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Will Natoli (top left) and members of the Hill House soccer team.

Hill House experience comes full circle for some one-time participants via volunteering

By Dan Murphy

Hill House, since its 1966 formation, has made an indelible impression on the lives of countless youth from Beacon Hill and other downtown neighborhoods through its athletic programming

and other offerings, and for some, this formative experience comes full circle when they reach adulthood and decide to give back by volunteering with the organization.

Will Natoli, a 31-year-old River Street resident who grew

up on Beacon Hill, first came to Hill House at around the age of 4 when his father, John Natoli, was serving on the board of the nonprofit community center. (The senior Natoli, who works as gen-

(HILL HOUSE Pg. 3)

BEACON HILL CIVIC ASSOCIATION COMMUNITY CORNER

Good Neighbor Spotlight

On any given day you can spot Robert Potter sweeping the sidewalks at the bottom of Garden Street, and picking up and disposing of stray garbage in the vicinity. This isn't Mr. Potters job - he is a retired executive. This is just an expression of his neighborliness. Mr. Potter is the kind of caring resident that makes Beacon Hill so great! We thank you for being a good neighbor!

BHCA 2021 Annual Appeal
We will be sending out our

Annual Appeal later this month. We ask for your generosity as we prepare for our centennial year (1922-2022). We have much to look forward to and are excited and grateful to our members to be reaching this milestone.

Join a BHCA Committee!

The Beacon Hill Civic Association has various committees that focus on a targeted range of issues and initiatives aligning with the BHCA's mission of Community

(BHCA Pg. 4)



Robert Potter at work on Garden Street.

New app provides increased access to the Otis House

By Dan Murphy

Historic New England's app for the Otis House provides a new way to virtually "visit" the last surviving mansion in Bowdoin Square, offering a close look at its architecture, furniture and one-time inhabitants, as well as at the changing face of the neighborhood over the last 200 years.

"The most amazing thing is that it allows us to tell the complete story of the Otis House, which is really the story of Beacon Hill, the West End and Boston," said Michael Maler, Historic Regional New England's site administrator for Metro Boston, as well as a Temple Street resident. "The Otises themselves only lived there for four years. The larger story we're telling is about the servants, the women, and the immigrants who lived there, and the whole transition of Beacon Hill and the West End from being an exclusive, upscale community to a broader, more diverse community over two centuries."

Besides the Otis family, the new app looks at Elizabeth Mott, a British physician who based her medical practice out of the Otis House in the 1930s at a time when, Maler said, it was "very atypical" for women to work as doctors, "let alone have their own

practices."

The app, which is arranged by category, also explores how Bowdoin Square was transformed from an elite neighborhood into a working class enclave circa 1800, with what Maler describes as the "rise of the boarding houses," and how the Otis House followed this trend when three sisters converted it into a rooming house during this period.

Once Urban Renewal took hold in the mid 20th century, the historic West End was "pretty much annihilated," however, Maler said.

Additionally, the app's Furniture category features "Hiding in Plain Sight," an in-depth look at a couch made by Isaac Vose & Son to furnish Marquis de La Fayette's lodgings at the Otis House for his 1824 visit to Boston.

Meanwhile, the app provides new levels of accessibility, including a 360-degree tour, Maler said, so visitors who have difficulty using the stairs can now visit every corner of the building virtually.

"A lot of people have commented that they'd been to the Otis House before, but this has allowed them a much deeper dive," Maler added, "and they're learning things they never knew before."

While the Otis House tentative-

(OTIS HOUSE, Pg. 3)

SNOWCAPPED



The Hatch Shell on the Charles River Esplanade is seen donning a white cap following last week's snowfall.

For the latest news in Beacon Hill that you need to know, check www.beaconhilltimes.com

EDITORIAL

WINTRY BLAST IS NOT SO HARD TO TAKE

The polar vortex once again has spun out of control, as it has done often in recent years. Instead of remaining in a tightly-wrapped circular motion around the Arctic, the vortex has been weakened by record-high temperatures in the Arctic in recent years because of climate change, thereby loosening the vortex's centrifugal force and allowing waves of cold air to drift from the Arctic to the continental United States.

We have to admit however, that the cold air has been refreshing. We're not suggesting that we want the sort of cold that is gripping the midwest with below-zero temperatures and -50 wind chills, but what is winter without a little spell of cold weather?

We think all would agree that Sunday's snowstorm, with those huge flakes of snow floating down upon us, was wondrous. Catching them in your mouth (as we did while out for a run before the Super Bowl) was something to be appreciated by all of the senses.

Sure, milder winters are easy on our heating bills and we don't have to worry about freezing pipes, slippery roads, and all of the other difficulties that come with winter weather.

But it is precisely the harshness of winter that makes us appreciate summer all the more. It won't be long before the lazy, hazy, crazy days of summer are here and these days of sub-freezing weather will barely be a memory.

TB SETTLED THE GOAT QUESTION

Yes Pats' fans, it was bittersweet to watch the duo of Tom Brady and Rob Gronkowski lead the Tampa Bay Buccaneers to a Super Bowl championship.

On the other hand, no Pats' fan should be deluded into thinking that if the Pats' management had kept #12, New England fans would be celebrating with a victory parade this week.

Tampa Bay started the season with far more talent on its offense than the Patriots and then went out and added Rob Gronkowski, Leonard Fournette, and Antonio Brown -- all of whom not so coincidentally scored the Tampa Bay touchdowns.

But analysis aside, the game captured the imagination of fans -- and even non-fans -- across the country because of the matchup between the greatest QB of all time, now at the age of 43, vs. the up-and-comer, 25 year-old Patrick Mahomes, from Kansas City.

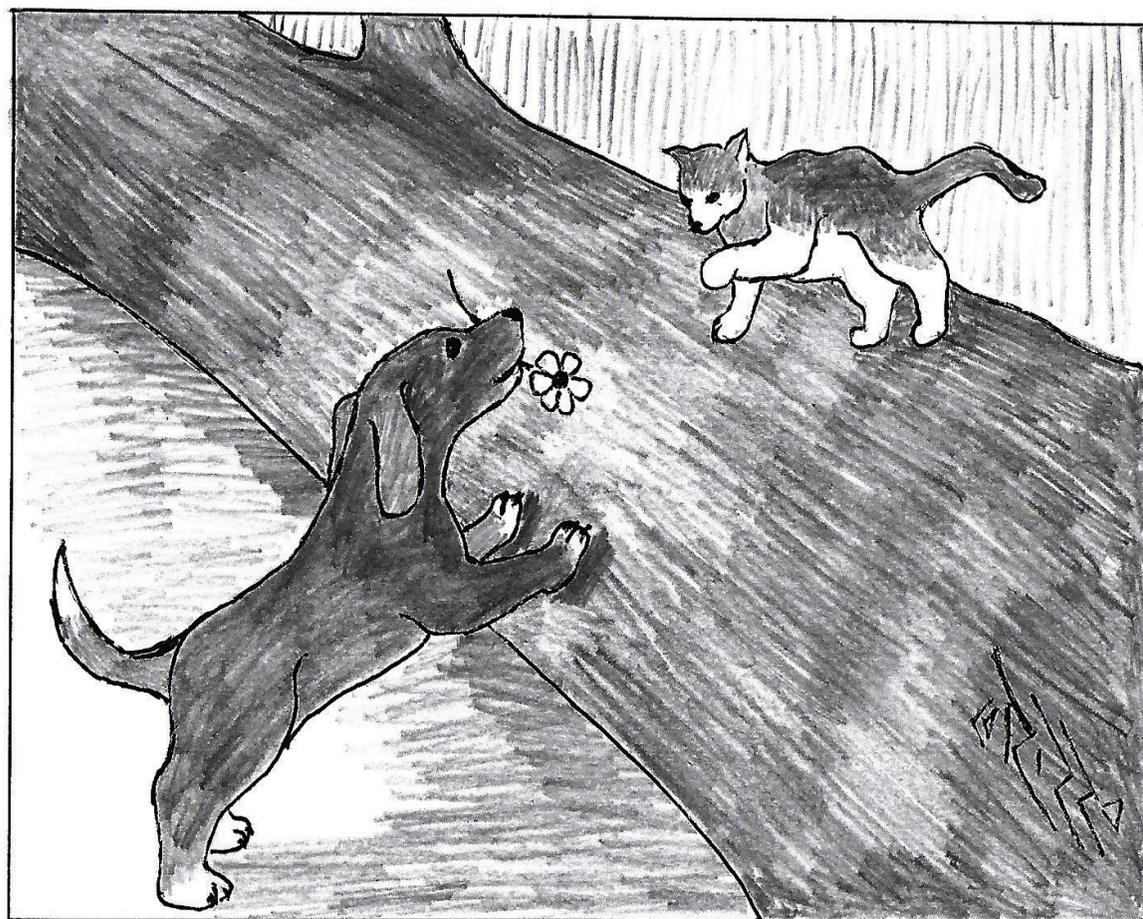
In addition, en route to the big game, Brady had vanquished two other GOAT wannabes, Drew Brees and Aaron Rodgers, while another GOAT pretender, Ben Roethlisberger over in the AFC, had fizzled out.

