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FRIDAY, JANUARY 16, 2026

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



The 31st cohort of the Mayor's Youth Council includes 20 high school students from schools across Boston who will represent their peers in City government.

Wu and the OYEA announce Mayor's Youth Council cohort

Special to the Times

Mayor Michelle Wu and the Office of Youth Engagement and Advancement (OYEA) recently welcomed the 31st cohort of the Mayor's Youth Council (MYC). The 20 high school students in the new council cohort were inaugurated with a swearing-in ceremony hosted by the Mayor.

"For over 30 years, the May-

or's Youth Council has fostered a direct connection with our young community leaders, sharing ideas to make Boston a home for everyone," said Mayor Michelle Wu. "I am so proud to collaborate with this cohort of change-makers on the issues affecting Boston's young people."

The youth on the 2025-26 Council represent nine schools and 12 neighborhoods. They

were selected from a pool of 226 applicants for their leadership, civic engagement, and commitment to their communities. The 22 weeks of council year programming will be split into multiple phases; the council members will first plan and host four town halls this winter to identify

See YOUTH COUNCIL Page 6

Developer releases schedule and construction management plan for 27/29 Hancock St. project

By Dan Murphy

Representatives for the newly rebranded Fenway Forward (formerly Fenway CDC) were on hand for a virtual meeting on Tuesday, Jan. 6, to outline their schedule and construction management plan for a home-ownership project planned for 27/29 Hancock St.

Per its agreement with developer JDMD, Fenway Forward -

a nonprofit developer of affordable housing - is redeveloping two adjacent buildings located at 27/29 Hancock St., which are both currently zoned as lodging houses, into a total of 15 units at 80-100 percent AMI (Area Median Income) for new homeowners.

Construction is expected to take around approximately 12

See PROJECT Page 2



D. MURPHY PHOTO

Two adjacent properties at 27/29 Hancock St., which are poised to be redeveloped by the nonprofit, Fenway Forward, into a total of 15 affordable homeownership units.

BEACON HILL CIVIC ASSOCIATION COMMUNITY CORNER



The Charles Street Jail, circa 1851.

Bricks & Bubbles Buzz

Our Brick & Bubbles fundraiser at the Liberty Hotel is less than two months away!

Join us on March 5th at the Liberty Hotel for an elegant cocktail party to celebrate historic preservation in our neighborhood, and to raise funds for the BHCA to continue our efforts in community building, civic engagement, and historic preservation.

Thank you to our first corporate sponsors (with more to come!):

Plymouth Rock Assurance Group
 Reig & Losordo

See BHCA Page 6

EDITORIAL

REMEMBERING DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

For those of a certain age, it is hard to imagine that 2026 will mark 58 years since the assassination of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in Memphis while he was standing on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel on April 4, 1968. Recalling how we felt when he first heard the news of Dr. King's murder still brings chills and a deep sense of sadness that never has subsided.

For those who are too young to have been alive in that era of American history, there are a few things that everyone should know about Dr. King that should provide inspiration to all of us.

First, Dr. King was fearless. He knew from the inception of his rise to prominence of the Civil Rights movement that he would become a target for those who opposed change. Yet, even though he often told others that he believed his death would be imminent, he did not relent in his fight to continue his work in the civil rights movement.

Second, Dr. King stood for the rights of all Americans, not merely those of color. He was in Memphis because he was working with striking sanitation workers, whose pay and working conditions he was seeking to help improve. He also was an outspoken critic of the Vietnam War because he knew it to be an unjust war, not only for poor Americans who could not get a college deferment for the draft, but also for the people of Vietnam, whose homeland was being bombed into oblivion at great profit for the American military-industrial complex.

Third, Dr. King spoke forcefully about the economic inequality that existed in the 1960s -- and that has been exacerbated exponentially today -- making the attainment of the American Dream all but impossible except for a select few.

If Dr. King were alive today, there is no doubt that he would be in the forefront of the protests against the barbaric deportation program by the federal government.

Dr. King's words ring as true today as they did two generations ago. His "I Have A Dream" and "I've Been to the Mountaintop" speeches are among the most powerful orations not only in American history, but in all of Western civilization.

All of us should learn from the example set by Dr. King. His life was a testament to the idea that each of us has the power to change the world -- and that each of us has the capacity to inspire others, whether through our words or deeds, whether on a small or large scale, to make the world a better place. Many of our fellow citizens have followed the path set by Dr. King and many more will do so in the years ahead.

Dr. King often would say, "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice." Admittedly, that "bend" often has taken a less-than-direct path in recent years.

But as we celebrate Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day this Monday, let us recall not only his memory and the many things that he accomplished, but let us also resolve never to yield to the forces of intolerance, prejudice, and hate that continue to plague our country and the world today.

STILL TIME TO GET FLU SHOTS FOR YOURSELF AND YOUR CHILDREN

An estimated 7400 Americans already have died from the flu this season. Although most deaths occur among senior citizens, young children are the next most-vulnerable group.

The tragedy is that almost all of these deaths would have been preventable if those who died had received their flu shots.

It is not surprising that this flu season has seen more hospitalizations and deaths compared to last year. Fewer Americans have received a flu shot, even though a vaccination is the number one means by which Americans of all ages can receive protection from serious illness and death.

It is estimated that 90% of pediatric deaths -- four deaths have been reported in Mass. thus far this season -- occur in children who were unvaccinated.

This tragedy in our country is the inevitable result of the spread of misinformation about the safety and efficacy of vaccines. Instead of following medical guidance, those who do not get vaccinated instead are relying on social media and other, uninformed sources to guide their medical decisions.

So our advice to everyone who is unvaccinated simply is this: Stop listening to know-nothing social media feeds and get a vaccination ASAP -- it just might save your life or that of a loved one.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

A POOR JOB

To the Editor,
I read your opinion regarding Mayor Wu. While she has a great personal story, she has done a poor

job as Mayor.

Spending has increased every year of her first term. Real estate taxes have gone up dramatically. Values of real estate are down both

commercial and residential.

And traffic is worse. These are major issues for a mayor, and she has done a poor job

Tim Cook

PROJECT (from pg. 1)

months to complete, and to kick off this spring, pending finalization of the last piece of funding for the project, said Tim White of the Boston construction firm, J.L. Dunn & Company.

The traffic plan, developed by J.L. Dunn & Company, together with the Boston traffic engineering firm, Howard Stein Hudson, has been submitted to the Boston Transportation Department for approval, said White, and proposes the temporary removal of five parking spaces on the left-hand side of Hancock Street, directly across from the project site, for the duration of construction. Sidewalks in the immediate area of the impacted parking spaces are also expected to be closed at this time. (Hancock Street is a one-way street, with parking only on the left-hand side ascending from Cambridge Street, White noted.)

"There should be no shut-

ting down of Hancock Street during construction," said White, although one brief project phase will shut down the street for a few hours over the course of three days to allow for the installation of a new water main.

Work vehicles accessing the staging area created via the five repurposed parking spaces will go up Hancock Street, pass the site, and then back into the enclosure per the proposed traffic plan.

"We hope by establishing this [route], there will be no blocking of Hancock Street at any time," said White.

Barriers, comprising water-filled, semi-permanent jersey barriers and removable fencing, will be erected around the staging area to allow for unloading, as well as to accommodate a dumpster, which can then directly collect debris without disrupting traffic on the left-hand side of Hancock Street. This will also allow

the project to proceed without 'live loads' (i.e. variable, transient, non-permanent parts of a structure, such as movable parts or contents), said White.

Scaffolding will be in place to allow pedestrians to cross Hancock Street safely, added White, while netting will also cover the sidewalk staging during the spring, summer, and fall, with a white tarp over it during the winter months.

"People will be on site regularly to clean and maintain the sidewalk," said White.

JDMD, which developed The Archer Residences -- a luxury condo building on Temple Street -- purchased 27-29 Hancock St. in 2018, with plans to gift the buildings to another developer for the creation of off-site affordable housing units to satisfy its IDP (Inclusionary Development Policy) with the city for the Archer project.

THE BEACON HILL TIMES

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NEWSPAPER GROUP

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NEIGHBORHOOD ROUNDUP

COMING UP IN JANUARY AT THE WEST END MUSEUM

The West End Museum is continuing the new year with several public events in January.

On Jan. 17, spend your Saturday evening with a glass of wine and a paintbrush while taking a peep at images from Boston's vintage burlesque scene. Be inspired by vaudeville and burlesque show posters and let the wine flow. This event is 21 +.

Learn how urban renewal affected one small city in Pennsylvania with Lafayette College Professor Andrea Smith's talk on Jan. 21. Easton, PA's urban renewal project destroyed an integrated multi-ethnic neighborhood. See how a familiar story played out in an unfamiliar city.

Finally, the museum welcomes back its West End Museum book club. This month's pick is 'From Plotzk to Boston,' a story of one young immigrant's journey to the United States. On Jan. 27,

a discussion on Mary Antin's memoir will fill your mind. A limited number of paperback copies will be available to participants.

More information and links to purchase tickets can be found on the museum's website at www.westendmuseum.org/programs.

