

## FCDC Looks Set to Develop 72 Burbank Project

BY ALISON PULTINAS

The small parking lot at 72 Burbank Street in the East Fens—owned by Forest Properties (also known as Parkside Tower LLC)—could see a construction start this year. It would be Fenway CDC’s version of a proposal already approved for compact apartments. The CDC and Forest Properties signed a purchase-and-sale agreement in December; final transactions are expected later this year.

When Attorney Marc LaCasse presented Forest Properties’ original plan to the Zoning Board of Appeal on June 25, 2019, the project, almost universally criticized in the neighborhood, won support from Shanice Pimentel of the Mayor’s Office and Nick Carter from District 8 Councilor Josh Zakim’s office.

At the ZBA meeting, only one person—Daniel Epstein, a trustee at 54-56 Burbank—raised objections. A memorandum of agreement had been negotiated with the CDC about access to nearby alleys. It included a provision banning rental of the proposed apartments to undergraduates and a promise to stabilize rents for two longtime tenants of another Forest property on Clearway Street.

However, in 2020, the CDC took on the challenge of adding more affordable housing to the East Fens. It began negotiations with Forest to acquire the parcel at 72, next door to the CDC’s offices at 70, and opened a discussion with Boston’s Department of Neighborhood Development (DND) about financing.

So, what has changed since Forest received its ZBA approval in June 2019? The CDC plan includes 27 units, not the

original 32, and all will be income-restricted in perpetuity for households at or below 60 percent of the area median income (AMI). The reduction in units translated into more units of larger dimensions. The unit mix is now 8 studios, 7 one-bedroom apartments, and 12 two-bedrooms. Forest had proposed 13 studios, 12 one-bedrooms, and 7 two-bedrooms.

However, some aspects of the project have not changed. The units will remain rentals and are still undersized, officially meeting the BPDA’s special compact-living standards. The same architectural firm, Embarc, has updated the previous design but kept a 600-square-foot community room and a bike-storage room. The CDC also will keep the promise of five years of Bluebikes membership as a free benefit for all residents.

The entitlements from the previous approvals all carry over to the CDC, so although a new round of public comments was solicited, no votes are needed from the ZBA or the BPDA.

The CDC submitted an application in DND’s fall 2020 funding round to secure money from both the Community Preservation Act fund and the Neighborhood Housing Trust (NHT), with a total request of \$2,800,00.

When the Community Preservation Committee met on December 7, its members approved a preliminary endorsement of DND’s recommended \$1 million allocation for the project, one of only three developments to secure CPA housing funds (the bulk of affordable-housing grants go directly to city programs managed by DND). Likewise, the NHT on December 17 voted to approve

\$1.8 million. The presentation to the Trust estimated the total development cost as \$15,117,028.

Burbank Terrace is also in line for low-income tax-credit funding from the state’s Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) winter competition. Although applications were due January 21, the CDC won approval in November 2020 through the department’s pre-application process. Suneeth St. John from Fenway CDC declined to share the specific amount requested from DHCD. “We are waiting to clarify the protocol with respect to publicizing our funding request with DHCD before awards are made, the process being highly competitive and all,” he said.

According to historic maps, the parcel at 72 Burbank has never been built on, an unusual condition in the neighborhood. In response to a question about possible archaeological findings, Joe Bagley, the City of Boston archaeologist, said that based on his review of the maps, the location (as well as any undeveloped parcels near the Muddy River) is sensitive for preserved native Massachusetts archaeological sites, given its proximity to the Muddy River and Back Bay. However Suneeth John, FCDC’s director of real estate, says subsurface



Embarc Studio's rendering of the CDC's Burbank Terrace project at 72 Burbank Street.

soil testing shows extensive urban fill. Bagley said that would make it very difficult for digs conducted by volunteers.

Alison Pultinas lives in Mission Hill

EMBARC RENDERING COURTESY OF THE BPDA

## Pushed Out of Kenmore, Post Office Finds A Home in Audubon Circle



A new post office will open soon at 508 Park Dr. in Audubon Circle. It replaces the branch on Deerfield Street in Kenmore Square, which closed in June 2019 as Related Beal cleared parcels for its redevelopment project, now under construction (below). Despite multiple attempts, The Fenway News was unable to get the Postal Service to provide the branch’s opening date.



PHOTOS: STEVE WOLF

## AT CHARLESGATE, GETTING THAT SINKING FEELING

On Jan. 17, a large sinkhole appeared on the east bank of the Muddy River right by the “Grove”—the brick patio-type area between Charlesgate East and the river at Beacon Street. By the 19th, the hole measured roughly 5 feet across and 8 feet deep, with water visible in the lower right corner when facing the river. DCR quickly enclosed the area with tape and barriers.

Unlike the sinkhole that appeared last year at Ronan Park—most likely an old well—this one sits on filled land, and staffers at the Emerald Necklace Conservancy suspect it resulted from water undermining soil as it ran through a flaw in structures underground. DCR removed water from the sinkhole on the 25th and will continue to investigate.



PHOTO: THE EMERALD NECKLACE CONSERVANCY

## CIVIC AGENDA

- TUE, FEB. 9, 6-9PM > Remote public meeting for 601 Newbury St. This will be the only public meeting for the project; registration required. Visit [www.bostonplans.org/news-calendar/calendar/2021/02/09/601-newbury-street-public-meeting](http://www.bostonplans.org/news-calendar/calendar/2021/02/09/601-newbury-street-public-meeting) for details and to register.
- FRI, FEB. 19 > Deadline for comments on 601 Newbury St. project. Submit by mail, or email to [michael.a.sinatra@boston.gov](mailto:michael.a.sinatra@boston.gov), or through [www.bostonplans.org/projects/development-projects/601-newbury-street#comment\\_Form](http://www.bostonplans.org/projects/development-projects/601-newbury-street#comment_Form)

**CORONAVIRUS VACCINATION AT FENWAY PARK! SEE P2**

## ARTS ACADEMY TAKES SHAPE ON IPSWICH



The future home of the Boston Arts Academy—Boston's only public high school for the performing and visual arts—has begun to assume a recognizable shape as the \$125 million reconstruction project on Ipswich Street continues. Boston Public Schools projects that the building will be completed by January 2022. The state-of-the-art facility will include dedicated rehearsal and performance spaces, gallery space, studios for music, visual arts, and fashion design, academic classrooms, recreation areas, kitchens, and student commons.

**FENWAY PARK OPENS FOR VACCINATIONS**

Starting Mon., Feb. 1, Fenway Park will become a vaccination site, ultimately serving thousands of people Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm. Managed by CIC Health, the clinic will have a set-up similar to the one used last fall for early voting. You'll need a reservation (slots will be released on a weekly basis) which you can make at [www.cic-health.com/vaccines](http://www.cic-health.com/vaccines). The user-friendly site also spells out eligibility, required identification, and anything else you need to know.

## Residents Continue Fight For The 55 Bus

More than a dozen West Fens residents, other Fenway neighbors, Robert Kordenbrock of the Fenway Community Center, and David Reedy of Fenway Health took the time to record two-minute comments opposing elimination of the 55 bus route for the Jan. 11 meeting of the MBTA's Fiscal Management and Control Board.

Many argued that it made no sense to cut the service to save money when Congress had just included money for transit agencies in the emergency relief funding it approved in late December. According to WBUR, the bill included \$14 billion for mass transit agencies.