The Brady-Mahomes matchup was a classic, made-for-TV, duel-for-the-ages.

But in the end, it was #12 who stood tall and confident in the pocket, firing lasers to his receivers, while Mahomes was scrambling around haphazardly and making costly mistakes.

New England fans were fortunate to have had the joy of watching Tom Brady perform his magic for 19 seasons, including six championships in nine Super Bowl appearances.

It was a run of excellence that will not be repeated, either here or anywhere else -- because there is only one GOAT.



HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

RIGOR AND HONESTY

To the Editor,

The minimum wage debate is one economists and social scientists have grappled with for decades. It is ongoing, and the labor economists who lead the research charge continue to draw conclusions often at odds with one another. What is aligned, are the intentions of those doing this important work -- seek truth to motivate social policy.

In the Beacon Hill Times recent editorial 'Minimum Wage Should be \$15', I was disappointed that none of the deep and pertinent questions on the matter were mentioned!

Might doubling the minimum wage lead firms to respond by reducing their workforce? I

for one was disappointed to see the Whole Foods on Cambridge Street, last week, reconfigure their small-item check-out lines to self-check-out.

Should the minimum wage be \$15 everywhere? \$15 goes a lot further in Mobile AL than Brookline MA. Might we expect employment effects to be exacerbated in low COL regions?

Could such a sudden and sharp broad-stroke increase in minimum wage lead to inflationary effects that reduce the real wealth gain from those affected under the policy in question? What second-order policies might we consider invoking to avoid mere "nominal" gains, and ensure the benefit results in actual increased buying power?

Instead, the editorial piece reads

like ideological fodder for a left-of-center audience who seeks local consensus with their own priors. It needlessly provokes divisive Trump-isms (Make America Great Again) that serve only to center policy discourse more around political performance and gesturing, and less around the productive activity of careful reasoning via conversation.

This sentence I took the greatest exception to: "...it is below the dignity of anyone to work for wages that amount to not much better than slave labor." This is exceptionally dismissive of how tortuous and devastating chattel slavery was in the United States. There remains much to be done to give black Americans greater access to economic opportunity, something I am actively involved with in the Boston area...but to liken living on minimum wage in America to enslavement!? That is beyond. There remain 40 million people enslaved globally, and I assure you they would give arm and leg to live on minimum wage incomes in the US. Moreover, low-income Americans are better off than even most of the non-enslaved global population. Please, let's have this conversation, but can we do so with rigor and honesty?

Leo Hsia

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Andrea Campbell receives several endorsements from local leaders

Councilor and mayoral candidate Andrea Campbell has announced endorsements from Governor's Councilor Eileen Duff and former State Rep. Marty Walz in her campaign for mayor of Boston.

"Andrea is a unique, authentic leader who knows personally what's at stake when Boston doesn't work for everyone," Duff said. "As a Councilor, she's taken action to transform systems to be more equitable and has fought for communities that have been excluded from the power structures of this city, including the LGBTQ community. I am proud to endorse Andrea Campbell for mayor of Boston because I know her leadership and vision for an equitable Boston is what this moment requires."

Duff represents District 5 on the Governor's Council and is one of the most prominent LGBTQ+ elected officials in the Commonwealth. Since assuming the office of Governor's Councilor in 2013, Eileen has used her background in consensus building and public policy to ensure that there is a level playing field for all judicial applicants and to ensure fair trials for ordinary citizens.

"I'm proud to endorse Andrea Campbell for Mayor of Boston. Her success as a City Councilor illustrates the intelligence, hard work, and leadership she'll bring to the Mayor's office," Walz said. "Now is the time to embrace Andrea's vision of an equitable city

so all of us, in every Boston neighborhood, have the quality of life, great schools, affordable housing, and safe streets we deserve."

Walz represented the 8th Suffolk District in the Massachusetts House of Representatives from 2005-2013, a district that included the Back Bay, Beacon Hill, the West End, and part of the Fenway. After leaving the legislature, Marty served as the President and Chief Executive Officer of Planned Parenthood League of Massachusetts, leading the organization's health care, education, and advocacy work. She now runs her own firm providing executive level support to organizations of all sizes.

"I am humbled and proud to have the support of these two phenomenal leaders who each have their own record of fighting for equity and justice for all in our Commonwealth and the city of Boston," said Councilor Campbell. "The momentum our campaign is seeing by every measure is a sign that our vision for an equitable Boston is resonating with residents across this city."

Councilor Duff and former Rep. Walz join other political and community leaders, including former First Lady Diane Patrick, former Suffolk County Sheriff and Secretary of Public Safety Andrea Cabral, State Representative Liz Malia, Bill Walczak, Diana Hwang, Dr. Atyia Martin, John Borders IV, and Makeeba McCreary, in endorsing Andrea Campbell for mayor of Boston.

OTIS HOUSE (from pg. 1)

ly plans to reopen this summer, the app allows visitors to access it in the meantime, Maler said, and when it does reopen, the app will be available at a kiosk inside the museum, as well as on visitors' personal devices, so they can use it to supplement their in-person tours.

Susanna Crampton, Historic New England's public relations officer, wrote: "We are excited by the opportunity to really expand our visitor outreach. This new virtual visitor experience makes Otis House more accessible than ever before. It provides an opportunity

for the visitor to really explore a topic, for us to tell a broader story and to share new research. Visitors from all over can use their computer or mobile device to discover Otis House and the history of the surrounding neighborhood."

The app for the Otis House, as well as for several of Historic New England's other properties, was made possible through a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) CARES Act, said Maler.

View the new Otis House app at <https://otis.house>.

HILL HOUSE (from pg. 1)

eral counsel for the Boston Retirement Board, was on the board for 25 years, from 1978 until 2003, serving as its president in 2001-02 and as co-president, alongside Sharon Malt, from 1998 to 2000).

Besides attending the summer camp with his brother, Charlie, Will participated in baseball and summer and was on hand for Halloween parties and other special events sponsored by Hill House throughout his childhood. He would even pitch in at Hill House's annual Christmas tree sale as a youngster, he said, with him and a friend each carrying one end of a tree down Mount Vernon Street en route to its destination.