JANUARY EVENTS CONTINUE AT MGH BLUM CENTER

The Blum Patient and Family Learning Center (Blum Center) at Massachusetts General Hospital is hosting several educational and wellness sessions, which are free and take place at the Blum Center (MGH Main Campus, White 110), including Acupressure, Reiki, and Sound Therapy Healing Event on Tuesday, Jan. 20, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.; Understanding Dementia, with a Spotlight on Alzheimer's Disease on Monday, Jan. 26, from noon to 1 p.m.; Clarity & Connection: A Guided Mind-Body Experience for the New Year on

Wednesday, Jan. 28, from 5 to 6 p.m.

For more information, call the Blum Center at 617-724-7352.

COME PLAY MAH JONGG AT THE WEST END COMMUNITY CENTER

Whether you are a beginner or an experienced player, you are invited to join the friendly Mah Jongg group. Instructors will be available to help new players, and everyone is welcome. Come meet new people, socialize, and play the game.

The group meets on the first and third Wednesdays of each month from 1:30-3:30 p.m. at the West End Community (within the West End Neighborhood Center), 75 Blossom Court (entrance on Thoreau Path).

To sign up or for more information, email Audrey Tedeman (artedeman@gmail.com) or Sandy Connor (ssconnor46@gmail.com).

Healey announces safety reforms following release of the ALR Commission's final report

Special to the Times

Governor Maura Healey announced a comprehensive set of reforms to strengthen safety, transparency and consumer protections in assisted living residences (ALRs) across Massachusetts. This action follows the submission of the ALR Commission's final report to the Legislature, which outlines both regulatory and legislative solutions to improve the safety and well-being of residents.

The ALR Commission was established through the 2024 Act to Improve Quality and Oversight of Long-Term Care and undertook an extensive review of the ALR sector to ensure it continues to meet the needs of an aging population while prioritizing resident health and safety. The Commission was expected to file its final report on August 1, 2025. Following the tragic fire at Gabriel House in Fall River, Governor Healey signed into law an extension passed by the Legislature so that the Commission had additional time to incorporate lessons learned from the fire. The Commission voted unanimously by those in atten-

dance to approve its final report on January 12, 2026.

The Commission's recommendations aim to ensure ALRs continue to meet the evolving needs of older adults while significantly strengthening transparency and oversight, emergency preparedness, staffing, and consumer protections. The Commission met 16 times, held two public hearings, and incorporated direct feedback from residents, families, industry experts, and first responders. Key recommendations include:

Stronger Fire Safety & Emergency Preparedness Standards – enhance inspections and coordination with local fire departments to prevent future tragedies.

Transparent Public Data – create a new statewide online database to provide families with clear access to compliance records, ownership information, and corrective action plans.

Standardize Disclosures – standardize information on services, costs, staffing, and resident rights for easier comparison across ALRs.

Staffing & Nursing Leadership Requirements – ensure

every ALR has access to licensed nursing support and leadership training that matches resident needs.

Clear Assessment Practices – ensure consistent evaluations of resident needs with clear notice of any cost or care changes.

Affordability Task Force – create a task force to evaluate new models that expand access for low- and middle-income older adults.

The Healey-Driscoll Administration is taking immediate action to begin the implementation of a majority of the regulatory and administrative recommendations in this report.

"Every older adult deserves a safe home and peace of mind, and every family deserves transparency and accountability," said Governor Maura Healey. "The heartbreaking tragedy at Gabriel House showed us that we cannot wait to strengthen protections for assisted living residents. We are taking immediate action on these recommendations so we can better protect residents, support families and

MassDOT announces annual Safe Routes to School Program Yard Sign Design Contest

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT), through its Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program, is pleased to announce the launch of the 2026 Yard Sign Design Contest. The annual contest raises awareness for transportation-related themes that help support school safety for walking and biking to school and is open to students in second through eighth grade who attend participating SRTS partner public schools. To become an SRTS partner, school administrators can connect with their Outreach Coordinator or fill out the online form.

"Massachusetts schools are ranked # 1 in the nation and under Governor Healey, safety for all will always be our top priority. As MassDOT launches this year's Safe Routes to School contest, we take great pride in partnering with schools, communities and today's youth to promote safety across all modes of travel to and from school," said Interim MassDOT Secretary and MBTA General Manager Phil Eng. "By making it fun for students and adults of all ages, it reminds us all that no matter what age we are, we can all participate, teach and learn. Watching the next generation help shape a safer, healthier transportation system for everyone who walks, bikes, rides and drives or takes transit across our state demonstrates the importance of education and that the future is bright."

This year's theme is centered around "no idling." Students are tasked with creating original designs that highlight the importance of turning off vehi-

cle engines to promote a healthy environment for nearby pedestrians. For the fourth year in a row, multilingual designs are highly encouraged.

All contest materials including a blank template will be available on the Safe Routes to School website under the Encouragement page. You can also view winning designs from past contest themes. All designs must be submitted by Monday, February 23, 2026.

The Massachusetts SRTS Program, sponsored by MassDOT and with funds from the Federal Highway Administration, promotes safer routes for students to actively get to and from school by fostering partnerships between community-led organizations, local law enforcement, education leaders, and public health departments. The Program currently serves more than 1,290 schools in over 285 communities across the Commonwealth. Through these partnerships, the Massachusetts SRTS Program highlights the importance of pedestrian and bicycle safety. SRTS also provides information, materials, and resources to support schools and communities with their local SRTS initiatives.

For more information on Massachusetts Safe Routes to School visit:

www.mass.gov/safe-routes-to-school

www.facebook.com/SafeRoutesMA

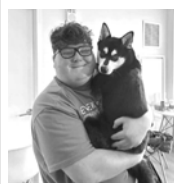
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See SAFETY Page 7

2026 MFS PRO-AM SQUASH DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIP

DEREK KOUYOUMJIAN PHOTOS



Stuart Chandler sets up a shot.

Top men and women squash players from all over the world came to the University Club in Back Bay to compete in the 34th annual MFS Pro-Am Squash Doubles Championship January 7-11. Spectators who attended the five-day event were witnesses to some of the best squash playing. A special feature of the tournament, is that many local amateur squash players were privileged to play with the pros. See Pages 5, 8 and 9 for more photos.



Stuart Chandler, Maria Elena Ubina, Fernanda Rocha Maturi, and Tony Simboli.



Maria Elena Ubina.



Tony Simboli, Fernanda Rocha Maturi, Local Squash legend Tom Poor, Maria Elena Ubina, and Stuart Chandler.



Fernanda Rocha Maturi.

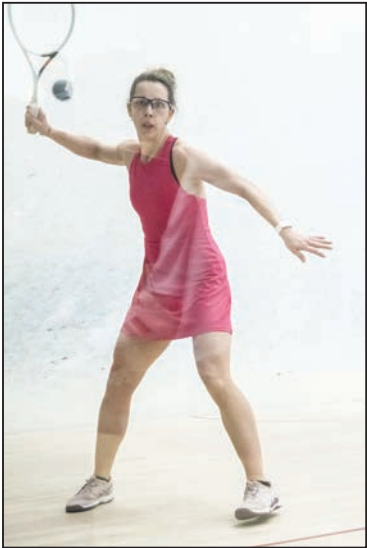


Tony Simboli.



Chris Spahr, Cel Kulasekaran, with Women's Pro winners Kayley Leonard and Maria Elena Ubina, and Charlie Humber.

2026 MFS PRO-AM SQUASH DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIP



Gina Stoker.



DEREK KOUYOUMJIAN PHOTOS

Nikki Todd strikes the ball as Gina Stoker and Kayley Leonard look on.



Gina Stoker, Kayley Leonard, Nikki Todd, and Maria Elena Ubina.



Kayley Leonard and Gina Stoker watch as Maria Elena Ubina locks in on the ball.



Maria Elena Ubina lines up a shot as Nikki Todd looks on.

SCENES FROM THE ANNUAL DINNER

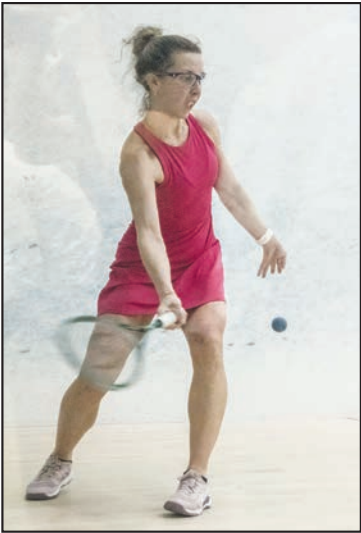


HOIL KIM PHOTOS

Shown (above and below) are players and members of the local squash community at the annual dinner.



Gina Stoker (center) strikes as Kayley Leonard and Nikki Todd look on.



Gina Stoker.



Nikki Todd locks in on the ball.



Kayley Leonard.



City offering free winter fitness series

Special to the Times

The Boston Parks and Recreation Department and Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC) are pleased to announce the 2026 Boston Parks Winter Fitness Series, sponsored by Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts. The series will offer free weekly classes in City of Boston parks until April 4.