A common theme of the messages was the importance of the bus connection for West Fens residents, especially seniors. Kathleen McBride called the route "a lifeline to Back Bay and downtown." As some stated, even if it was necessary to reduce the number of trips, eliminating the service completely would be unfair and hit elderly riders especially hard.

Signage on the bus route, which no longer runs to Park Street as it once did during working hours, has been inconsistent. Since September, the



route has ended at Copley Square, yet all bus signs remain present downtown, like this one on Tremont Street at the Boston Common. Turn to page 4 for residents' letters to the board about plans to eliminate the 55.

# NU's Fitzgerald Studies Building Equity into Climate Action

BY KELLY GARRITY

Although the past decade has seen around a 1 percent annual rise in global carbon dioxide emissions, policies put in place to limit the spread of coronavirus have resulted in a substantial decrease in emissions around the world. According to some estimates, the decrease is as great as 7 percent. During this time, scientists and scholars like Northeastern professor of urban and public policy Joan Fitzgerald have been researching ways cities can continue to keep emissions down, even after they return to the "new normal." In a June post on *Fast Company*, Fitzgerald discussed some of the findings from her recent book, *Greenovation: Urban Leadership on Climate Change*.

"Greenhouse gas emissions dropped 17 percent at the height of the coronavirus crisis, but in order to harness that, major changes will need to be enacted," Fitzgerald wrote. "One of the most significant ways to accomplish that is by electrifying the two primary types of vehicles on city streets: cars and buses."

Transportation, Fitzgerald argues,

is often the largest or second largest cause of emissions in cities. One of her main recommendations for cities is to shift public transportation, including buses and taxis, from diesel to electric power. In light of this, Fitzgerald has argued that the next economic-recovery package ought to include subsidies for electric vehicles.

The pandemic has also brought into sharp relief the need to consider equity in climate action. Scientists have found that climate change has compounded the impacts of coronavirus, especially in communities of color and low-income communities, both of which often bear the brunt of the impacts of climate change.

"It became so apparent that the frontline communities were the most impacted," said Fitzgerald, later adding, "They're the frontline workers who have to go to work, who have to get on the T, or public transit in other cities, and expose themselves, and because of the environmental pollution of their neighborhoods, they are more likely to have preconditions such as asthma or diabetes that make them more susceptible to COVID when they get it."

In her recent research, Fitzgerald looked at how cities were including a focus on equity in their climate action plans. She found that five cities—Austin, Baltimore, Cleveland, Portland, and Providence—stood out from the rest when it came to ensuring equity and community participation in the creation of climate action plans.

"Those are five cities that relatively recently updated their climate action plans, and in the course of doing so said 'we're going to focus on equity,'" said Fitzgerald. "What I did was look at, What does that mean, and how do they talk about equity?"

Fitzgerald found that of these cities, Providence and Austin were at the front of the pack.

"What I found in that study is that Providence and Austin had gone the furthest in engaging residents of frontline communities in the planning process. Residents were highly engaged in establishing goals and priorities," said Fitzgerald. In the case of Providence, the city involved residents in the goal-setting and implementation of the plan as well. Providence also ensured that those most affected by climate change

and pollution have a voice by including 10 representatives from frontline communities on the city's environmental justice committee.

Boston has a distance to go when it comes to participation and engagement of residents from low-income communities, Fitzgerald said. "I hear from frontline community organizations, a lot of them, that the city does come and hold meetings, but it's really to tell them what [the city is] planning on doing...as opposed to getting their input before doing it."

When it comes to the future of climate action in the city and globally, Fitzgerald said she is optimistic, but acknowledged that there is a long way to go.

"I'm very encouraged by the Biden administration and the people he has appointed, from John Kerry down," she said, but later noted that "even the Paris Agreement doesn't get us where we need to go by 2050...All we can do is plug away at it at the level of the city, of the state, of the nation, and hope we get there."

Kelly Garrity is a journalism student at Northeastern University.



## Mind the Gap? Harvard Does, And Builds a Bridge

Harvard Medical School's Countway Library of Medicine officially opened its new Huntington Avenue doors on January 6, completing a project begun in 2019. The landscaped plaza and entrance replace a driveway, loading dock, and awkward staircase. The new design has widened the sidewalk and added a ramp to connect to the courtyard and Shattuck Street. In a Harvard Medical School news post last year, Library Director Elaine Martin said that the decision to move the main entrance to Huntington Avenue builds a literal, as well as figurative, bridge between the library and the greater Longwood community. She said the gesture will help to break down the walls of the medical school and show that the library is welcoming.

## KENDI LOOKS AT RACIST HISTORY, DATA IN ZINN MEMORIAL LECTURE

BY RUTH KHOWAIS

**H**oward Zinn was a beloved civil rights and social activist and a faculty member in Boston University's political science department for 24 years. Zinn was known as a hero of the political left, a professor who inspired his students, and the author of the best-selling *A People's History of the United States*.

The Howard Zinn Memorial lecture series was initiated after his death in 2010. Each year, the series features a top-notch speaker who embodies Zinn's progressive values.

The 2020 lecture, on Dec. 7, was no exception, although it was hosted over Zoom.

It featured Ibram X. Kendi, the Andrew W. Mellon professor in the humanities at Boston University, founding director of BU's Center for Antiracist Research, and the author of the best seller *How to Be An Antiracist*. The lecture attracted 2,600 attendees.

This year's lecture took the form of a conversation with Nina Silber, a BU professor of American history and expert on the Civil War and women's history.

"Howard Zinn is one of the reasons why I decided to come to BU," Kendi told the audience at the beginning of the event, "to be able to walk on the same campus and think in the places he did and to activate people in the way that he did."

Kendi also told the audience that he wanted to come to Boston because he admired the abolitionists who were active here during the early 1800s, especially William Lloyd Garrison. Kendi said that some of those who recognized that slavery was wrong called for gradual emancipation, but William Lloyd Garrison called for "immediate emancipation." Kendi said that he takes his cue from Garrison.

"Once you know something is wrong," said Kendi, "you need to do something about it. There is an awareness now that racism

exists and that racism is a problem. I'm personally pushing for immediate equality. We need to think about passing policies that can eliminate voter suppression, that can eliminate police violence, that can eliminate the racial wealth gap, that can eliminate educational resource disparities."

Silber asked Kendi if collecting data was important. Kendi said data is critical, because over the years, data has been misinterpreted and policies have been formulated based on racist interpretations of data. As an example, when compared to white people, black people are twice as likely to be unemployed. Does that mean that something is wrong with the black workers or is it due to racist policies? He also gave as an example the belief that more homicides occur in black areas. Kendi said that if you interpret this as "black people commit more homicides," then you would find the same figures in upper- and middle-class black neighborhoods, and you do not.

A lot of past research has been based in racism, Kendi explained. He cited eugenics research and tied it into the COVID-19 pandemic. Kendi said that there is a misconception that COVID is an equalizer. People ask, "What's wrong with those black people? They are dying from COVID twice as much, instead of asking the question, what's wrong with the policies?"

"I'm sure you know from your work on the Civil War that slaveholders wanted people to do nothing," Kendi said to Silber, referring to her latest book, *This War Ain't Over: Fighting the Civil War in New Deal America*. "So, we are either challenging racism by striving to be antiracist or we are upholding racism, whether through doing nothing or by actively pursuing racist policies. So, there is no neutrality in the struggle against racism."

