

# December Meeting Shows 55 Bus Remains a Hot Issue

BY RUTH KHOWAIS

On Dec. 7, the Fenway Civic Association, the Fenway CDC, and Operation PEACE held a remote meeting to update the Fenway neighborhood about the status of the 55 bus. Elected officials and their staff, as well as local real estate

developers and residents attended the meeting. Moderator Conrad Cizek argued for “regular service that regularly meets the needs of the neighborhood.” As residents have pointed out, getting home is difficult without the 55. The closest T stops are at least 15 to 20 minute away on foot, a serious barrier for the elderly and people with disabilities. Multiple participants said that the 55 route doesn’t meet the needs of the neighborhood. District 8 City Councilor Kenzie Bok said “MBTA service is super important to me” and detailed the sad recent history of the bus. In November 2020, the MBTA announced drastic cuts and slated the 55 for suspension. Large numbers of people began demonstrating at the bus stop at Jersey

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We customarily start the new year with a look back at the old and the stories that mattered most to the Fenway, Audubon Circle, and Mission Hill. Here’s our survey, which we hope will prove more fun than 2021 itself did!

## COVID-19



PHOTO: STEVE WOLF

COVID dominated the news cycle—and our daily lives. Vaccinations moved into full swing in early February, as Fenway Park (pictured) and the Reggie Lewis Center became mass vaccination sites, serving thousands of people. Fenway Park will reopen this month as a high-volume site for both vaccines and boosters. With vaccines available, life became a bit more normal, and more people ventured out to restaurants, museums, and in-person events. For some local businesses, however, it was too little too late. In 2021 local restaurants including Tiger Mama, Bar Louie, and Boston BeerWorks in the West Fens; Eastern Standard, The Hawthorne, and Island Creek Oyster Bar in Kenmore Square; and the Squealing Pig in Mission Hill closed permanently, with COVID as either the cause or a contributing factor. Most area colleges and universities returned to in-person classes in the fall, with vaccine mandates and testing procedures in place. Boston Public School students also returned to the classroom with mask mandates in place. In December, Mayor Michelle Wu announced a vaccine mandate, beginning January 15, for indoor dining, including bars and nightclubs, indoor fitness, and indoor entertainment.

## DEVELOPMENT: THE FENWAY

After a lull in 2020, development was back in full swing in 2021. In the Fenway, notable projects included

- National Development’s proposed 10-story residential development, which will replace the Midtown Hotel at 220 Huntington Ave. (inset)
- Approval of the Fenway CDC’s revision of an already-approved development with roughly 30 compact apartments on a small parking lot at 72 Burbank Street in the East Fens
- A proposal to build a ten-story research and development project to replace the existing building at 109 Brookline Ave.
- Preliminary filings for the massive WS Development scheme to redevelop 13 parcels on all sides of Fenway Park as 2.1 million square feet of mixed uses
- Demolition of parcels at the corner of Queensberry and Kilmarnock streets as construction got under way for 60-80 Kilmarnock Street, Cabot Cabot & Forbes’s 435-unit housing development in the West Fens
- A revival of Scape’s proposed 29-story housing and retail proposal on the site of the Transnational Travel building at Ipswich St. and the Bowker Overpass.
- Much to the consternation of neighbors, construction continued on several projects slated to open in the next two years, including Scape’s apartment building on Boylston Street, the Boston Arts Academy and the MGM Music Hall (both on Ipswich), and Parcel 12, the air rights development at the northwest corner of Boylston and Mass. Ave.



RENDERING COURTESY OF THE BPDA

## DEVELOPMENT: MISSION HILL

- Mission Main—owned and managed by Winn Development under a long-term ground lease from the Boston Housing Authority with the Mission Main Tenant Task Force—will undergo renovations to give 535 apartments new heating and cooling systems, life-safety improvements, and updated kitchens and bathrooms. Winn expects to carry out between \$100,000 and \$120,000 of renovations per unit.
- Developers proposed more than 240 new apartments for six sites on Terrace Street.
- The Boston Parks Dept. led a redesign process for the Mission Hill Playground. Kyle Zick Landscape Architecture went back to the drawing board after hearing strong community interest in a regulation basketball court. The City anticipates substantial completion by May 2022.
- Other open space development included a new garden on Gore Street (pictured) created by the Mission Hill Health Movement, a nonprofit dedicated to ensuring quality of life of residents.



PHOTO: ALISON PULINAS



POLITICS

ELECTIONS

Michelle Wu (inset), then a city councilor at-large, and Andrea Campbell, city councilor from District 4, which includes parts of Dorchester, Mattapan, Jamaica Plain, and Roslindale, announced their candidacies for mayor in September 2020. After President Joe Biden nominated then-Mayor Marty Walsh as U.S. Secretary of Labor in early 2021, four other major candidates jumped into the race. One of the four, Jon Santiago—state representative for the 9th Suffolk district, which covers a large part of the Fenway—dropped out of the race in mid-July.