This season, Bostonians can enjoy a variety of healthy activities both indoors and outdoors, including Walking Group, line dancing, Bota Foga, Kids Dance Fitness, Strength and Balance, Tai Chi, Yoga, and more. Classes are designed for all skill levels and ages, with options that are family-friendly, age-friendly, and welcoming to those who may be new to fitness.

"Throughout the winter months, our parks remain active and welcoming places for Bostonians to move, connect, and care for their well-being," said Cathy Baker-Eclipse, Interim Commissioner of the Boston Parks and Recreation Department. "We're grateful for our partnership with the Boston Public Health Commission and Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts, which help bring free, accessible fitness programming and community connection directly into our neighborhoods this winter."

"The Winter Fitness Series is a wonderful opportunity for everyone in Boston to get moving and participate in free and

accessible activities that can improve health and well-being," said Bisola Ojikutu MD, MPH, FIDSA, Commissioner of Public Health for the City of Boston. "Resources like these free classes help reduce the risk of chronic disease, which is one of the goals of Live Long and Well, our city-wide population health equity agenda. By encouraging everyone to engage in physical activity, we are ensuring that Boston is a city where all residents can thrive."

Through this citywide initiative, the Parks Department and BPHC aim to reduce barriers to active living and provide more opportunities for Boston residents to stay healthy and active throughout the winter months. Continuing on the success of the 2025 Parks Fitness Series, the winter series offers the opportunity for residents to stay active during shorter daylight hours while enjoying safe, accessible outdoor options. All classes are free and open to the public.

"We are delighted to continue our long-standing partnership with the City of Boston to offer Winter Fitness, bringing free and accessible fitness opportunities to Boston neighborhoods," said Jeff Bellows, vice president of corporate citizenship and public affairs at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts. "The Boston Park Fitness series offers year-round in-person classes that support the physical and mental well-being of residents."

For up to date information, including weather-related cancellations for outdoor fitness classes, visit boston.gov/fitness.

The Boston Parks and Recreation Department (BPRD) stewards over 2,200 acres of public open space across 288 properties, including the Boston Common, the Public Garden, and the Olmsted-designed Emerald Necklace park system. Our parks feature walking trails, playgrounds, courts, natural areas, and historic sites, as well as 29 urban wilds, four high school athletic fields, two public golf courses, and more than 40,000 street trees. BPRD offers free cultural and recreational programming for people of all ages, helping to create welcoming, active, and connected communities. Learn more at boston.gov/parks and sign up for updates at bit.ly/GetParksEmails. Follow our social channels @bostonparksdept on X, Facebook, Instagram, and @parks.boston.gov on Bluesky.

Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC) is the country's oldest health department. We envision a thriving Boston where all residents live healthy and fulfilling lives. To accomplish this, BPHC works in partnership with communities to protect and promote the health and well-being of all Boston residents, especially those impacted by racism and systemic inequities. Learn more about our work at boston.gov/bphc.

YOUTH COUNCIL (from pg. 1)

the top priorities of their peers. Then, they will develop and implement solutions to address them.

"I am grateful for the young people who have stepped forward to serve on this year's Mayor's Youth Council," said José F. Massó, Chief of Human Services. "The City benefits so much from MYC members' input, guidance and insight and I know this Council will have a big impact as we tackle citywide issues that impact youth and families."

"Today's swearing-in of the new Mayor's Youth Council members marks a powerful reminder that Boston's future is already stepping up to lead. These young people bring fresh ideas, lived experience, and a deep love for their communities. Their voices will help shape programs and initiatives that impact youth across every neighborhood in our city," said Pedro Cruz, Executive Director of the Office of Youth Engagement and Advancement. "I'm incredibly proud of their commitment to service and to one another. Together, we are building a Boston where young people are not only heard, but centered in the work of government."

Since the first Council year commenced in 1995, the MYC has empowered nearly 1,000 Boston high school students to grow in their capacity as civic leaders, represent their peers in

City government, and collaborate with City officials. Over the last three decades, Mayor's Youth Council members have organized youth town halls and events, engaged in service projects, and created awareness campaigns to help address challenges facing Boston's youth. Council members have developed their leadership skills, commitment to public service, and understanding of local government.

"The swearing-in ceremony reaffirmed that I am someone who can make change in the City and that I represent other youth with the capacity to make change," said 12th-grader and second-time Council Member Samuel Falke. "Having worked with the Office of Youth Engagement and Advancement before, I'm excited to use what I've learned to deepen my impact, work with newer members of the Council, and make contributions that will have a lasting impact when I'm no longer on the Council next year."

To learn more about the Mayor's Youth Council and follow along with their work this year, visit boston.gov/myc and follow @mycboston on Instagram. To stay informed about all initiatives from the Office of Youth Engagement and Advancement, visit boston.gov/oyea, and follow our social channels @oyeaboston on Facebook and Instagram, and @oyea.boston.gov on Bluesky.

BHCA (from pg. 1)

Contact the BHCA office if you would like to be a sponsor of this event.

BHCA members will have been sent a direct link to purchase tickets on 1/15.

Tickets will be available online to the general public on 1/22.

The Importance of 311

Boston 311 is a free service that connects you with the City of Boston for non-emergency help and information. Whether you're reporting a broken streetlight, looking up your trash day, or trying to reach the right department, 311 makes it easier. You can contact the city by calling 3-1-1 or 617-635-4500, using the BOS:311 app to upload photos, or submitting a request online at 311@boston.gov—any time, any day.

Report missing bricks, trash put out incorrectly, broken gas lamps, and contractor parking

abuse on the 311 app. Your report assigns a number to the case, and the more reports that come in for that case the quicker the response will be.

It's up to us to do our part—so use the 311 system whenever you have something to report to the city. Thank you!

Upcoming Meetings & Events

Events Committee – Tuesday, January 20th, 6:30pm via Zoom

Young Friends Social – Teddy's on the Hill, 7pm at 9 Bowdoin Street

Meet & Greet – Monday, February 2nd, 6:00pm at 75 Chestnut

First Friday Coffee Hour – Friday, February 6th, 8:30am at 74 Joy Street

For further information on BHCA events and meetings, or to volunteer, please contact the BHCA office at 617-227-1922.

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Boston City Council welcomes Councilor Miniard Culpepper

Special to the Times

The Boston City Council welcomed Councilor Miniard Culpepper, who began his first term representing District 7 on January 5, following a recent inauguration ceremony.

Councilor Culpepper represents the neighborhood of Roxbury and sections of Dorchester, Fenway, and the South End. Born and raised on Seaver Street in Dorchester, he was shaped by a family legacy rooted in activism, faith, and community leadership. His grandparents were the first Black couple to live on Seaver Street, and his grandfather – a pastor and NAACP leader – marched with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and helped build one of



Councilor Miniard Culpepper

Boston's first Black-owned nursery schools. That legacy instilled in him a lifelong commitment to justice and service.

A graduate of English High

School, Brandeis University, Howard Divinity School, and Suffolk University Law School, Councilor Culpepper's path to public service was deeply influenced by his early work as a lawyer, including a fight to help a friend purchase a boarded-up home in Grove Hall – an experience that shaped his understanding of housing as a cornerstone of dignity and opportunity.

His career in public service spans decades. As New England Regional Counsel for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Councilor Culpepper fought for tenants' rights, fair housing, and reinvestment in underserved neighborhoods. His work included implementing Boston's first Civil

Rights Protection Plan in public housing, exposing racial discrimination at the Boston Housing Authority, and helping secure \$25 million in federal funding to rebuild public housing developments across the city. He also advocated for affordable housing communities such as Academy Homes, A Field Estates, and the Franklin Park Apartments.

In addition to his federal service, Councilor Culpepper has remained deeply engaged at the community level. As Senior Pastor of Pleasant Hill Missionary Baptist Church, he founded the Trotter Peace Program to support mentorship and employment opportunities for young people of color and led the Six Point Peace Plan to reduce com-

munity violence. During the pandemic, he organized grassroots vaccination and food distribution efforts to support his neighbors.

As a member of the Boston City Council, Councilor Culpepper is committed to advancing housing stability, economic opportunity, strong schools, safe and healthy communities, and a city government that is transparent, accountable, and rooted in community voice.

Guided by faith, shaped by lived experience, and grounded in decades of public service, he begins his term ready to partner with residents to deliver results for District 7 and help shape a more just and inclusive Boston.

SAFETY (from pg. 3)

ensure our assisted living system continues to serve people well into the future."

"Massachusetts has a responsibility to protect residents in every single assisted living community, and families are counting on us to get this right," said Aging & Independence Secretary and ALR Commission Chair Robin Lipson. "These changes will strengthen fire safety, clarify standards and practices that impact resident well-being, and make critical information more accessible so families can make informed decisions. We have already begun putting stronger protections in place and will work to ensure that residents across the Commonwealth are safer, better supported, and treated with the dignity they deserve."