"If you do nothing," he said, "racial inequality persists."

*Ruth Khowais lives in the West Fens.*

## BPL Adds Trove of Boston Photos to Wikimedia Commons

To mark Wikipedia's 20th anniversary, the Boston Public Library added a small fraction of its digital photo collection—some 8,000 images—to the site's free image collection at Wikimedia Commons. The randomness of the BPL images gives the collection lots of charm—and they are very random, from fusty views of European cities to small Boston businesses in the 1940s and '50s. One sizeable segment represents the work of Leon H. Abdalian, who shot weddings, family gatherings, and nature scenes. A few images from our distribution area appear here.



Clockwise from lower left: **1/** A 1955 photo by Abdalian shows Stage Beauty Salon at 1024 Beacon Street in Audubon Circle—occupied today by the Wine Press. **2/** Traffic fills Kenmore Square in 1920 (some things never change) in a view east from above the intersection of Comm. Ave. (far left), Beacon, and Brookline Ave. **3/** Fans filled the stands at the old Huntington Avenue Ground—now Northeastern's main quad—for the first World Series (Boston vs. Pittsburgh), played in 1903. **4/** A contingent of girls passes in front of Mission Church as part of an unidentified parade on Mission Hill in 1921.

See all the BPL images at [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Media\\_contributed\\_by\\_Boston\\_Public\\_Library](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Media_contributed_by_Boston_Public_Library)



## Citing Dredging, CPA Group Stiffs Conservancy on Bridge Funding

BY ALISON PULTINAS

**A**t its Jan 25 meeting, the Community Preservation Committee yielded a discouraging outcome for the Emerald Necklace Conservancy (ENC): It didn't even consider ENC's application for funding for a new bridge across the Muddy River in the Back Bay Fens. It was even more disappointing for the Mission Hill residents, who have hoped for decades to see the Evans Way Bridge rebuilt.

On Jan. 25, the committee took up requests for open space and historic preservation funding previously vetted by CPA staff and "recommended for a future round." In other words, these 19

proposals would receive full or partial funding only if the committee members advocated for them. Approximately \$2 million not already allocated was available. The bridge proposal had received favorable comments from some members at previous meetings and seemed to meet most committee criteria, including equity, resiliency, critical need.

City Councilor Kenzie Bok, the Community Alliance of Mission Hill, and the Mission Hill Health Movement were all supportive. Elena Saporta and Joann Robinson, consultants for ENC, had prepared a thorough proposal focused on the concept of a cultural loop walk

with a major starting point at Evans Way Park, where the only signalized pedestrian crossing on the Fenway between Brookline and Westland avenues leads to the location of the former bridge, removed in the 1980s.

ENC had asked for \$750,000 and would match that and raise more with a capital campaign. However, what happened at the meeting was startling. Before the discussion began, Thadine Brown, a CPA staffer, announced that the Boston Parks Department had vetoed approval because of the Army Corps of Engineers' ongoing dredging, still two years from completion.

ENC Director Karen Mauney-

Brodek said afterwards that the ACE had not raised this concern on her weekly walkthroughs. She said that dredging at this location should be finished by the summer, the river banks would not be regraded, the topography would not change, and an expected historic review for the bridge could take months.

CPA committee expects essential completion of projects within two years after funding is received, although there can be extenuating circumstances. In its three years, the committee has never funded an open space project in Mission Hill.

*Alison Pultinas lives in Mission Hill.*

## Residents Write the MBTA to Save the 55 Bus

Last summer, the MBTA announced service cuts on the 55 bus route between the West Fens and Park Street. The proposed cuts included reduced hours, the end of service to Park Street, and potential elimination of the entire route in 2021. In January the MBTA's Fiscal and Management Control Board held hearings about

system-wide cuts it proposed to make as it tries to close a funding gap caused by a drastic drop in ridership during the pandemic. Many Fenway residents submitted letters ahead of hearing. Here The Fenway News publishes several of those letters making a case for saving the bus.

### 'The only public transit option within our neighborhood'

As a West Fenway resident, I am writing to strongly urge you to continue the 55 bus service on a reduced basis during and after the pandemic, rather than eliminate it altogether in Spring or Summer 2021.

While the ridership numbers are part of the story, it is a complete story only when you also fully consider the people affected, their physical and mental health, and their overall quality of life.

Prior to the pandemic, many Fenway residents relied on the 55 bus, as evidenced by the standing-room-only buses in the mornings and late

afternoons on weekdays. In addition, many elderly, low-income, and disabled residents in the Fenway relied on the 55 bus to go shopping, get to the library, attend events, etc. As for myself, I injured a leg muscle earlier this year, and for a few weeks while it was healing (and painful to walk), I was grateful to be able to catch the 55 bus a block away to get to work downtown.

For many Fenway residents, the 55 bus is truly the only public transit option within our neighborhood. The City of Boston's Go Boston 2030 plan aspires to expand access so that every Bostonian will be within a 10-minute

walk of transit, bikeshare, and carshare. However, this needs to account for the fact that many elderly and/or disabled residents are unable to walk for 10 minutes, or would need longer than 10 minutes to walk to the subway lines, let alone ride a bike or afford carshare, which increases pollution and congestion. Also note that the Kenmore and Hynes stations are more than a 10-minute walk away (even from the nearest edge of West Fenway) for the average walker, and Hynes Station is not handicapped-accessible. Therefore, the 55 bus is foundational for our neighborhood's quality of life.

Given the real possibility,

with emerging vaccines, that we can turn the corner on this pandemic in mid-2021, it makes no sense to propose eliminating a necessary service at that time. Especially considering that the RIDE is so incredibly unreliable (and has been for many years, from what I have heard from people who have tried using it), it is unconscionable for the MBTA to propose completely eliminating the 55 bus. Our community would be best served by the MBTA proposing ways to have the 55 bus run on a reduced basis for the immediate future.

LESLIE POND, WEST FENS

### 'We believe eliminating the #55 bus, even as a temporary measure, will guarantee its permanent demise.'

Fenway Civic Association (FCA) is the Fenway's oldest all-volunteer neighborhood organization that accepts no public or developer funds. Formed in 1961, our mission is to promote a vital and livable neighborhood. We appreciate your leadership and work for the state during challenging times. As civic volunteers, we understand the extreme challenges posed to our community, city, and state that have been exacerbated by the pandemic. Our board is among the vast MBTA ridership now working remotely and we understand the detrimental impacts to the transit system that have ensued.

We are writing to request your reconsideration of elimination of the #55 bus line, a vital connection for Fenway residents, in the MBTA's *Forging Ahead* plan. Although we appreciate the work the MBTA has undertaken to retain 85 percent of its bus services, we represent the 15 percent that are now facing complete elimination of our bus line. For a community of 40,000+ residents representing a part of the city that has been a significant driver of tax revenue for the state, we feel such treatment is highly unfair.

Our comments:

**1. Elimination impacts highly vulnerable populations:** The West Fenway is host to a large senior constituency including St. Cecilia House and the Peterborough Senior Center. These community members cannot walk 1/4 mile to the nearest train or commuter

stop; moreover, the #55 route has been relied on to provide regular and efficient transit to the nearest library and other services; these resources were developed with the bus line in mind. The availability of a local bus service that provides accessible alternatives to seniors, especially when contrasted to a Green Line service with pressure from Fenway Park venues, should be a primary consideration when weighing cuts.