Will aged out of Hill House's programming by the time he reached his early teens and went away to boarding school soon afterwards, but he would still help out with the tree deliveries (albeit no longer on foot) after he got his driver's license and would come home for the holidays.

After high school, Will returned to Boston to attend Suffolk University, earning his Bachelor of Journalism degree in 2012. He began his career selling residential real estate three years later and, as a newcomer to that industry, wanted to get more involved in and give back to the communities where he was working. Somewhat inevitably, this drew Will, who now serves as senior vice president at Compass Real Estate's Newbury Street office, back to Hill House because, he said, "it brought back so many great memories from when I was a kid."

Although he had no prior coaching experience, Will has now been volunteering as a baseball and soccer coach at Hill House for five years. "It's been an awesome experience," he said.

His father, who credits much of Will's future success to the formative time he spent at Hill House, said, "Will's really good at networking, building bridges and collaborating with people, and a lot of these skills he probably developed at Hill House over the years with its programming. I think it imbued Will with the community spirit that he's really good at."

Marshall Caldera, Hill House's athletic director, describes Will as "by far our most-consistent volunteer presence."

Caldera said, "Will's remained a really consistent volunteer, just contributing a couple of hours each week. It's really amazing and not that common, which speaks to his giving nature."

Now 29, Caldera got involved in Hill House himself through its baseball program when he was



Then-Mayor Thomas M. Menino is seen with father-and-son John and Will Natoli in 2001 when Hill House opened the Mount Vernon Firehouse as its new headquarters.

9 and his family relocated to the North End from Arizona, and he also went participated in the summer camp, among other offerings.

Like Will, Caldera also aged out of Hill House's programming when he reached his teens, but each summer when he was attending the University of Maine as an undergrad, he would return to Boston and work as a councilor at the summer camp.

Upon earning his degree in 2013, Caldera returned to Boston, and to Hill House, where he found employment as an off-season

coach. He climbed the organization's ranks from athletic instructor, to camp director, to athletic coordinator, before being named athletic manager in 2016.

Today, Caldera, who was promoted to athletic director last November, credits Hill House's enduring success largely to the selfless commitment of volunteers like Will.

"Hill House is very much a volunteer organization," Caldera said, "and it's beyond words how much Will and others like him have done for us."

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LOCAL STUDENTS EARN ACADEMIC HONORS

LOCAL STUDENTS WHO MADE THE UMASS AMHERST FALL 2020 DEAN'S LIST

Below is a list of local students who were named to the dean's list at the University of Massachusetts Amherst for the fall 2020 semester.

In order to qualify, an undergraduate student must receive a 3.5 grade-point average or better on a four-point scale.

BOSTON

Anthony Christopher Bordon

Si Hua Cai
Lukas Towns Franken
Gordon Edward Jacobs
Nathanael Donald Krulewitch
Penghui Lao
Klarissa Marie Lopez
Angela Jing Louie
Nora Emilie Raftery
Alistaire Rauch
Eve Alexandra Slattery
Kimberly To
Ariana Idalis Vazquez
Jia Hui Yu
Jia Lin Yu
Minting Zeng
Evan Zhu

NEIGHBORHOOD ROUNDUP

HILL HOUSE 2021 SUMMER CAMP REGISTRATION NOW OPEN!

Hill House, Inc. located at 127 Mount Vernon S., has officially opened up Summer Camp registration for 2021 campers.

Now in its 22nd year, Hill House Camps (Kiddie Kamp for 3-5 year olds and Day Camp for 5- to 12-year-olds) feature: weekly Day Camp field trips; Kiddie

Kamp onsite adventures; expanded enrichment opportunities; sailing, theatre, sports and film camp options; weekly themes; extended day options for Day Campers; and expanded LIT program for 13- to 15-year-olds.

Visit Hill House's Summer Camp website (www.hillhouse-boston.org/Camps.htm) to learn more about all the fun. For more information on registering, contact Chelsea Evered at 617-227-5838 or cvevered@hillhouseboston.org.

BEACON HILL BEAT

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Larceny - Shoplifting

02/04/21 - A Charles Street pharmacy reported an unknown male suspect loaded up a shopping

cart with food, placed the items into his backpack and fled from the store with them at about 2:08 a.m.

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St. Joseph's Parish program offers helping hand to Neighbors In Need

By Dan Murphy

There are times when we could all use a helping hand and other times when we could lend one, and that's the underlying sentiment behind Neighbors In Need (NIN NID) - a program that connects St. Joseph's parishioners with neighbors who could use a little assistance or just some cheering up.

"Our pastoral care and outreach ministries recognize that charity begins at home," Fr. Joe White said, "and opens our eyes the needs of our sisters and brothers here and beyond our local areas."

The program began several years ago as a branch of its "tree and outreach efforts," said Fr. White, as a way to respond to the needs of seniors, those living alone and other vulnerable people living in the community of the West End, Beacon Hill, Government Center and the North End. Those in need would communicate their needs to the church, which would in turn put them in touch with a parishioner willing to run to the grocery store for them, bake them bread, drop by a for visit or just send them a card - whatever it is that they personally want and need.

"Some aren't able to be the active suppliers and deliverers and still there's been a role for them, too," Fr. White added. "Some provide finances, and there's arrangements made for local markets to fulfill deliveries. Others provide gift cards for the NIN NID efforts."

Sometimes those giving go beyond providing their recipient with just the essentials, Fr. White said, as was the case with one Beacon Hill parishioner, who, upon learning that their person in need had a strong affinity for artichokes, included a few of them in the supplies for delivery. The recipient only speaks Italian, Fr. White added, but the joy he showed upon seeing the artichokes transcended any language barrier.

"One individual able to be the one In Deed connects with the one In need," Fr. White said, "and the miraculous irony of it is that the one In Deed receives so much more from the one In Need."

Reaching out to the homeless and the marginalized is also an integral part of NIN NID, Fr. White said, and through one of its initiatives called Go Sox, which launched on Opening Day of the

Red Sox's 2018 season, Individual Care bags of socks, hygiene items, water and power bars are distributed outside the church and on the nearby streets.

NIN NID has seen the demand for its services increase four-fold since the pandemic struck one year ago, Fr. White said, because as more people have chosen not to leave their homes, the need to have milk, bread, fruit and veggies, and other basic items delivered to them has grown exponentially. "One-to-one phone contact and personal delivery drop-off simply grew organically," he added.

The program, meanwhile, has proven sustainable as one-time recipients of its services are now stepping up to help out their Neighbors In Need.

"Some of those who have received and reaped the benefits have in turn become Neighbors In Deed after being after being Neighbors in Need," Fr. White said. "I think it's very circular [because] out of suffering come caring and concern."

For more information on NIN NID, visit stjosephboston.org under "Parish Outreach" or call St. Joseph's parish office at 617-523-4342.

BHCA (from pg. 1)

Building, Civic Engagement, and Historic Preservation. Committee chairs are board members who volunteer their time and share their expertise to implement plans that relate to the goals of the orga-

nization for the good of our neighborhood. The BHCA encourages interested neighbors to become members of the BHCA and to join any of our Committees that match your interests and experience.

Upcoming Meetings & Special Events

Architecture Committee - Monday, February 15*

* Email info@bhccivic.org for details and joining instructions.

Become a member!

If you have yet to become a member of the BHCA, we invite you to join. By joining our membership, you strengthen our numbers and add credibility to our purpose as advocates for Beacon Hill for the past 99 years. Most importantly, you join a community of residents, businesses, and volunteers who work to preserve this special neighborhood. Please visit bhccivic.org or call the office at 617-227-1922 to become a member and get involved today!