The three newer candidates were Annisssa Essaibi George, a city councilor at-large; John Barros, former chief of economic development for the City; and then-Acting Mayor Kim Janey, city

councilor for District 7 who was serving as council president when Walsh resigned. Under the city charter, the council president steps in as mayor when a vacancy occurs.

A preliminary election on Sept. 14 narrowed the race down to Wu and Essaibi George. Wu dominated the final election in November, winning 64% of votes citywide. She began her term in late November.

Elections also took place for at-large and district city councilors, including the seat vacated by Janey in District 7. In the at-large race, incumbents Michael F. Flaherty and Julia Mejia held onto their seats, and Ruthzee Louijeune and Erin Murphy joined the council. Tania Fernandes Anderson won the District 7 race.

REDISTRICTING

In state politics, the Massachusetts constitution mandates updates of House, Senate, Governor’s

Council, and Congressional district boundaries every 10 years, following the U.S. Census, to accommodate shifts in population and provide equal representation to citizens.

- **State Senate:** A new map approved by the legislature and signed by Gov. Baker, will take effect for this fall’s election. It has the East Fens joining the Back Bay in a state senate district previously represented by Joe Boncore of East Boston but currently vacant (a special election to fill the seat takes place on Jan. 11).
- **State House:** Fenway representation in the House will change significantly. Jon Santiago will no longer represent any Fenway residents, with Jay Livingstone picking up all of the East Fens and four blocks of the West Fens bounded by Park Drive, Kilmarnock Street, and Peterborough Street. The rest of the West Fens will become the only area of Boston in a district that runs from the MIT campus into Chelsea and Everett.

THE ARTS



Fenway museums reopened in winter 2021 after their second coronavirus-related closure. By the summer, with vaccination rates rising and COVID cases falling, capacity limits were lifted and it was easier than ever to secure tickets to local museums. The Museum of Fine Arts continued to require timed and ticketed entries, and the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum encouraged visitors to buy tickets in advance.

On August 12, the Gardner opened *Titian: Women, Myth & Power*, the final stop and only US venue for a groundbreaking exhibition that had already hung in London and Madrid. For the first time in more than 400 years the exhibit brought together six mythological paintings that Titian, one of the giants of Renaissance painting, created for King Philip II of Spain. It included the first works that England’s Wallace Collection ever agreed to lend to a U.S. exhibition.

On October 10, the Museum of Fine Arts opened “Fabric of a Nation: Quilt Stories,” displaying and explaining 50 varied quilts and how they reflect America’s development—and some of its darkest past. The show reflected how the most Brahmin of Boston’s cultural institutions has struggled to redefine its mission and its role in the community over the last few years.

The year also brought public art to our neighborhoods, including this three story mural at 38 S. Huntington Ave., created by Colombian artist (and Mass Art grad) Felipe Ortiz.

IN MEMORIAM

Every year brings the death of friends and neighbors. These sometimes include people who create the social networks that define our neighborhoods. As a community-run newspaper, *The Fenway News* tries to capture some of the qualities that make these folks special. In 2021, we suffered some notable losses, including:



**Matti Kniva Spencer**, a beloved member of the community, died on Sept. 5. A Fenway

resident for more than 35 years, Matti was known as an artist, poet, philanthropist, and humanitarian. He contributed photographs, writing, and poetry to *The Fenway News* for more than 20 years and took a lead role in producing exhibitions and master-minding social events at the Peterborough Senior Center.



**Theresa Parks**, a Mission Hill icon from the Francis-Fenwood neighborhood, died on June 9. Theresa

was one of the influential founders of the Roxbury Tenants of Harvard housing development. She remained a community activist for the rest of her life while raising a family and holding multiple jobs.

**Marilyn Casey** of Mission Hill (not pictured) died on June 4. She was 65. A 2008 graduate of the Massachusetts College of Art and Design, Marilyn lived nearby at Mission Park on Huntington Avenue. For an exhibit at the Parker Hill Library in 2013, Marilyn submitted an artist statement that said “I love to tell stories about my community and African American culture and history through art.”



In late 2020, the Fenway lost **Gilbert Bo Sam “Gil” Loo** at the age of 100. Gil and his wife Barbara Richardson Loo moved to Park Drive in the early 1960s and regularly took advantage of Fenway museums and the BSO. Avid hikers, the pair hiked the entire 2,000-plus miles Appalachian Trail and summited 48 mountains taller than 4,000 feet. Gil served the neighborhood as a member of the Fenway CDC’s board

SOME OF OUR FAVORITE PHOTOS



Multiple residents reported seeing coyotes in the Back Bay Fens and Charlesgate Park in 2021. (STEVE CHASE PHOTO)

Roxbury’s Ekuia Holmes planted four massive plots of sunflowers on the MFA’s front lawn as the museum worked to showcase more art created by local artists. (STEVE CHASE PHOTO)