**2. Restoring service under the proposed plan is unlikely:** The ability to estimate demand for a service that is cut during *Forging Ahead* is not detailed in the plan, and there is no assurance of the return of services once they are discontinued. We believe that eliminating the #55 bus, even as a temporary measure, will guarantee its permanent demise.

**3. Independent analysis finds no budgetary justification for the plan:** The MBTA's Advisory Board submitted its report with a statement that significant differences in projected deficits negate the need to slash transit service. Importantly, reduction of services at a time when COVID-19 vaccines are likely to result in increased ridership will pose hardship to citizens returning to workplaces and other activities.

**4. Current Fenway development anticipates #55 services:** In the Fenway's recent planning, close to 1,820,000 square feet of development has been

approved in the West Fenway alone, all of which anticipate #55 bus service as part of transportation plan filings: Fenway Center Phase 1 and 2, 60 Kilmarnock Street, 201 Brookline Avenue, Fenway Theatre, 1252-1270 Boylston Street, and 1241 Boylston.\* Two other large-scale developments will advance in the near future. This list excludes ongoing institutional development planning by local universities and the Longwood Medical Area. The work of the city's Transportation Department, Mass DOT, and regional planners have permitted projects based on trip generation and ridership figures which rely on the #55 bus. Removing this line poses an extreme challenge not only to future project planning,

but to the successful traffic management of permitted development. This lends the additional point that such service elimination will be performed at a time when demand will undeniably increase as these projects are completed.

Our board understands the hard decisions facing the T. Notwithstanding, we ask that the MBTA retain the #55 bus, even with a reduced schedule, so that it can continue to serve our seniors and meet the demand of a growing community, with the hope that we can continue conversations with you, our representatives, and the community about how to best serve our transportation needs in the future.

TIMOTHY HORN, PRESIDENT, FENWAY CIVIC ASSOCIATION  
MATTHEW BROOKS, VICE PRESIDENT, FCA

### 'I am a frequent rider, even during the pandemic...'

I am writing to ask you to reconsider removing the 55 bus. As many residents have told you, this bus is essential to our neighborhood. We have many elderly and disabled residents with mobility issues. With no bus, they would have to take the unreliable RIDE or walk for 15 minutes to get to Kenmore or Fenway station, an impossible task for many. Even then, the Green Line is not as handicapped-accessible as the bus which can lower the step.

I am a frequent rider of the 55, even during the pandemic. Like many Fenway residents, I own a car but leave it parked, unless I am going out of Boston, and take the T. The 55 takes folks to the library, medical appointments, and

shopping. There are bus stops conveniently located right at the Fenway Community Center, near Fenway Health, and near the supermarket.

It may be slow right now, but during the Red Sox season, which will be returning within a year or two, thousands of sports fans and concert-goers flood our neighborhood. In addition, the Red Sox are continuing to develop the area, which includes building a huge concert hall. Will all these people be driving or will they take public transportation (which Fenway Park says they encourage)? Without the 55 bus, the public transportation options for Red Sox fans and concert-goers will be very limited.

RUTH KHOWAIS, WEST FENS

## Fenway News

Serving the Fenway, Kenmore Square, Audubon Circle, upper Back Bay, lower Roxbury, Prudential, Mission Hill, and Longwood since 1974

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### 'Comforting the afflicted and afflicting the comfortable.'

The founders of The Fenway News adopted this motto to express their mission of exposing and opposing the dangers the neighborhood faced in the early 1970s—rampant arson, predatory landlords, and a destructive urban renewal plan. If the original motto no longer fits today's Fenway, we remain committed to its spirit of identifying problems and making our neighborhood a better and safer place to live.

#### ► FREQUENCY ◀

The Fenway News remains online-only for the duration of the pandemic. Our next issue will appear on Friday, February 26.

#### ► DEADLINE ◀

The deadline for letters, news items, and ads for our next issue is Friday, February 19.

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**'Do not cut the 55 bus.  
We need it.'**

LISA FAY, WEST FENS

# Huntington Launches Full Theater Renovation

BY ALISON PULTINAS

The Huntington Theatre Company (HTC) has moved ahead with its construction project at 264 Huntington Ave. Construction is set to begin in late January/early February.

The plans include an addition to the rear west wing, interior demolition and renovation, new roofs, and an enlarged front terrace. All fixed theatre seating will be replaced, but other historic elements will be salvaged.

The public first saw the project five years ago during the City's review process for a high-rise tower next door. As readers might remember, when Boston University sold the theatre and the adjacent buildings to a real estate investment firm in 2016, the City helped negotiate an agreement by the developer to sell the theatre building to the company for \$1. Then HTC began a fundraising campaign for the work needed to maintain the building and make the planned improvements.

The renovation and restoration will produce an accessible entrance at street level and, potentially, a digital billboard on the center façade. The latest plan includes a single-story glass-and-metal-panel curtain wall above the historic arcade entrance next to the Riviera Apartments. The arcade entry will be fully rebuilt in order to create the accessible entrance. The historic limestone panel above the doorway, which says "Jewett Repertory Theatre Company Fund Inc.," will be restored.

The building application filed with the City's Inspectional Services Division estimates costs at more than \$20 million. Shawmut Construction is the contractor and Bruner/Cott is the lead architect.

At Public Improvement Commission hearings in December (required because of excavation work under the sidewalk), the City's Chief



RENDERING COURTESY OF BRUNER/COTT



PHOTO COURTESY OF BOSTON UNIVERSITY

Above, a rendering of the renovated theater facade and entry at 264 Huntington Ave. Left, inscription above The arcade entry at 264 Huntington Ave.

Engineer, Amy Cording, reminded the HTC consultants that digital billboards also require a public review process.

The buildings on the block sit on wood pilings, with the MBTA Green Line Arborway tunnel and Huntington Avenue underpass nearby, making excavation a complicated venture here. HTC will install stormwater-retention

tanks under the sidewalk.

Temple Gill, HTC's public affairs director, didn't have news to share about QMG/Toll Brothers' 34-story tower, now approved, which would replace the vacant buildings next door. That project won approval in 2017 and has a new BPDA project manager, Nupoor Monani, but is listed as "inactive" on

the BPDA's web page. The tower design included a two-story connection to the future east wing lobby and an amenities space for the theatre.

In November, HTC applied for a Community Preservation Act historic preservation grant, but the prognosis does not look hopeful. At the CPA committee's January review of historic-preservation applications, the theatre's proposal did not receive a high rating, although members called it a fantastic project.

CPA staff said the request for \$500,000 represented only a small part of the funding needed for the renovation, and the nonprofit had a considerable amount left to raise. So, it recommended that HTC come back in a future round when it has gotten closer to its goal. However, at the Jan. 25 meeting Gill made a plea for reconsideration because the opportunity to work on the building while the theatre is shut down for the pandemic has expedited HTC's schedule.

The Huntington Theatre building is not a designated Boston landmark, although perhaps in the future there could be a petition. The 1925 building has a significant history: it was home to the Jewett Players, the first nonprofit repertory drama group in the United States. A Massachusetts Historical Commission staff review is also expected for the renovation project because of historic tax credit funding. A 2018 survey noted the building's almost continuous use as a performing arts venue and how much of the original 1925 features remain. Gill was excited to announce that certain of the building's historic elements, such as the arcade's light fixtures, will be retained but moved to new settings

Alison Pultinas lives in Mission Hill.