The Commission recommends legislative action to further strengthen resident safety and consumer protections, including establishing a dedicated funding mechanism to expand state oversight and public reporting, amending state law to authorize certified medication aides in assisted living settings, and creating a statewide registry for ALR executive directors. The report also urges the review of ALR building classifications and the modernization of building code requirements. Finally, the Commission recommends forming an ALR Affordability Task Force to look into sustainable models that expand access for low- and middle-income older adults.

"These recommendations are very important. The Gabriel

House fire in Fall River increased the urgency of action," said Senator Patricia Jehlen, member of the ALR Commission. "AGE can implement most of the recommendations about transparency and emergency preparedness without legislation. But it's important to give them the budgetary resources to enforce the rules. The legislature needs to act on the recommended statutory changes, including establishing a dedicated and sustainable funding mechanism, supported by certification and recertification fees and fines."

"ALRs are an important pillar of the Commonwealth's continuum of care for our aging population, helping older adults age in place and maintain their independence. The health, safety and well-being of these residents is paramount. This principle guided the Commission's deliberations over the past year, especially following the devastating fire at Gabriel House in Fall River," said Representative Thomas Stanley, member of the ALR Commission. "I am proud of the comprehensive recommendations the Commission produced in this final report and look forward to the work ahead, including establishing the proposed ALR Affordability Task Force. I'd like to thank my fellow commission members for their service on behalf of our older adults in ALRs and their caregivers, and salute Secretary Lipson and her team at AGE for their incredible leadership and engagement throughout this process."

"While there are quality res-

idences across Massachusetts, inadequate regulations have allowed bad actors to persist for far too long," said Senator Mark Montigny, lead legislative sponsor of the ALR Commission. "As the devastating Gabriel House fire showed, vulnerable lives are at stake and we need to continue to demand more action from legislators, regulators, and residence owners. I appreciate the hard work of this commission over the past year to come to a set of actionable recommendations that can be implemented immediately and in the near future to help protect residents and improve the overall assisted living model in the Commonwealth."

"I would like to thank the commission for their thoughtful review of existing policies and procedures and for the recommendations outlined in this report that will provide for important enhanced safety measures for all residents of assisted living centers throughout the state in the aftermath of the tragic Gabriel House fire," said Fall River Mayor Paul Coogan.

"I am gratified to see the ALR Commission release its report detailing a number of comprehensive reforms that will strengthen safety and increase transparency for ALRs all across the Commonwealth. The extensive reviews following the tragic fire at the Gabriel House will ensure that our seniors will not only have the latest in health and safety protocols in place, but that ALR staff will be equipped with the highest training and certifica-

tions standards in the industry. The new statewide online database will also provide families with clear access to important compliance records, ownership information, and mandate that their facility has a proven corrective action plan in place," said Senator Michael J. Rodrigues, Chair of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means. "All older adults deserve a safe dwelling and their families the utmost in transparency and accountability for the aging parents."

"The ALR Commission Report and recommendations delivers achievable goals. Legislative action is needed to ensure uniformity and compliance," said Representative Alan Silvia (D-Fall River).

"After our community experienced the tragic and deadly fire at Gabriel House last year, we have been evaluating necessary remedies and changes to prevent catastrophes like this," said Representative Carole Fiola (D-Fall

River). "Thanks to the work of this Commission, we are seeing important changes to help improve safety, affordability, and care. Thank you to Secretary Lipson and my colleague Chair Stanley for their tireless dedication to this issue."

"I thank the ALR Commission for the work and report, it brings attention to needed improvements. I applaud the state's commitment to promptly addressing the issues and listening to concerns brought forward," said Representative Steven J. Ouellette (D-Westport). "I strongly support efforts to avoid serious incidents, particularly those that help our seniors and those ability hindered."

The Commission's report contains a comprehensive set of reforms that will significantly improve resident safety and ensure families have the information they need to make informed decisions.

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2026 MFS PRO-AM SQUASH DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIP

DEREK KOUYOUMJIAN PHOTOS



Charlie Humber, Chris Callis, and Ryan Mullaney look on as Mark Froot strikes the ball.



Charlie Humber strikes the ball.



Charlie Humber strikes the ball.



Chris Callis, Charlie Humber, Ryan Mullaney, and Mark Froot.



Ryan Mullaney locks in on the ball before striking.



Sam Khalifa takes a shot while James Stout watches.

2026 MFS PRO-AM SQUASH DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIP

DEREK KOUYOUMJIAN PHOTOS



Scott Arnold, Sam Khalifa, James Stout, and Chris Callis.



James Stout watches as Sam Khalifa takes a shot.



James Stout races into a shot.



Scott Arnold shoots while Chris Callis prepares to counter.



James Stout, Sam Khalifa, Chris Callis, and Scott Arnold.



Scott Arnold watched as Chris Callis takes a shot.



After winning the Men's Finals, Chris Callis and Sam Khalifa pose with Charlie Humber and Chris Spahr.



Chris Callis takes a shot.



Chris Callis watches as Scott Arnold takes a shot.



Chris Callis hits the wall following the ball as Scott Arnold prepares his shot.



HOIL KIM PHOTO

Tom Poor, (second from right) a local squash legend is shown holding his plaque for the US Squash President's Cup. This award was presented to Poor at the Pro-Am Doubles Championships that was held at the University Club over the last weekend. This award is the US Squash's highest annual service award and is regarded as its most prestigious honor. Shown with Poor from left are Tournament Committee members Charles Humber, Chris Spahr, Poor and James Zug, US Squash Senior Correspondent.



James Stout takes a shot.

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Rentals

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

Special to the Times

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

Threads of Legacy: Pop Up Shop

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

Jump Into the Past: Teen Takeover

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

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

Saturdays with Sheila: Yoga at MAAH

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

FREE

Join yogi Sheila Thorne of Bous Yoga for an all-levels yoga class which is held on the first Saturday of each month. Arrive early to secure a mat or bring one from home.

Children's Storytime: We Go Slow

Saturday, Feb. 7, 1 - 2 p.m.
FREE

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

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

Sunday, Feb. 8, 1 - 2 p.m.
FREE

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

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

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

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

Flower Arranging With Pilon Fleur

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

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

From Ideas to Institutions: The Process of Making Black History

Friday, Feb. 13, 5:30 - 8:30 p.m.

FREE

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

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

Digging Deeper into Black Voices of the Revolution

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

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

Storytime at the Museum: Joy Takes Root

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

Author Gwendolyn Wallace will share her children's picture book, *Joy Takes Root*, which follows a young girl as she connects with the earth, learns to grow plants, and honors her family's gardening traditions. Reviewers have called *Joy Takes Root* "a beautiful ode to both the natural world and intergenerational cultural wisdom..." Recommended for children ages 3-8. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

MAAH Lunch Club, A Taste of the Diaspora

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

Enjoy Southern hospitality at its best. Savor a flavorful meal created in collabo-

ration with Heritage Market and award-winning chef Larry J of Larry J's BBQ Café followed by a performance and poetry workshop featuring Boston poet Amanda Shea.

Black Wellness Retreat

Sunday, Feb. 22, 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

\$40 per person

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

US Premiere: In Search of Phillis Wheatley Peters

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

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

Suite for a Minor Meeting, Live Performance

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

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

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MCCA Board appoints John Barros Interim Executive Director

Special to the Times

The Massachusetts Convention Center Authority (MCCA) Board of Directors voted unanimously to appoint John Barros as Interim Executive Director of the Authority, with a start date of January 14, 2026.

Barros brings more than 25 years of leadership experience across the public, private, and nonprofit sectors, with a dedicated career focused on economic development, equitable growth, and community impact. From 2014 to 2021, he served as Chief of Economic Development for the City of Boston, where he led the creation of a newly consolidated Economic Development Cabinet focused on equity and inclusion, and advanced initiatives to create jobs, strengthen tourism, train the workforce, and revitalize neighborhoods.

Most recently, Barros served as Managing Principal at Civitas Builders, a Boston-based firm focused on improving communities through responsive real estate development and strategic project execution.

"As Massachusetts prepares for an extraordinary, nation-leading year ahead for

events, tourism and economic development, the MCCA is going to play a pivotal role," said Governor Maura Healey. "I'm confident that under John's experienced and strategic leadership, the Authority will continue fulfilling its mission to boost our economy and competitiveness, and I thank the MCCA Board for its work to ensure stability at this vital organization."

Earlier in his career, Barros spent 14 years as Executive Director of the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI), leading the nation's largest urban community land trust and helping establish it as a national model for community-driven development and equitable neighborhood revitalization.

"John will bring dynamic leadership to this important role at a consequential moment for Boston and the Commonwealth," said Boston Mayor Michelle Wu. "His economic development experience, knowledge of the city, and dedication to community will steer the MCCA to greater collaboration and success. I look forward to working with him on making Boston the leading destination

and hub—starting with preparing for a big summer as we host the 250th commemorations, Tall Ships, and the World Cup."

As chief of Economic Development for the City of Boston under Mayor Martin J. Walsh, Barros co-chaired the development of Imagine Boston, the city's first citywide comprehensive plan, and oversaw initiatives focused on access to capital, local wealth creation, job connections, and neighborhood-centered growth. Under his leadership, Boston added 140,000 new jobs and significantly expanded public investment in workforce development and community-centered economic strategies.