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City Council holds hearing on BLC eligibility requirements for landmarks in Boston

By Lauren Bennett

The City Council Committee on Government Operations held a hearing on February 8 regarding a petition for a special law regarding an Act Relative to the Boston Landmarks Commission (BLC) that would change language in the requirements for Boston buildings, sites, and other features to be eligible for consideration to be a landmark.

Sponsored by Councilors Kenzie Bok and Liz Breadon, Bok said the docket came to be as a result of many conversations Bok has had with her constituents during her time as a councilor.

When the Boston Landmarks Commission was established in 1975, it was written into the language that in order for a Boston building or site to be landmarked, it has to be “any physical feature or improvement designated by the commission in accordance with section four as a physical feature or improvement which in whole or part has historical, social, cultural, architectural or aesthetic significance to the city and the commonwealth, the New England region or the nation,” according to the legislation.

The petition would not automatically landmark any buildings or sites, and the existing process would still be in place. The petition would simply change the language to allow more buildings and sites to be eligible by allowing city significance alone to be enough for something to be considered for landmarking.

In order to become official, the proposal “would need consideration at the State House and a signature from the governor,” Bok said.

“This should be a decade where we think about how to preserve

our city’s history,” Bok continued. She said that Boston should be focusing on “acknowledging the richness and diversity” of its history, including immigrant, African American, Native American, and other contributions.

She said that she believes the current “standard of significance to the Commonwealth or nation” has had a connotation of preserving the white narrative of the history of the city of Boston.

“I think that’s something we should find ways to undo,” Bok said.

“I feel strongly about this issue,” Councilor Breadon said. “This initiative is an important thing to try and protect.”

Councilor Ed Flynn said that he is “interested in learning about the contributions of immigrants to our city. I would like to learn more about the proposal and see what specifically the city of Boston has to do if something is historic or what type of interaction they have to do with the state or federal government.”

Carl Spector, Commissioner of the Environment Department for the City of Boston, said that this petition “will help create clarity” when it comes to landmarks.

“We don’t see any reason why that level of eligibility shouldn’t apply to individual landmarks also,” he said. “Because of the existing differences in eligibility that we have, we have made some attempts to protect individual buildings by instead of landmarking them, creating very, very small historic districts. That’s a much more cumbersome, complicated, and lengthy process. We would prefer to not go through that if we don’t have to. We think this is a very good proposal, and we certainly support its passage.”

Roseanne Foley, Executive Director of the Boston Landmarks Commission, said that the language as it stands now was “an oversight back in the ‘70s that has caused us endless headaches.” She said it “would be wonderful to have local historic landmarks.”

Foley explained the current process for creating a landmark in Boston. She said to start the process, there must be a petition of 10 registered voters “for whichever resource...folks want to designate,” and then it goes on a waiting list and is designated as a pending landmark “until we get the resources to do the study report,” which describes the history, planning background, architectural history, and other aspects of the building. The public is involved in this process and is allowed to provide input, and if the BLC votes to designate a building as a landmark, it is registered at the Register of Deeds.

Lynn Smiledge, Chair of the BLC, said that the BLC currently only has three preservation tools, and “of those three, two of them don’t really work well.”

She said that the three tools are local districts, Article 85 Demolition Delay, and landmarking. Smiledge said that local districts “take years to put in place,” the Article 85 demo delay “doesn’t work at all” and is “largely a waste of time and effort.”

As for Landmarking, she said it is “tricky because we can only landmark a handful of buildings.” She said that right now, there are only about 110 landmarked buildings across the entire city.

She said that the current language “forces us to only consider buildings important beyond Boston,” but she said “we believe a building needs to be important to

Bostonians” to be a landmark in Boston.

Greg Galer, Executive Director of the Boston Preservation Alliance, said that he is “very much in support” of this petition.

He added, “this isn’t how most cities operate.” He said he has been in touch with other cities, including Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, Fort Worth, Dallas, Cleveland, New Orleans, New York City, and several others, all of which use similar language to the petition to landmark buildings and sites in their cities.

“This is not a radical idea,” Galer said. “It’s common.”

He said he still supports the “evolution of the city,” and a petition like this will not change the city’s ability to grow and change.

He said that the changes would have been beneficial in instances like the loss of the West Gate building in Kenmore that may have been saved if the language of significance beyond Boston had been removed.

“Residents are desperate to save their history,” Galer said. “I urge you to put Boston’s process on par with the rest of the nation.”

Resident Holly Berry, who said she volunteers with the Fenway CDC, also said that “equity has

been first and foremost this past year.”

She said the entire landmarking process should be available in multiple languages to be more inclusive.

“I think it shouldn’t even hurt to have some sort of campaign on this,” she said. “I think more people need to know more about it. It needs to be all-inclusive. As a community member, I’m so pleased to see this proposal.”

Douglas Kelleher of Epsilon Associates said that he is “very familiar” with the Article 85 Demolition Delay process “as well as the current landmarking process,” and wondered how or if the new policy were to be enacted if there would be a transition period.

Bok emphasized that this petition is just a change in legislative language and would not have any affect on the actual process of something becoming landmarked.

“The amendment itself doesn’t change anything about the process; it just changes the standard,” she said. “I think it’s a question for us to discuss.”

If the Council passes the petition, it would then move onto the mayor for approval, and then onto the State House and the Governor for final approval.

Normal postal delivery schedule to resume on Tuesday, Feb. 16

Postal employees across the commonwealth will pause on Monday, February 15, to celebrate President’s Day. Retail offices will be closed and there will be no collection or street delivery of mail except for guaranteed overnight parcels.

Full retail and delivery operations will resume on Tuesday, February 16.

The Postal Service receives no tax dollars for operating expenses and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations.

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National Grid seeks approval to expand access to distributed solar

National Grid has filed a proposal to expand access to solar energy and provide annual bill discounts to 20,000 low-income customers in Massachusetts.

Solar-powered generation is a vital part of the strategy to meet Massachusetts' clean energy goals. While many customers benefit from the savings of rooftop solar, not every customer has the means or ability to install solar panels on their home.

Community Shared Solar is a part of the Solar Massachusetts Renewable Target (SMART) program, and it enables customers to lower their bills through local solar projects without having to install solar panels on their property.

To date, low-income customers have had limited access to the

monetary benefits available from participating in solar projects. As of December 2020, less than five percent of solar capacity in the SMART program serves low-income customers. The company's Solar Access Initiative, which is pending review from the state Department of Public Utilities (DPU), seeks to make clean energy more accessible to low-income customers.

"No matter their income level, all of our customers should share in the benefits of distributed solar," said Marcy Reed, president of National Grid in Massachusetts. "With this proposal, we are demonstrating our commitment to offering fair and affordable solutions as we drive toward our clean energy future."

The Solar Access Initiative aims to expand access to Community Shared Solar projects by eliminating the need for customer credit checks through a new Solar Simplified Billing program. In addition, National Grid will launch a Solar Enrollment Program exclusively available to low-income customers that will provide approximately \$240 in annual bill discounts.

•Solar Simplified Billing

The owners of many Community Shared Solar projects screen applicants using credit scores to reduce the risk of late payments. This significantly limits the pool of customers who can qualify to participate. National Grid's Solar Simplified Billing eliminates the need for credit checks by guaranteeing on-time payments to project owners.

•Solar Enrollment Program

National Grid's Solar Enrollment Program will simplify the process for low-income customers to sign up for Community Shared Solar projects. The program will offer a month-to-month subscrip-



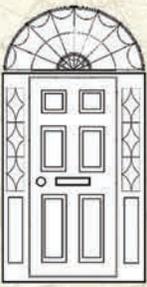
tion, no sign-up or cancellation fees, and an electricity bill discount of approximately \$240 per year.