## REMEMBERING A MISSION HILL HERO

On January 9, the twelfth anniversary of his death, fellow firefighters and the family of Lt. Kevin Kelley laid bouquets and a wreath at a memorial bench outside Mission Park on Huntington Avenue. The bench and plaque mark the site where Boston Fire Dept. ladder truck crashed after its brakes failed as it descended Parker Hill Avenue. Despite the imminent danger, Kelley had the presence of mind to sound the truck's air horn to warn pedestrians at the bottom of the hill, likely saving several lives. The truck crashed through this wall and into a building in Mission Park.



PHOTO: ALISON PULTINAS

## UPDATE: FENWAY NEWS FUNDRAISER

First, we've been blown away by the response to our funding campaign, which includes many donations that have come outside of the [GoFundMe page](#).

On January 25 we announced a new matching grant from a generous supporter. That has already brought in close to \$1,800 (on top of the many earlier contributions). These new contributions will be matched dollar for dollar.

Thank you for your generous support as we work to retire our debt and begin re-imagining our web presence to bring it fully into the digital age.

We still plan to return to print later this year. Meanwhile, please read us online at [www.fenwaynews.org](http://www.fenwaynews.org) and follow (and like us) on Facebook.

Fenway News

## CALL FOR ARTISTS!



Fenway CDC is looking for an artist or group of artists to design the exterior of a Little Free Library to be installed at 31 Burbank Street in the East Fens.

### WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

- Stipend provided
- Preference for artists who live, work, or study in the Fenway
- The structure comes assembled; the CDC will pay for paint and supplies
- Application deadline: Friday, February 26

Visit [bit.ly/3qYhRlW](http://bit.ly/3qYhRlW) or scan the QR code for details or to apply. Questions? Write Madeline Lee, project coordinator, at [mlee@fenwaycdc.org](mailto:mlee@fenwaycdc.org).



## IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

A LOT HAPPENED IN OUR NEIGHBORHOODS SINCE THE LAST ISSUE, INCLUDING...

Local media will fall all over themselves covering Fenway Park's opening on Feb. 1 as a vaccination site (see page 2). All that attention may obscure the fact that the Reggie Lewis Center—equally convenient for many readers—will also host clinics beginning that same week, but



with a key difference: It will only serve Boston residents, meaning you might have an easier time securing a spot.

Check this link for days and times, which weren't posted at press time. ➡ **Great Rembrandt's Ghost! Breaking glass on a door before sunrise on a Saturday, a man tossed a package into the Gardner Museum then fled.**

**First responders suspected a bomb until a bomb-sniffing dog cleared it. Four days later, according to the *Globe*, BPD and US marshals arrested a Randolph man in Braintree, who's also wanted in connection with a robbery at a Newbury Street art gallery.** ➡ This time-lapse footage of Northeastern's Matthews Arena being turned into a polling station for last November's election might seem a bit long in the tooth. But if you love time-lapse as much as ICYMI does, sit back and enjoy it. ➡

## EATS BEAT

The *Globe* launched "Project Takeout" this month to encourage readers to order more meals from neighborhood restaurants in hopes of helping them survive the

lean months between now and the spring, when outdoor dining can resume.

Food writer Devra First set the context with a page 1 story describing how pandemic-fighting capacity limits have devastated restaurants, forcing thousands of layoffs and dozens of closings. First pleaded with readers to order takeout during the next three months and to buy direct from restaurants rather than using delivery apps like Uber Eat, whose fees eat into already-thin profit margins. "Order takeout," she wrote. "If you can afford it, it's your civic duty."

First profiled two area stalwarts: Soleil in Nubian Square and Taberna de Haro in Audubon Circle. At Soleil, "Chef Cheryl Straughter serve generous breakfasts, Southern specialties, and delicious wood-planked salmon." As she struggles to keep paying nine employees in the face of a precipitous drop in business, takeout orders and gift cards offer a meagre lifeline that she hopes will help her limp through to spring.

First found a similar story at Taberna de Haro, "the kind of place everyone loves: unpretentious, reliable, a cornerstone of the neighborhood." Chef-owner Deborah Hansen hopes she can hold on until April, when she'll reopen her

patio. Like Straughter, she worries about staff who depend on their jobs to support families (and feel like family to her). When the restaurant reopens at the end of January, takeout and gift certificates will represent its main sources of income until warmer weather returns.

In a subsequent article *Globe* staffers profiled community-friendly places they love, with culture columnist Jeneé Osterheldt pitching Darryl's Corner Bar & Kitchen on Columbus near Mass Ave., where Neighborhood Combo Meal means "eating big on a budget."

### APPETIZERS

- Audubon Circle's **Cafe Landwer** takes part in a citywide "Taste of Israel" celebration through Feb. 2 with a half-dozen dishes showcasing typical Israeli foods—which sound a lot like the restaurant's everyday, Mediterranean-inspired menu. Jewish Arts Collaborative, the festival sponsor, has details.
- In late December, **Time Out Market** Boston joined the long list of Boston restaurants—many in the Fenway—taking a... time out until spring. The food hall has officially closed for the season and won't offer outdoor dining or takeout service.
- Boston Restaurant Talk confirms a report we carried last fall: **Cafe Maiko**, part of a Hawa'ii-based chain, will open in the former laundromat at the corner of Jersey and Queensbury streets in the West Fens. The cafe will serve matcha-inspired drinks and food.

## TRASH & RECYCLING

### PICK-UP SCHEDULE

- **BACK BAY:** Monday and Thursday
- **FENWAY:** Tuesday and Friday
- **MISSION HILL:** Tuesday and Friday

### FENWAY HEALTH



**We Believe That Everyone Deserves Access To High-Quality, Affordable Health Care.**

Has your employment situation recently changed? Are you currently uninsured?

If you live in MA, we can help you enroll in insurance. We can also talk to you about our sliding fee schedule. Call us at 617.927.6000. No one is denied care based on ability to pay.

FENWAY HEALTH | 1340 Boylston Street | Boston, MA 02215  
617.267.0900 | fenwayhealth.org

## Neighborhood Newsline

### T Lowers the Boom on the #55, Beefs Up Ruggles Station

The winter schedule for the beleaguered 55 bus route, released December 21, eliminated weekday trips after 8:45pm. The T still plans to cut all service in March. According to Dan Mueller of the T's community liaison team, the FMCB received several hundred comments on route 43, which runs on Tremont Street. Also slated for elimination in the "Forging Ahead" plan, the comments rescued it. The Fenway's 55 didn't get anywhere near that many letters. Transit advocates have argued that instead of eliminating the 55, the T should carefully consider its role as part of that network-wide evaluation. The MBTA has stopped distributing paper schedules for bus routes, but it posts PDFs online, and they still list the route as "Jersey & Queensberry to Park St. Station." Bus stops downtown also haven't changed their signs. A multimillion-dollar third commuter rail platform at Ruggles Station, funded with federal money, has reached a major milestone. According to Lisa Battiston of the T's communications office, the platform is structurally complete, although the contractor continues to work on a punch list of remaining items that include security cameras, fire alarms, electronic signage, and wayfinding signs. She said the agency anticipates that the platform will be ready for final inspection later this winter.