"I am honored to step into this role at such a critical moment for the MCCA and grateful to the Board for their support and confidence," said John Barros. "As a world-class cultural and economic engine, what happens here impacts not just Boston, but the entire Commonwealth. I am looking forward to working with the team and ensuring we continue to deliver on our mission of driving economic impact, fostering a fair and equitable workplace, and event excellence."

As Interim Executive Director, Barros will oversee the MCCA's venue portfolio and operations, including the Thomas M. Menino Convention & Exhibition Center, the John B. Hynes Veterans Memorial Convention Center, the MassMutual Center, and the Lawn on D, while advancing the Authority's mission to drive economic impact through events and tourism.

The Massachusetts Convention Center Authority owns and oversees the operations of the Thomas M. Menino Convention & Exhibition Center (MCEC), the John B. Hynes Veterans Memorial Convention Center, the MassMutual Center, Convention Center Carpark & The Landing in Springfield, MA, the Boston Common Parking Garage, The Lawn On D and The Lot On D. The MCCA's mission is to deliver world-class



John Barros

event experiences that drive statewide economic growth, foster innovation, and exceed customer expectations all while cultivating a workplace culture that values excellence, inclusivity, and employee well-being.

MBTA to operate two Patriots trains from Boston on Sunday, January 18

The MBTA and Keolis Commuter Services (Keolis), the MBTA's operations and maintenance partner for Commuter Rail, announced today that two trains will operate from Boston to Gillette Stadium for the Patriots playoff game on Sunday. Additionally, a third train will operate from Providence to Gillette. Tickets are limited and are currently available through the mTicket app.

Trains to Foxboro:

The first train from Boston will depart South Station at 12:40 PM and arrive in Foxboro at 1:40 PM. The second train

from Boston will depart South Station at 12:50 PM and arrive in Foxboro at 1:50 PM.

Both Boston trains will stop at Back Bay Station and Dedham Corporate Center Station before arriving at Foxboro Station.

The Providence train will depart from Providence Station at 12:00 PM with stops at Pawtucket/Central Falls, Attleboro, and Mansfield Stations before arriving at Foxboro Station at 1:15 PM.

Trains from Foxboro to Boston and Providence:

The first Boston train will depart from Foxboro Station

30 minutes after the end of the game. The second Boston train will depart once passengers board. The train to Providence will depart 45 minutes after the end of the game.

Passengers are reminded to make their way to the station directly after the game ends to ensure they board their train home.

For more information, visit massbytrain.com or MBTA.com/Gillette or connect with the T on X @MBTA and @MBTA_CR, Facebook /TheMBTA, Instagram @theMBTA, Threads @thembta, or TikTok @thembta.

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Significant drought conditions declared in central and northeast regions

Drought conditions worsen in the Southeast Region, Nantucket County and Millers Basin, while conditions have improved in Dukes County

Special to the Times

Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) Secretary Rebecca Tepper has declared the Central and Northeast Regions have worsened to a Level 2–Significant Drought. Conditions also declined in nearly all other regions, moving the Southeast Region to a Level–1 Mild Drought and the Millers River Basin to a Level 3–Critical Drought. In the Islands Region, Dukes County has returned to Normal Conditions, and Nantucket County has moved to a Level 3–Critical Drought. Conditions remain unchanged in the Western, Connecticut River Valley, and Cape Cod Regions.

Drought is a look back at conditions over a period of time. The Drought Management Task Force (DMTF) collected and analyzed data from August 2024 through December 2025. Despite minor improvements at a few locations, drought conditions have continued in most of Massachusetts.

“Continued snow and rainfall are needed to alleviate the drought that many regions in our state are experiencing this winter,” said EEA Secretary Rebecca Tepper. “Groundwater levels still need to recover, so

as we get closer to the growing season, we encourage everyone to continue to follow state guidance and local water restrictions. This will help ensure we have enough water available for our essential needs.”

During December, Massachusetts received rainfall ranging from 3 to 4 inches, but the month ended with totals at 1-2 inches below normal. However, when looking back over the past 3 to 6 months, precipitation deficits persist.

The current drought, which began in 2024, has had significant impacts on the natural environment, including the drying of streams in nearly all regions, lower water levels in lakes and ponds, resulting in exposed banks, and impeding fish passage out to the ocean. Although local water supplies are currently stable, as the drought persists and winter recharge is reduced, it is prudent for all to be very conservative and save water whenever possible.

As outlined in the Massachusetts Drought Management Plan, continued detailed monitoring of drought conditions must continue. The drought levels also require ongoing coordination among state and federal agencies to implement drought response actions such as water use restrictions. Additionally, engagement with municipalities, including local Boards of Health (BOH), is essential. This includes providing technical outreach and assistance to water suppliers and affect-

ed municipalities. Residents are asked to report to their local BOH in case of wells drying up; BOHs are asked to report on the condition of local private wells.

Residents can report dry environmental conditions and submit photos to help monitor the situation on the Massachusetts Water Impact Reporter. Additionally, a FAQ is now available for questions regarding the current drought status and water conservation; and private well owners can go here for information on how the drought may impact them.

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) will continue to assist communities in managing their water systems. The Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) water supply system is not experiencing drought conditions.

Below are recommendations for communities and individuals living and working within a Level 1–Mild Drought, Level 2–Significant Drought, Level 3–Critical Drought including those utilizing a private well. Residents and businesses are strongly urged to check with their local water system in case more stringent watering restrictions are in place. Many systems may have other more severe local conditions and constraints on water supply.

For Regions in Level 3 – Critical Drought Residents and Businesses:

- Minimize overall water use

- Follow state water conservation actions and any local water use restrictions

- Monitor total household water use shown on your water bill for sudden increases, which often indicate leaks. Use the MA Home Water Use Calculator tool to evaluate household water use.

- Fix any toilet or faucet leaks immediately. Check for leaks in homes and businesses regularly by:

- Checking water meters for constant dial movement
- Using dye tabs to check for toilet leaks

- Conducting regular inspections of all pipes and fixtures, including those located in utility rooms, crawlspaces, and other hidden areas

- Use dishwashers rather than handwashing dishes. Run the dishwasher only on a full load
- Aggressively reduce indoor water use by:

- Reducing shower length and consider using a shower timer
- Running washing machines only on a full load

- Not letting water run while brushing and shaving
- Replacing old fixtures and appliances with water-efficient ones. Make sure toilets, faucets, and showerheads are WaterSense labeled

- Stop all non-essential water use

Immediate Steps for Communities/ Municipalities:

- Provide timely information on the drought and on water conservation tips to local residents and businesses taking advantage of the state’s library of outreach materials

- Enforce water use restrictions with increasingly stringent penalties

- Strongly discourage or prohibit washing of hard surfaces (sidewalks, patios, driveways, siding); personal vehicle or boat washing

- Establish or enhance water-use reduction targets for all water users, identify top water users and conduct targeted outreach to help curb their use

Short- and Medium-Term Steps for Communities/ Municipalities:

- Establish a year-round water conservation program that includes public education and communication, taking advantage of the state’s library of out-

reach materials

- Implement or establish drought surcharge or seasonal water rates

- Prepare to activate emergency inter-connections for water supply

- Develop or refine your local drought management plan using guidance outlined in the state Drought Management Plan

For Regions in Level 2 – Significant Drought

Residents and Businesses:

- Minimize overall water use;
- Follow local water use restrictions;

- Fix indoor leaks, such as from toilets, faucets, and showers, which result in more than 60 percent of indoor use; and,

- For larger buildings and businesses, conduct water audits to identify areas of leaks and potential water conservation opportunities.

Immediate Steps for Communities/ Municipalities:

- Limit or prohibit washing of hard surfaces (sidewalks, patios, driveways, siding); personal vehicle or boat washing; and,

- Establish water-use reduction targets for all water users, identify top water users and conduct targeted outreach to help curb their use.

