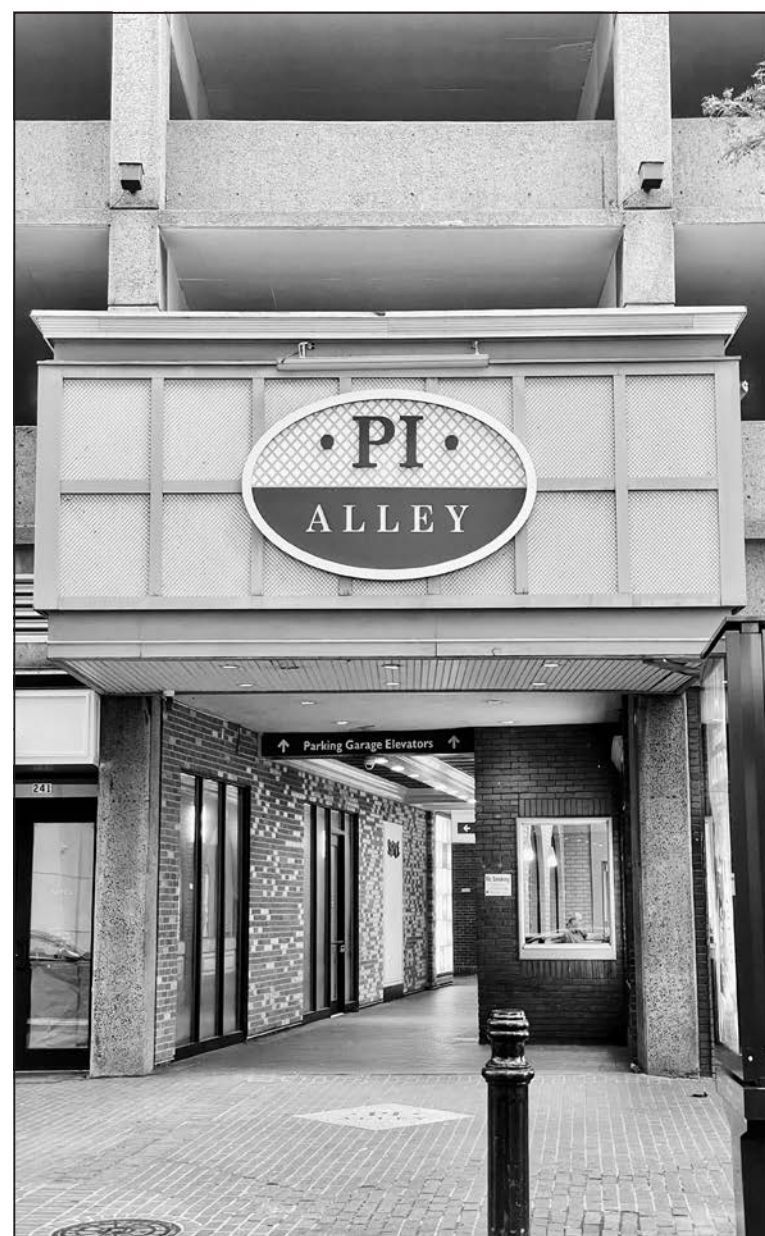
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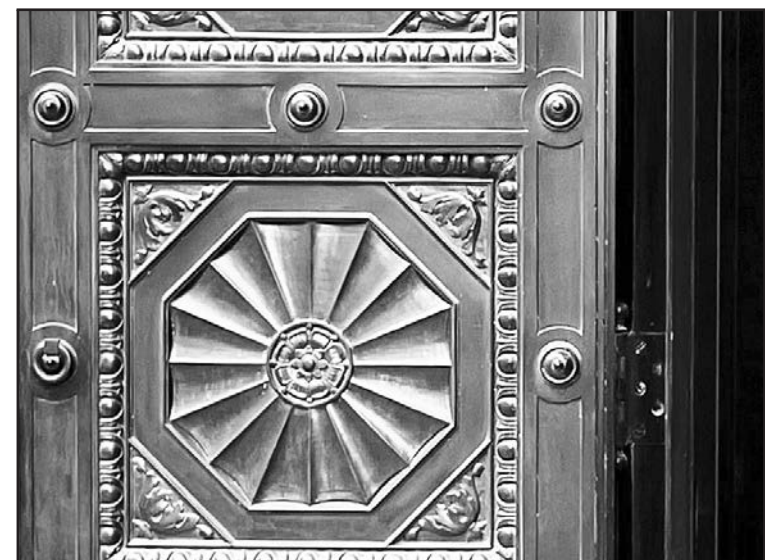
THIS WEEK'S ANSWER



The unusual brickwork in the last clue is near the Washington Street entrance to Pi Alley. Over the years, this tiny lane has been called Williams Court, Savage's Court, Peck's Arch, and Webster's Arch. In the past, the Bell in Hand Tavern, the Boston Herald, and Boston Police were located here.