### MFA Reopens Under Loosened COVID Rules for Some Businesses

The MFA will reopen on Feb. 3 as Boston returns to Step One of Phase Three of the State's (somewhat confusing) reopening system. The City hit the pause button in December as cases mushroomed, but this brings it back in line with the rest of the state. Museums, gyms, and movie theaters can reopen at 25 percent capacity, as currently mandated by the state. Reservations for timed-entry tickets opened for members on Jan. 28 and for the general public on Jan. 29.

### Year-Over-Year Vacancy Jumps in Area Neighborhoods

In December, the website Boston Pads released data on vacancy rates in 2019 and 2020. Students and professionals working remotely have opted to leave the city during the pandemic, with a significant impact on vacancy rates. The 2019 vacancy rate near Northeastern University ballooned from 0.75 percent to 9.57 percent in 2020, an 1,176% increase. The Back Bay rate rose from 0.99 percent to 6.08 percent, a 515% jump. In Mission Hill, the rate climbed from 1.09 percent to 6.48 percent—a 494.5 percent increase. Fenway/Kenmore's rate went from 1.58 percent to 8.17 percent, an increase of 417.09 percent.

### MassArt And City Team Up to Award Racial Justice Arts Grants

In December, MassArt and the City of Boston awarded \$250,000 in grants through the Radical Imagination for Racial Justice program to 16 artists who identify as African, Latinx, Asian, Arab, Native American, Black, indigenous, or a person of color. The artist work in media spanning audiovisual storytelling, game design, and more. All applicants were asked to allocate at least 20 percent of their grant budget toward their personal well-being. On January 22, MassArt hosted a virtual reception for the artists, chosen from more than 300 applicants. In other MassArt news, a poll of *USA Today* readers ranked the MassArt Art Museum #5 in a list of ten best new attractions in the country. The newly remodeled museum opened in February, right before the first wave of pandemic shutdowns.

### Fire Displaces Charlesgate East Residents

A mid-December fire at 64 Charlesgate East resulted in \$250,000 of damages. Residents of the 36-unit building evacuated safely but couldn't immediately return to their homes.

### Arts Academy Commissions Art for New Building

In mid-January, the City announced that MASARY Studios has won a commission for interior artwork at the new Boston Arts Academy building under construction on Ipswich Street. Simon Donovan and Ben Olmstead will create exterior artwork, and both creators will see their work installed in 2022. The interior art has a budget of \$300,000; the exterior-art budget comes in at \$200,000. All applicants had to build their proposals around BAA's four guiding principles: community with social responsibility; diversity with respect; passion with balance; and vision with integrity. See page 3 for a photo of progress on the school's construction.

### Spring Semester Begins at Berklee

Berklee College of Music and Boston Conservatory resumed classes for the spring semester on Jan. 25 with a hybrid model. At Berklee, more than 200 small ensembles will take place in person, across many different musical styles. Faculty, staff, and students coming to the Boston campus will need to attest via a mobile application that they don't have any symptoms related to COVID-19. The school will require all community members to undergo testing prior to starting work or attending classes; they will continue to be tested twice weekly through the spring semester. Berklee has leased rooms at the Hynes Convention Center spacious enough to accommodate up to 16 students under physical-distancing protocols. All other rooms at Berklee will be populated in accordance with recommended safety guidelines. Berklee requires all community members to wear masks that cover the nose and mouth at all times.

### DCR Parking Proposal Lands With a Thud at Landmarks Hearing

On Jan. 26, a Boston Landmarks Commission review of the state Department of Conservation & Recreation (DCR) proposal to add 15 parking kiosks along The Fenway and Park Drive received a large number of comments from residents and elected officials—all unfavorable. Jeffrey Harris of DCR's Office of Cultural Resources presented the DCR proposal at the virtual hearing. The commission denied the proposal without prejudice, meaning DCR can come back with a revised plan. BLC's purview only covers aesthetics and the visual impact of the five-foot-high metal pay stations installed on concrete pads on the strips of lawn bordering the parkways. Residents described encroachment of new development on the park, stressing a corresponding need for visual relief, and highlighting DCR's neglect of the landscaping along the parkways. "Can we even call it an Olmsted park anymore?" asked Steve Wolf. "You folks can draw the line when no one else can." City Councilor Kenzie Bok's message, read by aide Kennedy Avery, spoke of the monetization of public space. David Beraducci of the BLC's design subcommittee said the proposal was "vastly undercooked" and that it was not clear who the beneficiary was. Beraducci was impressed by the passion of the neighbors and appalled that DCR had not held a targeted meeting for Fenway residents, only regional meetings in the fall.

### Proposed New Fenway Music Venue Wants Liquor License

On Jan. 27, the City of Boston Licensing Board, led by Kathleen Joyce, heard a request to transfer the liquor license of the closed Pizzeria Uno in the Buckminster Hotel to a new venture at Samuels & Associates' Boylston West property on Van Ness Street. Rockwood Music Hall would be a small venue of 1,847 square feet. Attorney Joe Hanley represented owner Ken Rockwood, calling him a musical legend on Manhattan's Lower East Side, where he has owned a club for 15 years. Hanley predicted no impact on the Fenway residential neighborhood, as this venue will operate in the core of the commercial district, located in the building that houses Target. Rockwood expects build-out to take six to eight months and could open by the end of the year.

# The Arts

## Pandemic Confessions of A Veteran Operaphile

BY JOHN ENGSTROM

As the pandemic grinds on and on and most of us remain hunkered down in our abodes, we naturally look for activities and/or projects that will 1) relieve boredom; 2) entertain us; 3) teach us something new and exciting; and 4) keep body and soul together. My “fix” in these dangerous and difficult times is all of those things. It’s free of charge, physically safe, and available to anyone with a computer.

I refer to the Metropolitan Opera’s stupendous and unprecedented stream of its opera productions, one every night. Operaphiles around the world can rejoice, even here in Fenway, where the Met’s “high definition” screenings of their seasons at the Regal Cinema were seen by sold-out audiences of opera lovers, many of them seniors. If it was a long opera, they brought sandwiches and salads into the theater. These are people who love opera but can’t make it to Lincoln Center.

But as we are all painfully aware, once the coronavirus took root and spread, an invisible ax fell on all public entertainment, from restaurants to theaters. And that left the Met as exposed and vulnerable as any cultural institution now in shutdown because of the health crisis.

The Metropolitan, which started taping its performances in the 1980s and showing them on TV in color with subtitles, has a roster of “house” composers second to none. The Met’s seasonal repertoire—both eclectic and vast—embraces operas by Mozart, Gluck, Beethoven, Berlioz, Verdi, Bellini, Rossini, Wagner, Zandonai, Janacek, Gershwin. (John Adams, (Thomas) Adès, (Kaija) Saariaho, Mussorgsky, Dvorak, (Richard) Strauss, Shostakovich, Weill, Britten, Glass, and probably others that I don’t remember.

Conductors who have led famous performances at the Met—and are featured in the streams—include the company’s long-

time music director James Levine (American) and current music director Yannick Nezet-Seguín (French-Canadian), along with such celebrated maestros as Valery Gergiev (Russian), Thomas Adès (English) and Esa-Pekka Salonen (Finnish). If your computer has good sound quality, you can luxuriate in the beautiful sound and enormous range of the Met orchestra, which during the Levine era blossomed into one of the world’s greatest.