Residential customers enrolled in National Grid's low-income rate will be eligible to participate. National Grid expects that the program will serve up to 20,000 low-income customers.

National Grid will contract with and match low-income participants to Community Shared Solar projects. The contracted projects

will not have to conduct their own customer billing or recruitment, reducing their costs and making more bill discounts available to the low-income participants.

National Grid is committed to being a responsible business partner, delivering sustainable energy safely, reliably and affordably, ensuring no one gets left behind. If approved by the DPU, the Solar Access Initiative would go into effect in early 2022.



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Former State Senator Ben Downing announces candidacy for Governor

By John Lynds

On Monday afternoon Ben Downing is inside Mi Pueblito Restaurant in East Boston picking up some tacos for lunch.

“The chicken jalapeno here is also really good,” Downing tells me as he pays for his lunch.

It’s been a busy morning for the Western Mass native that served 10 years as a State Senator from Pittsfield before stepping down in 2017 to work full-time in renewable energy.

Downing has been on the phone all morning tapping into his network of supporters, potential donors, friends and family.

On Monday morning Downing released a video announcing he is formally entering the 2022 race for Governor of Massachusetts.

“Growing up in Pittsfield, I lived what it meant to be an afterthought in the state’s political power circles,” said Downing. “Now, as an East Boston resident, I’m part of a new community just as familiar with being written off. From one side of Massachusetts to the other, I have spent my life in communities that have had to fight harder than they should to get fair representation, equitable access to resources, and attention from Beacon Hill. So I know what a difference state leadership makes. And I know we need better than what we are getting right now.”

Downing was one of the youngest state senators ever elected in

Massachusetts history in 2006 at the age of 24. During his tenure at the State House Downing emerged as a leading climate advocate.

Downing moved to Eastie five years ago with his wife, Micaelah Morrill, and are raising their two young sons Malcolm, age 3, and Eamon, age 9 months, in the neighborhood. However, Downing’s roots in Eastie are strong and the family got their start in the neighborhood at the turn of the last century. In fact, there’s a hero square on the corner of Sumner and Cottage Street in Jeffries Point that was dedicated by Mayor Martin Walsh in 2019 in honor of Downing’s great great-granduncle Albert Henry Downing of Eastie who died during World War I.

While living in Eastie Downing has seen first hand the inequities that have existed for quite some time but have only been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

“I think the major issues right are going to be the COVID response and the lessons we’ve learned from COVID,” said Downing. “What did it expose? What did it show? I think what it showed was something a lot of us already knew existed. We have these widening economic and racial gaps in Massachusetts around income and wages, around wealth and gaps between communities in parts of the state that have grown and have benefited from economic growth in recent decades. So the focus will

be how do we close those gaps, how do we address economic and racial justice and, while doing that, take the urgent steps that we need to take to address climate change. We know that the most scarce resource when it comes to climate change is time. We only have really a decade here to take the steps we need to build a sustainable society and I don’t think our actions at the state level have reflected that.”

Downing argues that most of the urgency over climate change has percolated up from members of the legislature, there needs to be more sense of urgency from the executive branch of government.

“We need more of a sense of urgency,” said Downing. “We know communities like East Boston, Chelsea and even Pittsfield were targeted for the development of fossil fuel infrastructure and have the asthma rates and other public health indicators to reflect that. We know a transition to a clean energy economy and the spillovers from that are positive. We have more jobs to create by putting solar on roofs, building energy storage, doing energy retrofits of homes, building offshore wind---there’s a lot of jobs there.”

Since 2017 Downing has served in a leadership role at Nexamp, a leading renewable energy company. In that role, Downing led efforts to improve accessibility within the green economy, expand to new markets outside of the



Ben Downing on the campaign trail.

northeast, and deploy cutting-edge energy storage solutions here at

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“I’ve come away from Nexamp more optimistic,” said Downing. “The naysayers will say, “Oh it’s

(DOWNING, Pg. 11)

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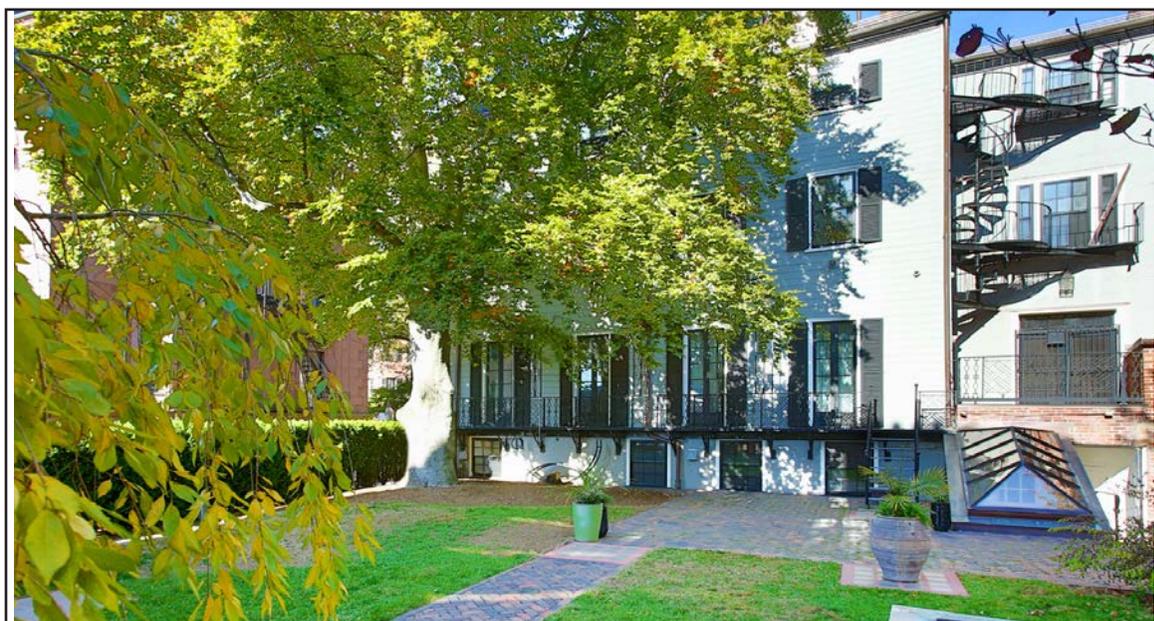
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BEACON HILL ARCHITECTURAL COMMISSION

The Beacon Hill Architectural Commission will hold a public hearing on Thursday, February 18 at 5 p.m. at the Boston City Hall, Piemonte Room, 5th floor.

Subject of the hearing will be applications for Certificates of Design Approval on the agenda below, reviews of architectural violations, and such businesses as may come before the commission, in accordance with Chapter 616 of the Acts of 1955 of the Massachusetts General Law as amended. Applications are available for review during business hours at the office of the Environment Department. Applicants or their representatives are required to attend, unless indicated otherwise below. Sign language interpreters are available upon request.

Attention: This hearing will only be held virtually and NOT in person. You can participate in this hearing by going to: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84470772576> or calling 1 (929) 205-6099 and entering meeting id # 844 7077 2576. You can also submit written comments or questions to BeaconHillAC@boston.gov.

I. Violation

APP # 21.0692 BH 11 Irving Street

Applicant: Roy Harriman

Proposed Work: Ratification of

unapproved intercom with new intercom.

II. Design Review Hearing

APP # 21.0676 BH 62 Chestnut Street

Applicant: Joe Bocelli; Sleeping Dog Properties

Proposed Work: Replace wood shutters with replicas to match in color, style and material.