Short- and Medium-Term Steps for Communities/ Municipalities:

- Establish a year-round water conservation program that includes public education and communication, taking advantage of the states library of outreach materials;

- Provide timely information to local residents and businesses;

- Implement or establish drought surcharge or seasonal water rates;

- Check emergency inter-connections for water supply; and,

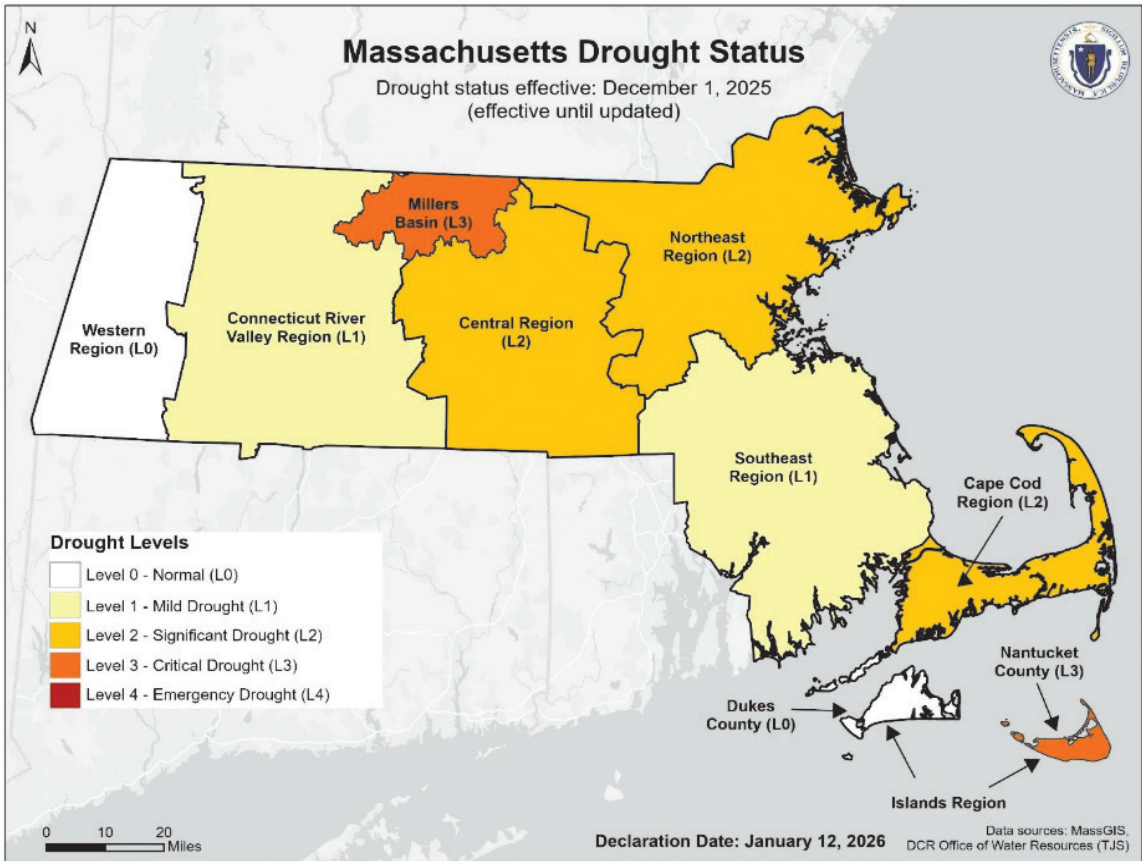
- Develop or refine your local drought management plan using guidance outlined in the state Drought Management Plan.

For Regions in Level 1 – Mild Drought

Residents and Businesses:

- Minimize overall water use;
- For larger buildings and businesses, conduct water audits to identify areas of leaks and potential water conservation opportunities;

See DROUGHT Page 13



Wu appoints Lydia Torres and Franklin Peralta, and reappoints Stephen Alkins to Boston School Committee

Special to the Times

Mayor Michelle Wu recently announced three new appointments to the Boston School Committee, Lydia Torres, Franklin Peralta, and Dr. Stephen Alkins. Torres and Peralta will begin their first terms, and Dr. Alkins will begin his second term, after first being appointed by Mayor Wu in January 2022. The Boston School Committee is the governing body of Boston Public Schools (BPS).

"I'm excited to reappoint Dr. Stephen Alkins and appoint Ms. Lydia Torres and Mr. Franklin Peralta to the Boston School Committee. These three leaders embody the dedication, expertise, and passion for serving our young people that will help guide our work to make Boston Public Schools the first choice for all our families," said Mayor Michelle Wu. "Each brings a personal connection to our schools and the professional experience to complement Superintendent Skipper's leadership. I'm grateful for their service and look forward to partnering with these members and the entire School Committee in this work."

"There's much generational work to be done. To truly make BPS a high-quality experience for every student, we must focus on addressing critical opportunity and achievement gaps and reimagine the ways we do this in partnership with our families and community organizations," said Dr. Stephen D. Alkins, Jr. "BPS is building upon this through districtwide investment in foundational literacy and inclusive education reform, but we must continue to engage in deep, critical discourse, transparency with families, data analysis, and accountability."

"I have spent my entire life in BPS—as a student, teacher, parent, and school and district



Lydia Torres

leader," said Lydia Torres. "I'm honored to be appointed to the Boston School Committee as the capstone of my career serving the district I love and I look forward to helping the district advance opportunities and outcomes for students."

"It is a true honor for me that Mayor Wu has chosen me to join the Boston School Committee," said Franklin Peralta. "As I said several times through the application process, education has opened doors for me to enter places where I never dreamed I would be. I'm ready to join the talented and committed group of leaders in the School Committee to continue offering these same opportunities to all our students in the Boston Public Schools."

"We are excited to welcome three school committee members who each brings a valuable perspective to our collective work to advance educational equity and excellence across Boston Public Schools," said Boston School Committee Chair Jeri Robinson. "We remain committed to advancing our important work through partnerships with families, educators, and the broader community to ensure every student has access to the high-quality education they expect and



Franklin Peralta

deserve. I look forward to working alongside our new and returning members as we continue the critical work of moving our district forward."

"I look forward to working closely with each new and returning school committee member as we continue to strengthen and advance Boston Public Schools for every student we serve," said Superintendent Mary Skipper. "Ensuring the success of our students is a shared effort that takes strong governance, collaborative leadership, and strong partnership with educators, families, and communities. Alongside our school communities and City partners, we will remain focused on improving student outcomes, supporting our educators, and ensuring every school has the resources and supports needed for all students to reach and succeed beyond the classroom."

First appointed by Mayor Wu in January 2022, Stephen D. Alkins, Jr., Ph.D. is the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (and Belonging) Officer (DEIO) and Co-chair of the DEI Council at TERC. With his leadership, Stephen helps craft and implement the vision for DEIB at TERC through his collaboration on NSF STEM education grant



Stephen Alkins

development in multiple learning environments (informal and formal K-16 spaces). His role and responsibilities include recruitment and retention of a diverse research and infrastructure staff, internal policy review, development and analysis of inclusive educational opportunities and social programming, and establishment of collaborative partnerships to promote equity for all STEM learners. A resident of Mattapan and BPS parent, Dr. Alkins received his B.S. in Biology from Morehouse College and his Master's and Ph.D. in Cellular Neuroscience from Brandeis University.

Lydia Torres, a Roslindale resident, has nearly four decades of experience as a Boston Public Schools educator. She began her career as an English as a Second Language teacher at the Henigan School, and has served as a literacy specialist, literacy coach at the school and district level, Director of English Language Arts for grades 6-12 district-wide, and Assistant Principal and Middle School Director at the Eliot K-8 Innovation School. After retiring in 2018, Lydia has spent her time volunteering with the Boston Teacher Residency program run by Boston Plan for Excellence, supporting new teachers in adopting data-informed instruction for multilingual learners. She has a Master's in Education from Lesley University and a Certificate of Advanced Graduate Studies

in Educational Leadership from Cambridge College.

Franklin Peralta, a BPS parent and Jamaica Plain resident, has dedicated his entire professional career to public education, particularly focusing on adult basic education, in Boston and in his native Dominican Republic. He currently serves as Director of Business Engagement and Public Policy at English for New Bostonians (ENB), where he oversees workplace and workforce English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) projects, including needs assessments for companies applying for funds to teach English to employees, and implementation of workplace English training. Prior to joining ENB, Franklin was Student Counselor at the Adult Learning Program of Jamaica Plain Community Centers, and a researcher and social educator at a cultural center in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. Franklin is actively engaged in his daughters' schools, the Sarah Greenwood K-8 School and Boston Latin Academy, and is the elected representative for the Sarah Greenwood on the Citywide Parent Council. Franklin holds a Master's degree in Qualitative Research in Education for Social Change from the Autonomous University of Santo Domingo.

The School Committee is responsible for:

- Defining the vision, mission, and goals of the Boston Public Schools;
- Establishing and monitoring the annual operating budget;
- Hiring, managing, and evaluating the Superintendent; and
- Setting and reviewing district policies and practices to support student achievement.

The School Committee meets approximately twice per month during the school year to adopt, review and modify policies and practices that support teaching, learning and improved student achievement. With the exception of executive sessions, Committee meetings are open to the public, feature public comment periods and are broadcast on Boston City TV.

DROUGHT (from pg. 12)

Communities/Municipalities:

- Establish a year-round water conservation program that includes public education and communication, taking advantage of the state's library of outreach materials;
- Provide timely drought and water conservation information to residents and businesses;

- Check emergency inter-connections for water supply; and,
- Develop a local drought management plan (learn more here).

State agencies will continue to closely monitor and assess conditions across the state, coordinate any needed dissemination of information to the pub-

lic, and help federal, state, and local agencies prepare additional responses that may be needed in the future. The DMTF will meet again on February 10 at 9:30 AM. For further information on water conservation and what residents can do, visit the EEA's drought and water conservation pages.