Do you have a favorite building or detail you would like featured? Send an email to Penny@BostonZest.com with your suggestion.

THIS WEEK'S CLUE



CITY PAWS

Dogs at transition points

By Penny & Ed Cherubino

Throughout our lives, we encounter transition points, both positive and negative. We've noticed that these are often moments when people think about adding a dog to their lives. In each case, there are pros and cons you should consider.

Some common transition points are reaching a significant age; setting up your first home; moving in with someone else; getting married; becoming a parent; changing jobs; retiring; or losing an important person or animal.

Job Change

The transition to remote work during the pandemic made it possible for many people to add a dog to their lives. As some of these folks return to the office, they and their dogs must learn to live with that change.

A job change can also mean moving, longer hours, and more or less travel. These can impact your relationship with current animal

companions, and in some cases, may raise the possibility of adding an animal to your family.

Retirement

Leaving the world of work or moving to a semi-working status is a transition point that can have a massive impact on your lifestyle and your ability to make choices that can be good or bad for your mental and physical well-being.

Research has found that dogs positively impact the lives of people of retirement age. Patti Murphy, writing for www.travelawaits.com, said, "After I retired I noticed that I had a lot more free time and occasional boredom creeping in. Having a dog has helped fill some of that time and given me company on days when not much else is going on. We play, we walk, we do training, and I take him to visit family members who no longer have their pets and miss having a lively creature around."

Research has shown that dogs provide a reason to exercise and become part of a community.

These are important factors for heart health and cognitive function. Increased social interaction, companionship, daily routine, and the unconditional love of a dog can do wonders for our quality of life and mental health.

However, there are factors that must enter into your decision-making. Murphy suggests that retirees consider the size and strength of a dog who might pull on a walk and sometimes need a lift from you. She also recommends a more mature animal who might need less training and have less energy to burn off daily.

Moving to a New Home

Over the years, we've conducted home visits for various rescue groups. Quite a number of these were for young individuals or couples setting up their first home or home together.

One of the first questions in the adoption process is whether or not dogs are allowed in the building and under the lease. We gave a top approval rating to a couple from



Research has found that dogs positively impact the lives of people of retirement age. (Photo by Ave Calvar)

the Midwest who moved to Boston. They had leased a dog-friendly apartment, planned where they would walk a dog, and found a nearby veterinary hospital. Both were engaged in the adoption process and were enthusiastic about having a dog.

If you already have animals in your home when you relocate, let those critters get used to their new place before introducing an addi-

tional family member. Moving is stressful for our furry companions, just as it is for the humans in the family. It will be harder to give a new dog the time and peaceful atmosphere needed to transition to a new home and family.

Do you have a question or topic for City Paws? Send an email to Penny@BostonZest.com with your request.

CONCERNS (from pg. 8)

Additionally, Dartmouth Street, she said, is "the central vein to access Boylston and Newbury streets and the surrounding area."

If the plan is to permanently close Dartmouth Street between St. James Avenue and Boylston Street, it would effectively put a stranglehold on "the heart of the magnificently planned Back Bay street grid," she said, by forcing vehicles to go around the circumference of the neighborhood to get through its center.

"People end up going where they don't want to go to get to where they want to go, and they have to go out of their way to get there in most cases," Mainzer-Cohen added.

Like Laffer, Mainzer-Cohen agrees that there's an opportunity to perhaps add some transitional paving between Copley Square and the library, as well as an opportunity to look at the roadway capacity and the possibility of expanding the library plaza over one of the existing traffic lanes.

"We are also open to some short-term closing to accommodate community events," she added.

Mainzer-Cohen, however, expressed concern "that the city's promotional materials appear to depict what we hope is an inaccurate portrayal that [a portion of] Dartmouth Street will be permanent closed."

Rep. Livingstone said he can understand the city's desire to enhance the area, especially given the Boston Parks and Recreation Department's plan to update the design of Copley Square Park and the BPL's plan to rehabilitate the McKim Building, including the Dartmouth Street Plaza.