APP # 21.0677 BH 73 Charles Street

Applicant: Lindsey Perrelli

Proposed Work: New Store Signage.

APP # 21.0678 BH 69 Charles Street

Applicant: Laura Cousineau

Proposed Work: New Store Signage.

APP # 21.0679 BH 40 Phillips Street

Applicant: Jaime Morin

Proposed Work: Replace twelve, wood, 1 over 1 windows with twelve, fibrex, 1 over 1, windows.

APP # 21.0680 BH 83 Mount Vernon Street

Applicant: Marc Beaulieu

Proposed Work: New fifth floor dormer and deck, new door hardware and repaint front door Heritage Red HC-181, new front light fixture, new intercom (See Additional Items under Administrative Review).

APP # 21.0681 BH 78 Mount Vernon Street

Applicant: Dana Nielson

Proposed Work: New dormers at rear façade, new oriel.

APP # 21.0682 BH 27 Brimmer Street

Applicant: Peter White

Proposed Work: Replace roof deck, remove and rebuild head house in a new location, new guardrails, and new skylight.

APP # 21.0683 BH 66 Beacon Street

Applicant: James Fay

Proposed Work: Repaint front door BM-Gloss black.

III. Administrative Review/Approval: In order to expedite the review process, the commission has delegated the approval of certain work items, such as those involving ordinary maintenance and repair, restoration or replacement, or which otherwise have a minimal impact on a building's appearance, to commission staff pending ratification at its monthly public hearing. Having been identified as meeting these eligibility criteria and all applicable guidelines, the following applications will be approved at this hearing:

Applicants whose projects are listed under this heading NEED NOT APPEAR at the hearing. Following the hearing, you will be issued a Determination Sheet to present at the Inspectional Services Department (1010 Massachusetts Avenue) as proof of project approval when applying for permits. ISD personnel will send an electronic copy of your building-permit application to the commission staff for review. (To avoid potential confusion, the text

of your building-permit application should be consistent with the project description given below.) Commission staff will accordingly authorize the execution of the work, attaching any applicable provisos, reflecting the relevant guidelines and precedents.

Please note that following issuance of the determination sheet no further correspondence will be issued for the applications listed below. The electronic building-permit application as annotated by commission staff will constitute your Certificate of Appropriateness; this will be valid for one year from the date of the hearing. The applicant is required to notify the commission of any project changes; failure to do so may affect the status of the approval.

If you have any questions not addressed by the above information, please contact staff at 617.635.3850 or BeaconHillAC@boston.gov Thank you.

APP # 21.0684 BH 33 Beacon Street: Spot repair slate roof in kind.

APP # 21.0685 BH 78 Beacon Street: Repoint brick façade and chimney in kind.

APP # 21.0686 BH 63 Chestnut Street: Install five storm windows on front façade. Two windows on the third floor, and three on the second floor.

APP # 21.0687 BH 24-26 Hancock Street: Repaint front door in kind (black). Clean front stoop, repaint in kind.

APP # 21.0680 BH 83 Mount Vernon Street At front façade, replace all front windows which are currently vinyl. Windows will be 6 over 6 wood true divided

lights, except on the second floor which will be 6 over 9 wood true divided lights. Install new shutters on front façade, painted black, Repair front dormers in kind, repaint BM- Black Forest Green, Repair bow roof and entry canopy with new standing seam copper, repoint chimney and reset chimney pots, repoint all masonry on facades visible from the street, reset front walkway pavers, repaint garden fence BM Black, repair and repaint side lights; color BM Monterey White HC-127, restore front door. (See Additional Items Under Design Review).

APP # 21.0688 BH 57 Myrtle Street: Repoint masonry façade in kind using type "N" Mortar in ¾" deep cut joints.

APP # 21.0689 BH 35 Revere Street: At front façade, replace one aluminum clad, 1 over 1 window with one, wood, 1 over 1 window.

APP # 21.0690 BH 19 West Cedar Street: Repaint fire escape, replace hardware in kind.

APP # 21.0691 BH 47 West Cedar Street: Replace several bricks on chimney. Mortar and brick to match historic bricks/mortar.

IV. Ratification Of 1/21/2021 Public Hearing Minutes

V. Staff Updates

Vi. Projected Adjournment: 8:00

Date Posted: 2/8/2021

Beacon Hill Architectural Commission

Members: Arian Allen, Miguel Rosales, Danielle Santos, P.T. Vineburgh, Vacancy

Alternates: Matthew Blumenthal, Alice Richmond, Wen Wen, Vacancy, Vacancy

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Lu, Peiqian	Gary W Rush RET	110 Stuart St #26A	\$1,010,000
MSGM LLC	First Savannah Ltd	534-538 Commonwealth Ave #5B	\$690,000
BEACON HILL			
Common Branch LLC	Branche Street T	19 Branch St	\$1,900,000
Allen, Amy	Pimental, Matthew D	69 Joy St	\$1,727,500
Vonmetzsch, George A	Mount Vernon 160 RT	160 Mount Vernon St	\$4,500,000
Brian Oconnell	L M Connors RT 2005	8 Whittier Pl #22K	\$369,750
BAY VILLAGE/SOUTH END/KENMORE			
Shah, Ankit	Fahey, Christopher E	5 Appleton St #6A	\$1,310,000
Choukhmane, Taha	Johnson, Kirstin	433 Columbus Ave #3	\$815,000
Boyd, Frederick C	Cohen, Merrill L	312 Dartmouth St #312	\$4,500,000
Wang, Quanying	Axelrod, Stephen J	74 Fenway #36	\$755,000
Zhang, Lecheng	Miqueu, Francois	108 Gainsborough St #303W	\$565,000
69-14 Park Drive RT	Hunt, Finley	69 Park Dr #14	\$346,100
Duong, Charlie	Wilson, Jason	60 Queensberry St #A	\$499,000
Su, Yuhong	50 Symphony LLC	50 Symphony Rd #402	\$1,149,000
Adam S Goldstein	West Brook House LLC	189 W Brookline St #PH	\$3,950,000
WATERFRONT/DOWNTOWN			
Pan 3 Avery LLC	3 Avery St Unit 901 RT	3 Avery St #901	\$660,000
Gibbons, Brian M	Mary Oliverson RET	17-R Clark St #1	\$665,000
Weitzman, Steven	Grewal, Harpreet	88 Kingston St #7D	\$1,330,000
Tran, Hai	R W Botnick T	165 Tremont St #803	\$1,725,000

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SU20C0362CA
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on the return day of
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a deadline by which you
must file a written appear-
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proceeding.

WITNESS, Hon. Brian J.
Dunn, First Justice of this
Court.
Date: January 27, 2021
Felix D. Arroyo,
Register of Probate
2/11/21
BH

Attention to Detail

BY PENNY CHERUBINO

THIS WEEK'S ANSWER



The Juliette balcony in the last clue is on 74 Beacon Street. Architectural historian Bainbridge Bunting wrote, "The handsome row of six granite houses at 70-76 Beacon Street erected by the Mount Vernon Proprietors in 1828 are today among the most charming structures in the entire length of Beacon Street."

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



Baker talks about economic recovery, state aid

By Lauren Bennett

Governor Charles Baker held a press conference on February 8 to talk about the importance of federal aid when it comes to economic recovery from the coronavirus pandemic.

The state's number of positive tests has been trending downward, and as of Sunday, there were 3,000 new cases in the Commonwealth, 1,389 people in the hospital—which Baker said was “down dramatically from January 4”—and 318 people in the ICU.