ADVERTISE IN THE TIMES,
CALL 781-485-0588

Real Estate Transfers

BUYER 1	SELLER 1	ADDRESS	PRICE
BACK BAY			
Bresler, Carol J	Rich Colorful Inv LLC	167 Commonwealth Ave #5	\$1,800,000
Jody M Kipnis Ft	Todd Ruderman 2002 RET	400 Stuart St #28D	\$583,419
Smith, Stephen	Bero 3rd, George L	53 Clarendon St #1	\$1,300,000
Rios, Barbara V	Tjre Investments LLC	69 Church St #1	\$2,600,000
BEACON HILL			
Post, Alexandra	The Doucette & Fisher Rt	70-72 Mount Vernon St #BA72	\$833,000
Harris, Dylan	21 Beacon Street 4s T	21 Beacon St #4S	\$540,000
BAY VILLAGE/SOUTH END/KENMORE			
Spacone, Aaron	Hagerty, Matthew C	27 Appleton St #1	\$2,925,000
Mclp Asset Company Inc	Wang, Feng	40 Traveler St #507	\$1,043,142
DOWNTOWN/WATERFRONT			
Thomson, Melissa A	Byrne, Patrick J	110-112 Commercial St #5	\$830,000
Desravines, Rudie P	Downey, Richard	156 South St #1L	\$492,000
Rupley Ft	Abrano, Kim S	343 Commercial St #212	\$2,275,000
Sommer, Jonathan	Mcaf Winthrop LLC	240 Devonshire St #3804	\$2,390,000

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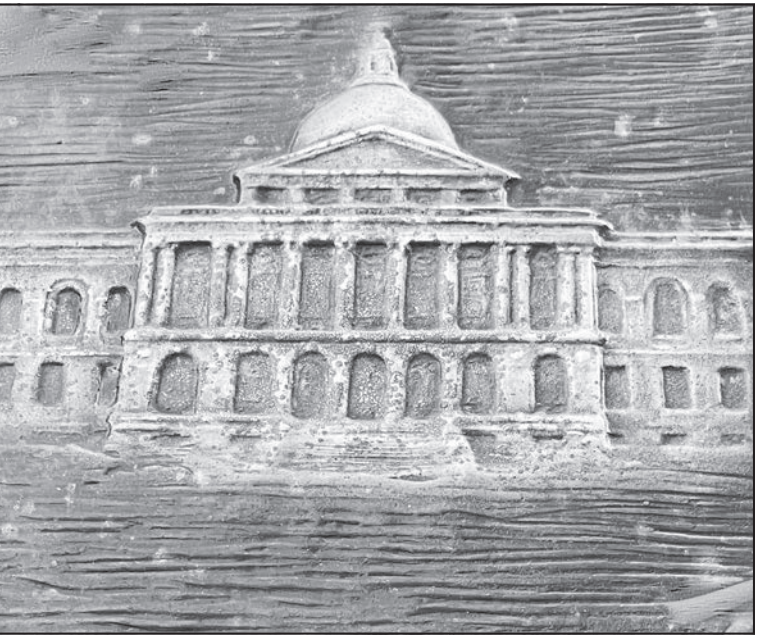
INTERNATIONAL REALTY



The wrought-iron gate in the last clue is at 18 Cedar Lane Way. In his book “Beacon Hill” Allen Chamberlain wrote, “... at the request of one of the oldest residents of the neighborhood, the Street Commissioners have revived the original name of ‘Cedar Lane,’ adding, however, the word ‘Way’ to distinguish it from the new ‘Cedar Lane’ was coming into being in another section of the city.”

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

THIS WEEK'S CLUE



DO YOU NEED TO PLACE A LEGAL NOTICE?

Don't Forget to check with the Courts to see if you qualify for a FEE WAIVER

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 GIVING NOTICE OF PETITION FOR APPOINTMENT OF CONSERVATOR OR OTHER PROTECTIVE ORDER PURSUANT TO G.L. c. 190B, § 5-304 & § 5-405
Docket No. SU25P2879PM
In the matter of: Geneva Murchison
RESPONDENT (Person to be Protected/Minor)
Of: Boston, MA

To the named Respondent and all other interested persons, a petition has been filed by Massachusetts General Hospital of Boston, MA in the above captioned matter alleging that Geneva Murchison is in need of a Conservator or other protective order and requesting that

(or some other suitable person) be appointed as Conservator to serve Without Surety on the bond. The petition asks the court to determine that the Respondent is disabled, that a protective order or appointment of a Conservator is necessary, and that the proposed conservator is appropriate. The petition is on file with this

court. You have the right to object to this proceeding. If you wish to do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance at this court on or before 10:00 A.M. on the return date of 02/12/2026. This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline date by which you have to file the written appearance if you object to the petition. If you fail to file the written appearance by the return date, action may be taken in this matter without further notice to you. In addition to filing the written appearance, you or your attorney must file a written affidavit stating the specific facts and grounds of your objection within 30 days after the return date.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

The outcome of this proceeding may limit or completely take away the above-named person's right to make decisions about personal affairs or financial affairs or both. The above-named person has the right to ask for a lawyer. Anyone may make this request on behalf of the above-named person. If the above-named person cannot afford a lawyer, one may be appointed at State expense.

WITNESS, Hon. Janine D Rivers, First Justice of this Court.
Date: January 08, 2026
Stephanie L. Everett, Esq.
Register of Probate

1/16

BH

Officials announce over \$300,000 in Swim Safe Grants to expand free swim lessons for youth

Special to the Times

The City of Boston’s Office of Human Services and Boston Centers for Youth & Families announced the award of Swim Safe grants totaling \$314,118 to 15 Boston-based nonprofit organizations to expand access to free beginner swim lessons for young people across the city. The grants bolster Boston’s ongoing efforts to enhance water safety and equitable access to aquatics programming.

“This investment of City funds ensures that every young person has access to free swim lessons, building on our ongoing commitment to water safety,” said Mayor Michelle Wu. “I’m grateful to the Office of Human Services and BCYF for awarding these grants, which will allow us to expand access to aquatic programming for thousands of Boston youth. I encourage all Boston families to take advantage of this critical resource and enroll in programming.”

Grant awards range from \$2,200 to \$100,000 and are drawn from the City of Boston FY26 Operating Budget. They will support a range of organizations to provide free swim lessons throughout the school year, including large aquatics providers as well as school-based programs serving Boston Public Schools students. Through this grant, Boston expects to see over 2,500 youth complete beginner swim lessons. These free lessons are offered in addition to the thousands of free lessons provided by the staff at Boston Centers for Youth & Families aquatics sites.

Grantees include the following organizations:

- YMCA of Greater Boston (9 locations)
- Boys & Girls Clubs of Boston (4 locations)
- Boys & Girls Club of Dorchester (Dorchester)
- Salvation Army Kroc Center (Dorchester)
- West End House (Allston-Brighton)
- Tierney Learning Center (South Boston)
- Friends of the Hernandez School (Roxbury)
- Bridge Boston Charter School (Roxbury)
- Modest Women Swim, Too! (Roxbury)

- Omega Men in Action (Roxbury)
- Ohrenberger School (West Roxbury)
- Blackstone Elementary School (South End)
- Hurley School (South End)
- Swim Freedom (Roxbury)
- Edusports (Mattapan)

“Our Swim Safe grants continue to strengthen Boston’s commitment to ensuring every child has access to this essential life skill,” said José F. Massó, Chief of Human Services. “Thanks to this year’s grantees, we’re not only reaching thousands of young people but also expanding the network of providers who can help keep our young people safe around the water.”

“This year’s grant awards represent a major investment in water safety and equitable access,” said Marta E. Rivera, Commissioner of Boston Centers for Youth & Families. “In collaboration with our aquatics partners, BCYF is ensuring that every Boston family has free and inclusive access to swimming and helping to break down barriers and provide high-quality programming that serves the incredible diversity of our city.”

In addition to long-standing Swim Safe partners that operate pools and provide youth swim lessons, including the YMCA of Greater Boston, Boys & Girls Clubs of Boston, Boys & Girls Club of Dorchester, and the West End House, this year’s cohort introduces several new grantees proposing to add swim lessons into existing school-based and after-school programs. These new providers will help deliver swim instruction to elementary-age students in Boston Public Schools, as well as youth enrolled in after-school enrichment programs, significantly broadening the reach of the Swim Safe initiative. New school partners include the Ohrenberger School in West Roxbury and the Blackstone Elementary School in the South End.

“We are thrilled to be able to offer swim lessons to our families that otherwise would not have the chance to take swim lessons without the Swim Safe grant,” said Courtney Sheppeck, Principal of the Blackstone K-6 Elementary School. “We feel swimming should be taught to

all students across the city. The Swim Safe grant will give more students the opportunity to learn this essential life skill.”

New this year, budgeted costs have been capped at \$200 or less per child, ensuring that the maximum amount of funding goes directly to swim instruction rather than administrative costs. This grant cycle will also serve as a pilot period to assess this cost-efficiency strategy.

“The Salvation Army Boston Kroc Center is proud to provide safe, accessible swim opportunities that empower young people to build confidence, develop lifesaving skills, and enjoy the water responsibly. Through the Swim Safe initiative, we’ve been able to expand our reach and create a supportive environment where children and families feel welcomed, protected, and encouraged,” said Stephanie Lorflis, Program Director of Salvation Army Boston Kroc Center. “This partnership allows us to strengthen our commitment to water safety and ensure that every child in our community has the opportunity to learn, grow, and thrive in and around the pool.”