"I agree that if the city is spending so much money renovating Copley Square and the steps to the Boston Public Library, that the space in between them should made as beautiful as the other two spaces," he said.

And while Rep. Livingstone said he personally enjoyed the added pedestrian space in the area created via Copley Connect, he doesn't believe that it would adequately justify the permanent closure of that segment of Dartmouth Street.

"I had a great time with my family on Dartmouth Street when it was closed, but the games that my kids played and the activation that they the city did with the space could have been on Copley Square," he said. "I don't see the benefit of closing Dartmouth Street for many months of the year when no one is doing any outdoor activities. Closing Dartmouth Street so people can sit outside, especially in the winter, is not something anyone is going to benefit from."

As a resident of the Back Bay, Rep. Livingstone usually travels on foot, but on the rare occa-

sions when he does drive in the neighborhood, he said he's acutely aware of increased traffic volumes at Berkeley and Arlington streets for much of the day.

"And it doesn't take much to trigger a cascading traffic jam off those ripples," he added.

Construction in the road, a vehicle double-parked, or a car breaking down, he said, can cause "ripples throughout the area and remove part of the grid and only make those ripples significantly worse."

But Rep. Livingstone said he too wouldn't object to occasional closings on Dartmouth Street for special city events.

"Closing Dartmouth Street for occasional special events, as we currently do, I'm fine with," he said, "and I look forward to greater public discussion on what these occasional big events would look like."

Council President Flynn outlined his concerns with the Copley Connect plan, especially regarding its potential impact on public safety, in a letter dated Feb. 7 to Jascha Franklin-Hodge, the city's chief of streets, and Arthur Jemison, chief of planning for the BPDA.

"Dartmouth Street, along with Berkeley Street, are two of the main thoroughfares for residents traveling north from South End and St. Botolph into Back Bay," Council President Flynn wrote in

part. "Our first responder units - Boston Police Department D-4, Boston Emergency Medical Services headquarters, and two supporting arms of the Boston Fire Department at Bay Village (Engine 7 Ladder 17) and South End (Engine 22) - are all located south of Back Bay. Currently, in the event of an emergency, these units would utilize either Dartmouth Street or Berkeley Street."

Council President Flynn continued: "Permanently shutting down Dartmouth Street at Copley will not only increase traffic times at an already congested Berkeley Street, but also critical response times. With a significant number of residents, businesses, hotels, schools and colleges interwoven across Back Bay, it would not only be unwise but irresponsible from a public safety standpoint should there be an emergency in the area.

"Every second is critical when it comes to public safety," he wrote.

("Emergency vehicle access on Dartmouth Street will continue to be an important design consideration," according to the city.)

Over the past year, City Council President Flynn said he has received numerous calls, emails, and letters from nearby residents and businesses, as well as from NABB, expressing their concerns and opposition to Copley Connect.

"In the feedback I have received

from residents in the area, a consistent theme has emerged regarding transparency and concerns about the community process, with their position being that it has been completely bypassed with minimal neighborhood engagement," wrote Council President Flynn.

Meanwhile, Councilor Bok believes the biggest question ultimately comes down to what the area should look like.

"For me, the biggest question we need to collectively answer right now is actually not about regulation or closure, it's about how this space should look," she wrote. "At a time when we're redoing both Copley Square and the BPL front steps very soon, I think there's an obvious opportunity to put in some beautiful pavers and create that continuous European square visual, anchored by the architectural splendor of Trinity Church and the Central Library.

"As we know from Downtown Crossing, we can have special pavers in an area that cars, buses, and emergency vehicles still traverse, or that closes on Sundays or for special occasions. Even as I've heard major concerns from my Back Bay constituents about permanent closure, I've heard lots of enthusiasm for the beautification of that block, so I'm looking forward to zeroing in more on that aspect," added Councilor Bok.



Last year's garden club Soirée drew a few hundred neighbors and friends.

THE BEACON HILL GARDEN CLUB'S SOIRÉE IS SET FOR MARCH 17

The Beacon Hill Garden Club's Soirée co-chairs, Suzanne Eliastam and Sharon Malt, have announced that for the Sixth Annual Soirée, the party open to the public before the next day's Tour of the Hidden Gardens of Beacon Hill, have firmed up. The event features drinks, hors d'oeuvres and entertainment and will again be held in the King's Chapel Parish House's garden, reached from Branch Street. The date is Wednesday, May 17, from 5:00-7:30 p.m., rain or shine.