Baker also said that as of Sunday, 859,118 doses of the COVID-19 vaccine have been administered across the state, and more than 1.25 million doses have been

shipped to providers statewide.

“It would be critical from our point of view for Congress to pass significant relief swiftly to help us beat down the pandemic, and, just as importantly, help get our economy back on track,” Baker said.

“Here in Massachusetts, our economy was powering forward last February, but COVID brought everything to a grinding halt. We collaborated with public health experts to safely and carefully reopen our economy.”

Baker said that the state “is still down 330,000 jobs from this time last year,” and although the state is “now in a much better economic spot than we were last spring,” many people still do not have jobs.

“Many jobs that have been lost

will be difficult to bring back,” Baker said, such as ones in the hospitality, indoor entertainment, and other industries that Baker said he describes as being for the “the benefit of the crowd.”

He added that state finances “are also feeling the burden” of the pandemic.

“The feds can play a huge role with respect to vaccinations, testing, school reopenings for both K-12 and higher education, food insecurity, housing, rental, energy, and water assistance, small business support, and support for state’s local governments and territorial governments as they do the hard that’s going to be associated with trying to rebuild their economies, and especially deal with the

dramatic changes that have taken place with respect to how and where people work since this pandemic began,” Baker said.

“I can’t understate how big a challenge that is going to be for everybody as “we move through this pandemic and on into the future,” he continued. “While we are in a critical point in our fight against this pandemic and against this virus, it’s more important than ever that there be a predictable path forward for states and for local governments as we work to do the things we are going to need to do to rebuild our economy, deal with the consequences of the pandemic on many of our downtowns, and to find a path to make sure that all of our people here in

the Commonwealth of Massachusetts are able to weather the final few months of this as people get vaccinated, and more importantly, are able to find a way forward, back into the workforce hopefully, and back into the life that they used to have before this all began last March.”

US House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Richard Neal also spoke at the press conference to talk about President Biden’s proposed assistance package, adding that the “Speaker made it clear that this will pass,” around the second or third week of March. The package proposes \$1.9 trillion in spending.

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CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

North Washington Street Bridge construction look-ahead through Feb. 20

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.

VIBRATORY HAMMER NOISE IMPACTS

•A vibratory hammer is being used to install the five cofferdams which will be needed to build the piers of the new bridge. Installation of each cofferdam takes about two weeks.

•The project has positioned a combination of hanging sound blankets and temporary barrier to minimize noise impacts from the

vibratory hammer. These measures will be adjusted as needed and appropriate.

•Use of the vibratory hammer began on 10/6/20. Work hours are during the day (7 a.m. – 3 p.m.)

DESCRIPTION OF SCHEDULED WORK

•Installation of south abutment haunch and drilled shafts, installation and maintenance of silt curtain, construction of piers, and sheeting and bracing of cofferdams.

WORK HOURS

•Most work will be done during the daytime (6:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.)

WORK THAT HAS BEEN COMPLETED

•Prior to 2/7/21, crews continued preparatory work to build the new bridge. Cofferdam installation is 90% complete.

TRAVEL TIPS

Westerly sidewalk, Lovejoy Wharf stairs near Converse are open to the public with the opening of the temporary bridge, the adjacent section of the Harborwalk passing under the bridge remains closed.

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.

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Beacon Hill COVID update

By John Lynds

Last week there was no change in the cumulative COVID-19 positive test rate in Beacon Hill and the surrounding neighborhoods and the weekly positive test rate decreased for a third week in a row.

According to the latest data released by the Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC) last Friday, overall since the pandemic started 43,525 Beacon Hill, Back Bay, North End, West End and Downtown residents have been tested for COVID-19 and the data shows that 5.7 percent of those tested were COVID positive--this was the same percentage reported by the BPHC two weeks ago.

Last week 3,064 residents were

tested and 3 percent were positive--a 6.25 percent decrease from the 3.2 reported two Fridays ago.

Citywide, 32,198 residents were tested and 5.8 percent were COVID positive--a 15 percent decrease from the 6.8 percent testing positive two weeks ago.

The infection rate in Beacon Hill and surrounding neighborhoods increased 6.6 percent in one week according to the latest city statistics.

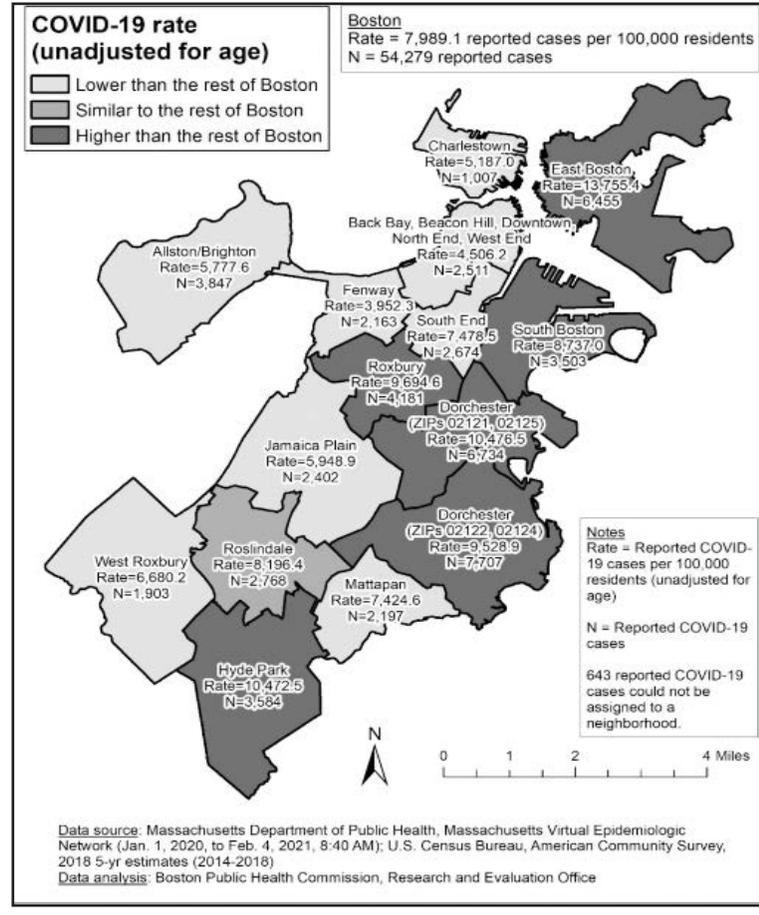
The BPHC data released last Friday showed Beacon Hill, Back Bay, North End, West End and Downtown had an infection rate of 450.6 cases per 10,000 residents, up 6 percent from 432.8 cases per 10,000 residents.

An additional 99 residents

became infected with the virus last week and the total number of cases in the area increased from 2,412 cases to 2,511 cases as of last Friday.

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

Citywide positive cases of coronavirus increased 5 percent last week and went from 52,704 cases to 55,404 confirmed cases in a week. Forty-three Boston residents died from the virus last week and there are now 1,196 total deaths in the city from COVID.



FBI cautions public to beware of romance scammers looking for more than love

The FBI Boston Division is continuously working to raise awareness about online romance scams, also called confidence fraud. In this type of fraud, scammers take advantage of people looking for companionship or romantic partners on dating websites, apps, chat rooms, and social networking sites with the sole goal of obtaining access to their financial or personal identifying information. Romance scams are prevalent, especially during this time of year. Increased isolation brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic has also resulted in more people looking for love online.

The criminals who carry out romance scams are experts at what they do. They spend hours honing their skills, relying on well-rehearsed scripts that have been used repeatedly and successfully, and sometimes keep journals on their victims to better understand how to manipulate and exploit them. In some cases, victims may be recruited, unknowingly, to transfer money illegally on behalf of others.