By the conclusion of this grant cycle, the city expects more than 2,500 young people to have received free swim lessons during the school year. There will be an expanded pool of swim providers participating in Swim Safe, increasing the number of accessible, community-based swim lessons available to Boston residents.

The Human Services cabinet oversees six departments that provide direct services to Boston residents: Boston Centers for Youth & Families, Boston Public Library, Age Strong Commission, Office of Youth Engagement & Advancement, Office of Returning Citizens and the Office of Veterans’ Services. The mission of the Human Services cabinet is to provide equitable access to high quality services, resources, and opportunities so that every Boston resident - especially those with the greatest needs - has what they need to thrive. In pursuit of this mission, the departments in the Human Services Cabinet meet residents where they are - in their homes, neighborhoods, and communities - to break down barriers to

critical resources.

Boston Centers for Youth & Families (BCYF) is the City of Boston’s largest youth and human service agency. BCYF operates 35 community centers in Boston that offer a variety of engaging and enriching programs for people of all ages created through community input and need. BCYF also oversees many citywide programs.

Beacon Hill Times Pick-Up Locations

Antonio’s	288 Cambridge St.
Simmon’s Liquors	210 Cambridge St.
Jobi Liquors.....	170 Cambridge St.
7-Eleven.....	122 Cambridge St.
West End Library.....	151 Cambridge St.
Charles St. Liquors	143 Charles St.
U.S. Post Office.....	136 Charles St.
Gary Drug	53 Charles St.
Bank of America.....	39 Charles St.
Charles St. Supply.....	54 Charles St.
Cobblestones	30 Charles St.
DeLuca’s	11 Charles St.
Beacon Hill Wine	Charles St.
UPS	Charles St.
Remax 119	Charles St.
Cheers.....	84 Beacon St.
Emerson Place	10 Blossom St.
Beacon Hill Market.....	61 Anderson
Beacon Capitol Market	30 Myrtle St.
City Convenience.....	23 Beacon St.
Capital Coffee House	122 Bowdoin St.
Richdale Food	Beacon & Bowdoin St.
River House.....	145 Pinckney St.
West End Place	150 Stanford St.

Apartment Building locations:

8 Whittier Place	1 Emerson Place
6 Whittier Place	0 Emerson Place
150 Stanford St.	45 Temple St.
1 Longfellow	10 Bowdoin St.
4 Longfellow	122 Bowdoin St.
5 Longfellow	144 Bowdoin St.
2 Hawthorne Place	130 Bowdoin St.
3 Hawthorne Place	45 Myrtle St.
9 Hawthorne Place	19 Myrtle St.
Emerson Place	65 Martha Rd.
4 Emerson Place	

FRESH AND LOCAL

Savory pancakes

By Penny & Ed Cherubino

When you think of pancakes, do you picture a stack of golden discs with a big pat of melting butter and a cascade of maple syrup? That is one side of the pancake story. The other side is all the savory pancakes that people enjoy around the world. Today, we'll give you some ideas for pancakes that are perfect for a hearty breakfast, lunch, or dinner.

World Tour

You may have already enjoyed savory pancakes in international versions at home or abroad. Perhaps you've tasted French crêpes or buckwheat gallettes, Indian roti, Japanese okonomiyaki, Vietnamese banh xeo, Ethiopian injera, Latin American tortillas,

or Eastern European Blini, but didn't consider these pancakes.

Wikipedia defines this food as "... a flat type of batter bread like cake, often thin and round, prepared from a starch-based batter that may contain eggs, milk, and butter, and then cooked on a hot surface such as a griddle or frying pan."

Pick Your Starch

Many pancakes begin with all-purpose flour. But that is not the only option you can use to explore the world of savory pancakes. Injera is made with teff flour, and the batter is fermented to create the lovely texture that soaks up and holds the food you pick up with it.

Buckwheat galletts may be made with 100% gluten-free

buckwheat flour. However, many cooks add some wheat flour because it makes the batter easier to work with. If you're gluten intolerant, ask before you order this pancake. The same is true of buckwheat blini.

Cornmeal pancakes are among our favorites. Johnny cakes, or journey cakes, are traditional New England cuisine said to have originated in Rhode Island. Think of the mix-ins you can add to a cornmeal pancake to create a savory meal. Beyond tacos or arepas, we recommend making a simple cornmeal pancake recipe with less sugar, adding corn kernels, jalapeño, and chili powder, and topping it with leftover meat and cheese.

Chickpea flour is used to make pancakes in both Asia and Italy. The website Serious Eats has a great article on Italian farinata, with tips to make it without ending up with a dry, uninteresting result. Like many serious eaters, Daniel Gritzer uses ratios. "The key to custardy farinata is to use the right ratio of water to chickpea flour: three to one by weight, respectively. You'll end up with a batter that looks very thin and watery: That's okay, it's what



A Dutch Baby is another pancake variation you can fill with savory ingredients.

you want."

Mix, Top, Fill, or Roll

How you turn a pancake savory is up to you. You can add mix-ins from a favorite flavor profile. You can use it as a base and top it with the ingredients from an Irish breakfast. You can fill it and roll it like a crêpe or roti. As is often the case with classic foods, you can create a great meal with leftovers and reduce food waste.

One final note that may account for many pancake fail-

ures is that many recipes call for resting the batter for a recommended period. Resting allows the flour to hydrate fully and, in some cases, ferment.

When you see a form of pancake on an ethnic food menu, give it a try. If you love it, you can check out the recipe. You might find it is relatively simple to make, and could add some variety to your menu rotation.

Do you have a question or topic for Fresh & Local? Email Penny@BostonZest.com with your suggestion.

Motor Mart Garage reportedly going back on the market

By Dan Murphy

The owner of Motor Mart Garage has apparently scrapped its ambitious redevelopment plans and is now reportedly poised to put the property on the market this winter.

The CIM Group, owner of the century-old garage since 2016, has apparently hired the global commercial real estate services and investment firm, CBRE, to potentially sell the 1.2 acre site, which spans a full city block where Bay Village meets Back Bay, according to the Jan. 7 edition of The Boston Globe. (Banker & Tradesman first reported the listing.)

Prior to the pandemic, an affiliate of the Los Angeles-based CIM Group and Boston Global

Investors were poised to redevelop the existing eight-story, Art Deco garage at 201 Stuart St. into a mixed-use building with new condominium units located within the western portion of the existing structure, as well as additional units within a new 20-story residential tower that would sit atop of the existing structure. In all, the project would have created 306 new residential units while retaining approximately 46,000 square feet of restaurant space and retail space, along with 672 of the 1,037 existing parking spaces. The project would also have included a new basement-level space at Columbus Avenue and Church Street designed to accommodate a supermarket.



COURTESY OF CBT ARCHITECTS

An artist's rendering of the proposed Motor Mart Garage redevelopment project from 2018.

BPLF hosts free estate planning webinar for same-sex couples and non-traditional families

The Boston Public Library Fund (BPLF) is proud to announce that it will host an online Zoom free webinar on Wednesday, February 4, 12:30-1:30 p.m., featuring Scott E. Squillace, Esq., for an in-depth program exploring the unique estate planning considerations affecting same-sex couples and non-traditional families.

In the wake of shifting federal administrations, LGBTQ+ individuals have faced evolving questions about marriage rights, legal protections, and long-term planning. This program will trace the history of LGBTQ+ rights and the development of key case law, examining how these legal changes impact estate planning today. Attendees will gain insight into the advantages and disadvantages of marriage from tax and estate perspectives, as well as the specialized planning strategies available to same-sex couples. Mr. Squillace will also discuss emerging risks in

the current political climate and outline proactive steps attorneys and clients can take to safeguard their interests.

This free webinar is essential for same-sex couples considering marriage and for professionals advising them on estate planning strategies. Following the presentation, Mr. Squillace will answer questions from the audience. Register here: www.bplfund.org/events.

The mission of the BPLF is to provide financial support to the Boston Public Library, ensuring that it remains viable, engaging, accessible, and free to all. The fund fulfills this mission by working in partnership with the library, donors, and other funders in supporting BPL programs and special initiatives. Support from the Fund supplements, but does not supplant, other BPL resources, including City of Boston funding.

With over 38 years of legal experience and a career dedi-

cated to serving the LGBTQ+ community, Scott E. Squillace, Esq. brings extensive knowledge and practical guidance to this important topic. He is the author of *Whether-to-Wed: A Legal and Tax Guide for Gay and Lesbian Couples* and has spoken nationally on LGBTQ+ estate planning. He is the founder of Squillace & Associates, P.C., a boutique law firm located in Boston's historic Back Bay. His practice focuses on estate and business planning, with a special emphasis on tax and philanthropic planning for high-net-worth individuals and families.

Scott holds a bachelor's degree from Fordham University, studied at the Sorbonne University in Paris, and earned his J.D. from the Columbus School of Law at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. He resides in Boston, MA and Palm Springs, CA, with his husband and their two silver labs.