From 5 to 6 p.m. the club will offer attendees tours of three of the gardens that will be shown the

next day on the Tour of the Hidden Gardens.

Ticket prices are \$200 each for general admission. Soirée Supporter tickets are available at \$250 for those wanting to offer more support toward the garden club's philanthropic mission. The club will provide Soirée Supporters and Corporate Sponsors with special recognition at the event and through other promotional avenues. The Soirée ticket includes admittance to the tour itself on Thursday, May 18.

In non-pandemic years, proceeds from the Soirée and the Tour of the Hidden Gardens have

recently enabled the club to contribute more than \$100,000 to mostly local organizations that engage in worthy horticultural and environmental endeavors.

The Beacon Hill Garden Club is grateful to the sponsors of this event. Once again, the lead sponsor for the event is Fiduciary Trust. Other sponsors are Beacon Hill Books and Café, FH Perry Construction, LandVest and Upstairs Downstairs Antiques.

The Soirée is always sold out, and the co-chairs are certain that this year's party will give the 2023 tour a great send-off.

MWRA to temporarily shutdown fluoride system

Starting in late February, the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority will be replacing portions of the equipment that feeds fluoride into its drinking water. During this period, MWRA will not be adding fluoride to the water. This work is expected to take about three months to complete.

MWRA has worked closely with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health on this issue. While fluoride is important for dental health, health officials believe that this short-term shutdown will not pose any risk to

dental health and will not require any special action by consumers.

Fluoride has been added to the region's water since the 1970s. The US Centers for Disease Control recommends its usage for reducing tooth decay and promoting community public health. MWRA also consulted with the Department of Public Health Oral Health Office and the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, both of which approved this temporary fluoride shutdown.

MWRA treats drinking water from the Quabbin and Wachusett

Reservoirs at the John J. Carroll Treatment Plant in Marlborough. In addition to fluoride, water is treated with both ozone and ultraviolet light for disinfection, and the pH is adjusted to make the water less corrosive and less likely to leach lead from home plumbing.

If you have any concerns, check with your dental care provider. For more information on your drinking water, please visit www.mwra.com or call MWRA at 617-242-7283.

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removing an assortment of objects from animals' stomachs, such as a toy dinosaur, false teeth, yards of fabric, pacifiers, and coins.

"Animals will eat anything," Cox warned. "The worst thing they can eat is string – tinsel on Christmas trees, Easter basket grass, and yarn. It does awful things."

Cox grew up in Tennessee, and has been a vegetarian since she was a young teenager. At Northwestern University, in Chicago, she studied history of religions, specializing in South Asian theologies and languages. Cox attended a joint graduate program with Northwestern, The University of Chicago, and the University of Oxford, and studied in Sri Lanka for a year as a Fulbright Scholar.

"When I was in Sri Lanka, I was spending more time with animals and accumulating cats," remembered Cox. "I was more interested in that than my studying."

While teaching as an adjunct assistant instructor at Whitman College, in Walla Walla, Washington, Cox was translating a 13th century collection of folk tales from Pali, the Buddhist language, when she realized that her dissertation had already been written by someone else.

She then decided to become a veterinarian, and moved into a corrugated, steel shed on an organic farm. The summa cum laude,

Washington State University graduate now serves as the senior shelter veterinarian at MSPCA.

"Challenges can seem amusing in retrospect," chuckled Cox, who described the experience she had when holding the penis of a bull while her instructor carved a wart off of it.

Cox was one of the first diplomates of the American Board of Veterinary Practitioners for Shelter Medicine; and is a co-founder and former board member of the Association of Shelter Veterinarians, which provides veterinarians with resources to continue their education.

Cox implored listeners to be patient when admitting their pets into the emergency room, as there is a challenging shortage of veterinarians, as well as a high suicide rate among them.

"Part of that is because they're having to turn animals away because people can't pay, which feels awful," revealed Cox. "Social media has also not been good for humanity in a lot of ways. People get horrible reviews on social media. A lot of people in the veterinary profession are sensitive, nurturing, perfectionists, and it's difficult."

In her free time, Cox enjoys contra dancing, and surrendering to the will of her four cats: Sabine, Orca, Steve, and Little Grey Baby.



Founder Lisa Macalaster, Programs Director Cindy Sullivan, and Co-President Wendy Oleksiak.



Speaker, Cynthia Cox, speaking with her friend, Cristy Milner.

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