“The consequences of these scams are often financially and emotionally devastating to victims who rarely get their money back and may not have the ability to recover from the financial loss,” said Joseph R. Bonavolonta, Special Agent in Charge of the FBI Boston Division. “While we recognize that it may be embarrassing for victims to report this type of fraud, it’s important to do so, so that the FBI and our law enforcement partners can do everything in our power to ensure these online

imposters are held accountable.”

According to the FBI’s Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3), which provides the public with a means of reporting internet-facilitated crimes, romance scams have resulted in one of the highest amounts of financial losses when compared to other online crimes. Nationwide in 2020, almost 23,768 complaints categorized as romance scams were reported to IC3 (4,295 more than the previous year), and the losses associated with those complaints total approximately \$605 million. Here in the Boston Division which includes all of Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island, 569 complaints were filed with financial losses totaling approximately \$11.7 million.

57 victims in Maine reported financial losses totaling \$1,514,636.

361 victims in Massachusetts reported financial losses totaling \$8,006,260.

71 victims in New Hampshire reported losing \$820,326.

80 victims in Rhode Island lost approximately \$1,381,336.

The reported losses are most likely much higher as many victims are hesitant to report being taken advantage of due to embarrassment, shame, or humiliation.

Be careful what you post online because scammers can use that information against you, and always assume that con artists are trolling even the most reputable dating and social media sites. If you develop a romantic relationship with someone you meet

online, consider the following:

Scammers can use details shared on social media and dating sites to better understand and target you.

Research the person’s photo and profile using online searches to see if the image, name, or details have been used elsewhere.

Go slowly and ask lots of questions.

Beware if the individual seems too perfect, or quickly asks you to communicate “offline.”

Beware if the individual attempts to isolate you from friends and family.

Beware if the individual claims to be working and living far away, whether it’s on the other side of the country or overseas.

Beware if the individual promises to meet in person, but then always cancels because of some emergency.

Beware if you’re asked to send inappropriate photos or financial information that could later be used to extort you.

Never send money to anyone you don’t know personally.

Never help anyone move money through your own account or someone else’s. You could become an unwitting money mule for the perpetrator helping to carry out other theft and fraud schemes.

If you suspect an online relationship is a scam, stop all contact immediately and if you have already sent money, it is extremely important to report any transfer of funds to your financial institution and file a complaint with the FBI’s Internet Crime Complaint Center at www.ic3.gov.

On Friday the BPHC released its weekly COVID-19 stats by neighborhood that tracks infection rates and COVID testing results in Boston neighborhoods.

DOWNING (from pg. 7)

big pie in the sky stuff” and it’s not going to really do anything with the economy. I think the most exciting thing for me is to see the solutions that we have to climate change that are at our fingertips--whether that’s solar energy efficiency, battery storage, offshore wind--they’re there to be tapped. What’s been missing is leadership that’s ready to tap into that potential and set a higher standard for all of us. All too often you see Governor Baker echo talking points from the real estate lobby and others who say these will cost too much and slow down development. We’ve heard those concerns every step along the way when it comes to the climate change debate in Massachusetts. But every step along the way those talking points have been proven wrong. Yes, there are costs but the benefits far outweigh the costs. We’ve seen that time and time again and the great thing about these jobs is they will be done in Massachusetts, the work has to be done here, and they’re good blue collar jobs that can be done in every corner of the state.”

Another focus said Downing will be to invest in transportation that can help cut down on carbon emissions.

“A big part of addressing climate change issues is making transit more reliable and you look at governor Baker’s record; it’s a record of cutting the budget at the MBTA,” said Downing. “We need

to increase ridership and make it more reliable but we need to do the same with the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) because the BRT just isn’t relevant but we need it to be. We need people to see that as a viable option that gets them out of their cars. It is a significant undertaking but it’s that much tougher to do without leadership from the corner office.”

As a state Senator, Downing represented the largest district in the state, comprising 52 cities and towns. Over a decade in office he led legislative efforts to accelerate our clean energy development and respond to climate change, rebuild our urban and rural economies, reduce poverty and hunger, strengthen our state ethics laws, and expand protections for transgender individuals.

“I’m running for Governor to build a fairer, stronger Massachusetts,” said Downing. “I believe there is no limit to what we can accomplish here. But the leadership needed to unlock this potential is sorely lacking. As we recover and reimagine our future in the months and years to come, we need a Governor who sees, feels and understands the gravity of this moment and how we got here; who is not content with accumulating power but who is ready to use that power to respond boldly to the dire impacts of the pandemic, rising racial inequality, and the urgency of climate change.”

CITY PAWS

Companion animals and healthy aging

By Penny & Ed Cherubino

specific benefits would increase.

Reported Benefits

The survey found, “Pet owners said that their pets help them enjoy life (88%), make them feel loved (86%), reduce stress (79%), provide a sense of purpose (73%), and help them stick to a routine (62%). Respondents also reported that their pets connect them with other people (65%), help them be physically active (64% overall and 78% among dog owners), and help them cope with physical and emotional symptoms (60%), including taking their mind off pain (34%).”

Even with social distancing, dogs are still a great way of connecting with people and much research has been done on the importance of social connections for healthy aging. The reasons that people of all ages gave for adopting animals are reflected in these findings.

Reported Concerns

Reasons for not having a pet included, “... not wanting to be tied down (42%), cost (23%), and not having time to care for a pet (20%). One in six respondents (16%) cited allergies (either their own or a household member’s) as a reason for not having a pet, while 19% did not have an interest in pets.”

Those with pets also noted



PHOTO BY DONNA CECACI

Survey says, “Senior pet owners said that their pets help them enjoy life...”

As an animal lover, one of the most difficult decisions you will make as you age is whether or not you will be able to care for a companion animal for the rest of its life. In reality, this is an important thought every animal guardian should have before bringing a new animal into their life. Aging just makes it more apparent.

Obviously, we should all have a plan for what will happen to our cats and dogs when we can no longer care for them. We have to plan for an alternate guardian and if possible set up a trust to provide a financial cushion for someone who takes on that responsibility. With those items in place, seniors can make a decision based on their individual situation.

Pets Contribute to Healthy Aging

As you prepare a list of pros and cons, you might consider how a pet could improve your life as you age. The University of Michigan conducted a survey of adults aged 50–80 about the benefits and challenges of having a pet.

At the time of the survey, 55% of older adults reported having a pet. We would guess that some of the many animals adopted during the pandemic increased that percentage. We also think that if the survey were conducted today, the percentages of people who cite

challenges related to travel, financial issues, and putting the needs of the pet ahead of their own needs and health.

Alternatives to Pet Ownership

We have often suggested sharing a pet with another household as a way to enjoy some of the benefits of having a pet with fewer downsides. You could also set up a pet sitting business as a part of

your retirement plan.

If your reason for not having a pet is housing-related, you could become a house and pet sitter meaning you would also be able to enjoy living in other settings as well as helping people solve their own travel-related pet issues. For example, since we have a dog who doesn’t like to be left alone in strange places, we hire a pet sitter to come and stay with her when

we go out to lunch or dinner. With the number of people who have added companion animals to their lives during the pandemic, this will be a growing need once everyone’s work and leisure travel return to normal.

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

THE CITY OF BOSTON CAN HELP YOU

apply for the Senior Circuit Breaker Tax Credit program.

The Senior Circuit Breaker Tax Credit helps people 65+ get a tax break and maybe even a refund. You may qualify even if you don’t usually file taxes. Learn more by calling 311 and put money back in your pocket.



Mayor Martin J. Walsh

#BOSCanHelp

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