The languages sung in performances at the Met (and other international opera theaters) encompass English, Italian, French, Russian, Czech, and German. Translations into English, German and other languages appear on a small screen embedded in the back of every seat in the house, enabling greater linguistic understanding. So far, the Met streams have lacked titles, which is both good and bad. Good in that you can experience each work directly in the original languages and feel the music’s emotional subtext. Bad is when you can’t fathom the plot and characterizations. To get a detailed idea of the story, go to Wikipedia opera synopses and composer profiles. The streams from the Met can be accessed through the company’s website and on Facebook.

You could complain that sitting in front of a computer for three to five hours (the running times of Berlioz’ Virgilian epic *The Trojans* and Wagner’s mystical think piece *Parsifal* are five hours) is not only boring, it bastardizes the operas by shrinking them visually on the screen and “interpreting” them for the camera with close-ups and other cinematic devices. Further, these productions

were designed for a gargantuan venue the size of a Roman colosseum that seats 4,000.

Certainly the home entertainment approach is a far cry from the thrill of being in that plush, red-and-gold hall with chandeliers that ascend ethereally to the ceiling when the show is about to begin. People who don’t like opera or attend only occasionally say that the Met is obscenely opulent. Most people can’t afford the steep prices of “premium” seats, but the company

has managed to keep some prices at a level of affordability, meaning the relatively cheap seats in the Family Circle and the venerable policy of selling standing-room and canceled tickets on the day of the performance.

*Many of the soloists are superstars of opera... as well as an army of less familiar musical artists with illustrious careers across the globe*

While the home computer format doesn’t hold a candle to the panoramic vastness of the actual Met, it has some advantages over seeing the operas in the hall. The detailed close-up views of principal singers and members of the enormous Met chorus (who are actors as well as singers) are magnificent and moving. The close-up shots give an extra layer of intimacy to works that are intimate to begin with (*La Traviata*, *La Bohème*).

Many of the soloists we can see in this series are superstars of opera (Russian soprano Anna Netrebko, German tenor Jonas Kaufmann, American soprano Renée Fleming) as well as an army of less familiar musical artists with illustrious careers across the globe. These soloists remind us forcibly that opera is a form of theater. Finnish soprano Karita Mattila created a hair-raising “*Salome*” with live nudity (that was decorously edited out by the video producers). In “*Dialogues*

of the Carmelites,” set in Revolutionary France, Mattila stole the show as a cranky but declining Mother Superior who dies on stage. French soprano, actress, and comedienne Natalie Dessay gave triumphant, unforgettable performances in Donizetti’s tragic *Lucia di Lammermoor* and comic *La Fille du Régiment*.

The Met being a repertory theater, singers must be versatile in many different styles and languages. African American bass-baritone Eric Owens made strong impressions in operas as unlike each other as *Doctor Atomic*, *Elektra*, Wagner’s *Ring*, and half the title role of *Porgy and Bess*. New faces added fresh color to the scenery: there were three occasions to savor the artistry of English counter-tenor Iestyn Davies, who gave hilariously nuanced performances in Ades’ jarring operas *The Tempest* and *The Exterminating Angel*, as well as Handel’s black comedy *Agrippina*.

Before the streaming series I had never seen Dvořák’s lovely fairy-tale opera *Rusalka*; now I’ve seen it, or its video incarnation, twice, in two different productions of equal merit starring Renée Fleming and a more recent showing with Latvian soprano Kristine Opolais. I’ve also seen works that I somehow missed or passed over during the last 40 years, like Donizetti’s *Lucia*, *Les Pêcheurs de Perles* by Bizet, *Satyagraha* and *Akhmaten* by Philip Glass and *Ariadne auf Naxos* by Richard Strauss.

Okay, “Opera at the Home Computer” probably wasn’t what Handel, Verdi, and Wagner were thinking of when they wrote their masterpieces. They also were not anticipating a world pandemic that would turn theaters and opera houses everywhere into empty shells. The Met’s streaming series enables access to works of theatrical and musical genius in some of the finest performances ever recorded without leaving our zones of safety.

*John Engstrom lives in the West Fens.*

## With Online Weaving Class, MassArt Student Adds Mission Hill Fans

BY ALISON PULTINAS

Zoe Cronin, a MassArt senior majoring in art education with minors in fibers and sustainability, taught a free online weaving class in four sessions this fall. It served as her semester project for Prof. Adriana Katzew’s “Creating Community” community.

To find students, Cronin left resealable plastic bags with loom kits and a card with contact info in public places in Mission Hill, Jamaica Plain, and Dorchester. Mission Hill resident Nancy Ahmadifar found one on a bench at Kevin Fitzgerald Park, then helped recruit more participants through the Friends of the Parker Hill Library.

“It was a bit of an experiment to gather participants,” Cronin said, “but that was also part of the fun...I was interested to see who would be interested and take the initiative

PHOTO: LYDIA PENA



to reach out. It ended up being a wonderful experience, and I love that I have more friends in the Mission Hill community.”

She plans to teach natural dyeing this spring, where students will learn a brief history of natural dyes, prepare skeins of yarn, scour and mordant yarn, and create dye baths using turmeric, avocado pits and skins, red cabbage, and/or pomegranate skins. The dates haven’t been scheduled yet, but the first class will most likely take place later this month. Potential participants can email her at [zmcronin@massart.edu](mailto:zmcronin@massart.edu). Since the dyeing class won’t be part of a college assignment, Cronin will charge each participant \$10.

*Alison Pultinas lives in Mission Hill.*

*Lydia Pena completed multiple weaving projects, left, for Zoe Cronin’s online class.*

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE MFA

## YOUNG ARTISTS COLLABORATE ON NEW MFA SCULPTURE



Planning to visit the newly reopened MFA? Take in its annual student-artist-led exhibition, *Community Arts Initiative: Exchange Codes*, on view through April 11. Led by artist Sarah Pollman, young artists from around Boston contributed to a large-scale, joint sculptural relief. It traces global pathways of exchange for artists’ goods, services and ideas, charting a linked history of a material past. All timed-entry tickets include access to the work.

## BPL LAUNCHES READING CHALLENGE

BY KELSEY BRUUN

As the pandemic drags on and Boston residents remain cooped up in their homes, the Boston Public Library wants readers throughout the city to participate in “Reading Together.”

In the challenge, each month has a distinct theme, and participants are asked to read a book tied to the theme. The library offers recommended book lists for the monthly themes for adults, teens, and children at [bpl.org/yearlong](http://bpl.org/yearlong). Following January’s theme, “A Book About the Past,” subsequent themes will include:

- February: A Debut Author
- March: An #OwnVoices Book
- April: A Book with Pictures
- May: An Author of Color

- June: An Award-Winning Book
- July: An LGBTQ+ Author
- August: A Book in Translation
- September: A Staff Pick
- October: A Story Under 100 Pages
- November: An Author Born Outside the United States
- December: A Book About the Future
- Bonus: A Book Recommended by a Reading Together Participant

Patrons can track their progress on the Beanstack app or website at [bostonbpl.beanstack.org](http://bostonbpl.beanstack.org), under the BPL’s Reading Together program. They can also track their progress using one of the BPL’s Reading Together bookmarks, which will be handed out to patrons through the BPL To Go program.

*Kelsey Bruun is the editor of The Fenway News*

# February

## CALENDAR

### Ongoing

- **BSO NOW** series of newly recorded concerts. View Boston Symphony Orchestra video performances free for 24 hours; for additional access, donate a minimum of \$100. [www.bso.org/brands/bso/features/bso-now.aspx](http://www.bso.org/brands/bso/features/bso-now.aspx)
- **THE MAGIC OF HANDEL** will be available free, with a suggested donation of \$10, through the Handel and Haydn Society website at [handelandhaydn.org/streaming-concerts/](http://handelandhaydn.org/streaming-concerts/). Every piece will be performed on the period instruments for which Handel composed.

### Tuesdays & Thursdays

**LIFEBOAT FOOD PANTRY.** 4-6pm. Free, fresh food available to Boston residents with food insecurity; sign up at [bit.ly/lifeboatbostonregistration](http://bit.ly/lifeboatbostonregistration). Boston Temple 7th-Day Adventist Church at 105 Jersey Street.

### Mon, 2/1

Bean Celebration Setsubu/Mame-Maki

with **KAJI ASO** offers a purifying ceremony for the year 2021. Join Kaji Aso to find out about Mame-maki and hurl virtual beans to chase away oni! 7pm. Join the ceremony via: <http://bit.ly/KajiAsoBean>

### Sat, 2/6

**TIGER STYLE.** Squabbling siblings Albert and Jennifer Chen reached the pinnacle of academic achievement. But as adults, they're epic failures. This comedy examines race, parenting, and success with wit and sharp humor. Listen to the GBH (89.7 FM) broadcast of this 2016 Huntington Theatre production at 6pm.

### Thu, 2/11

- A webinar by the **NATURE CONSERVANCY MASSACHUSETTS** will feature Karen Mauney-Brodek, president of The Emerald Necklace Conservancy, who will discuss how the Conservancy works to maintain and restore Emerald Necklace and how the global pandemic has altered the Conservancy's efforts. 12-1pm. Register at [www.nature.org/en-us/get-involved/how-to-help/volunteer-and-attend-events/find-local-events-and-opportunities/ma-nature-connects-webinar-series/](http://www.nature.org/en-us/get-involved/how-to-help/volunteer-and-attend-events/find-local-events-and-opportunities/ma-nature-connects-webinar-series/). The Nature Connects series features leading scientists and environmental experts on the topics of tackling climate change, protecting land and water, and providing food and water sustainably.

involved/how-to-help/volunteer-and-attend-events/find-local-events-and-opportunities/ma-nature-connects-webinar-series/. The Nature Connects series features leading scientists and environmental experts on the topics of tackling climate change, protecting land and water, and providing food and water sustainably.

- **DRAWING TOGETHER WITH THE MASSART ART MUSEUM.** Join MAAM and MassArt Studio Foundation professor Loretta Park and artist Maya Anderson for a free virtual collage workshop, which will explore simple and improvisational collaging techniques while listening to music. 6:30pm. Register at <https://maam.massart.edu/event/collage-workshop-2>.

### Fri, 2/12

Join the MFA to celebrate **LUNAR NEW YEAR** and ring in the Year of the Ox! Lunar New Year is celebrated across Asia and around the world. This year, the holiday marks the Year of the Ox. The celebration will feature a Chinese lion dance and demonstration by Gund Kwok Asian Women's Lion and Dragon Dance Troupe; highlights from the MFA's 2020 Lunar New Year celebration; a Spotlight Talk from Fei Yung, research associate, Art of Asia; and a Spotlight Talk from Nancy Berliner, Wu Tung Senior Curator of Chinese Art.

### CDC LOOKING FOR ARTISTS

Tackle a small design project with high visibility: the Fenway CDC wants an artist to design the exterior of a Little Free Library it will install this spring in the East Fens. The job includes a stipend and material costs. Complete a simple application and submit it by Friday, Feb. 26. Apply at [bit.ly/3qYhRlw](http://bit.ly/3qYhRlw). For full details or questions, write Madeline Lee at [mlee@fenwaycdc.org](mailto:mlee@fenwaycdc.org).

Visit [www.mfa.org/event/community-celebrations/lunar-new-year?event=3265](http://www.mfa.org/event/community-celebrations/lunar-new-year?event=3265) for streaming information. 7-8pm.

### Thu, 2/18

**DRAWING TOGETHER WITH THE MASSART ART MUSEUM.** Join MAAM and MassArt Studio Foundation professor Edward Monovich for an artmaking experience that blurs the boundaries between observational drawing and performance art. This session will feature a live model flowing between a series of poses set to music examining the theme of transformation. 6:30pm. Register at <https://maam.massart.edu/event/drawing-together-18>.

## @ THE CENTER

Due to the pandemic, the Fenway Community Center continues to host virtual activities. Find links for everything at [fenwaycommunitycenter.org](http://fenwaycommunitycenter.org).

- **Mondays, 11am: ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS.** Practice your speaking and listening skills in this free American English class.
- **Wednesdays/Thursdays, 8pm: GAME NIGHT.** Play Drawful and other online games suitable for all ages.
- **Thursday, 6pm: ARTS & CRAFTS.** Have fun making a variety of easy crafts in a supportive group. Craft materials are available free while supplies last to those who register in advance.
- **Fridays, 11am: SENIOR TRIVIA NIGHT.** Test your knowledge of old-school pop culture. Use Zoom or a plain old phone to join. Each week's highest scorer wins a \$20 grocery store gift card.
- **Fridays, 6pm: VIRTUAL 5K.** Take little steps to improve your wellness with support of a senior from Northeastern's Health Science Program.

## COMMUNITY meetings

**WED, FEB 3** Wentworth Institute of Technology **VIRTUAL TASK FORCE MEETING.** 6-8pm. The task force discusses the proposed two-year renewal of Wentworth institutional master plan. Use [www.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN\\_uaSG9NIHTv6rWy-eZgV3Yw](http://www.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN_uaSG9NIHTv6rWy-eZgV3Yw) or call (833) 568-8864 and enter meeting ID 161 242 9115 to join. Contact Edward Carmody at [Edward.Carmody@Boston.gov](mailto:Edward.Carmody@Boston.gov) or (617) 918-4422 with any questions.

**WED, FEB 3** The final meeting on the **MISSION HILL PLAYGROUND REDESIGN.** 6-7:30pm. The meeting will show two possible final designs for the park design. Use [bit.ly/MHPx3](http://bit.ly/MHPx3) to join. Contact Abigail Chatfield at [Abigail.Chatfield@Boston.gov](mailto:Abigail.Chatfield@Boston.gov)

or (617) 504-7709 with any questions.

**TUE, FEB 9** Virtual public meeting, 6-8pm. The BPDA hosts a public meeting on the application for the **601 NEWBURY ST. PROJECT** under the agency's Small Project Review process. The meeting will include a presentation by the proponent followed by a Q&A and comments. Use [www.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN\\_uAOsyEInR1uO84WkZPbTPg](http://www.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN_uAOsyEInR1uO84WkZPbTPg) or call (833) 568-8864 and enter meeting ID 161 018 9112 to join. Contact Michael Sinatra at [Michael.A.Sinatra@Boston.gov](mailto:Michael.A.Sinatra@Boston.gov) or (617) 918-4280 with any questions. Comments on the project are due Fri., Feb 19, and you can submit them via Sinatra's email.



**One community, one purpose.  
Let's stay strong to keep Boston healthy.**

**Northeastern University**

[NORTHEASTERN.EDU/PROTECTTHEPACK](http://NORTHEASTERN.EDU/PROTECTTHEPACK)

If you see a Northeastern community member not following COVID-19 guidelines,

PLEASE CALL / 617.373.TIPS