We groused about the pandemic, but it did force us to embrace cool-weather outdoor dining, as on this chilly April night at the Trillium beer garden. (STEVE WOLF PHOTO)



In late August, Arthur Rose—at 102 the oldest member of the Fenway Garden Society—released four monarch butterflies he raised from eggs found on a milkweed plant in his garden. (CARMEN MUSTO PHOTO)



MFA staffers walked out of the museum on Nov. 17 to protest the lack of progress in contract talks. (ALISON PULTINAS PHOTO)



# NEW RATES MAKE 100% RENEWABLE ELECTRICITY THE CHEAPEST CHOICE

BY LESLIE POND

If you haven't yet opted up for 100 percent renewable electricity, now is a great time to do so, with winter just starting and heating costs rising. And if you previously opted out of the standard rate, opting back in will also lower your electricity costs.

The City of Boston's year-old Community Choice Electricity (CCE) program uses the collective buying power of Boston residents and small businesses to negotiate lower, more stable prices for sustainably sourced electricity. The more people in the program, the greater the savings and benefits for the environment.

Starting this month, the CCE program's residential rates have dropped below the rates of other providers. Eversource has just increased its rate for basic service—which meets the state's requirement that 18 percent of electricity come from renewable sources—to 15.735 cents per kilowatt hour (kwh). This new rate will remain in effect for at least six months. By contrast, CCE rates will continue at 13.858 cents/kwh for 100 percent renewable (the program's "Green 100" option), and 11.161 cents/kwh for 28 percent renewable (known as "Standard/Default"), through at least December 2023. Whichever CCE option you choose, your electricity continues to come through the Eversource grid.

Opting up to Green 100 will help Boston meet its goal of becoming carbon-neutral by 2050—current projections have us falling short of this goal. If all basic-service customers chose 100 percent renewable, we could cut Boston's greenhouse gas emissions by nearly 10%.

To opt in, visit <https://www.cityofbostoncce.com/opt-in-opt-out/> and enter your energy choice; your utility account number; and your name, address, and email. You can change your option at any time with no fee; it typically takes one to two billing cycles to process changes.

To compare your costs and calculate greenhouse gas reductions for the various options, visit <https://www.cityofbostoncce.com/calculator-iso-ne-and-third-party-rate/>.

To learn more about the new rates, visit <https://www.boston.gov/news/new-lower-community-choice-electricity-rates-announced>. If you have questions, contact program manager Theresa Teixeira at [theresa.teixeira@boston.gov](mailto:theresa.teixeira@boston.gov), or sign up for a 15-minute Q&A session via <https://calendly.com/bcce>.

Leslie Pond lives in the West Fens.

> **55 BUS MEETING** from page 1

and Queensberry streets, prompting the T to bring the bus back on a limited schedule that doesn't accommodate those going to work or to evening activities. As attendees noted, if the MBTA was checking ridership, numbers between 10am and 4pm would be low.

State Sen. Will Brownsberger pointed out that agency's problems aren't just financial. There is a nationwide shortage of bus drivers, and the MBTA is limited by garage capacity. Brownsberger suggested that supporters "re-imagine" the bus route. He noted that the 55 always shows up as a low-ridership route, and that the MBTA is always looking to push it off the list. He proposed making the bus part of a larger route that includes Longwood. To that end, a brief one-question survey, projected on screen, asked whether residents would prefer a bus route that makes turns to travel closer to residents' front doors or a route that travels straight lines on major streets but comes within walking distance of destinations. For the Fenway, this could mean a route along Boylston Street extending to the Longwood area. It was noted that such a straight route could run more frequently. 76 percent of respondents preferred the straight route. A longer neighborhood survey had been

underway prior to the meeting, and its results were revealed during the meeting. 104 people had responded to the Fenway Bus Survey. The respondents' average length of time living in the Fenway was 15 years. Their average age was 49, with most respondents being over 65 or between 25 and 34. According to the survey, walking represents the main mode of transportation for residents in the Fenway; 70.9 percent do not own a car. Before elimination of the full bus schedule, most people used the 55 bus for going to work, shopping, and doing errands.

In breakout discussion groups, attendees pointed out that the new construction at Queensberry and Kilmarnock streets will add hundreds of new residents to an already packed neighborhood, and they will need public transportation.

In one breakout discussion, Claire Durant, representing the Red Sox, said that the Red Sox are "willing to put their full voice behind restoring the 55 bus." She promised that the Red Sox will promote the bus to fans.

The neighborhood bus survey continues to be available at [tinyurl.com/FenwayBusSurvey](https://tinyurl.com/FenwayBusSurvey).

Ruth Khowais lives in the West Fens.

## VOLT HOCKEY MAKES DEBUT



On Dec. 4, The Boston Self Help Center, a Mission Hill nonprofit, introduced Volt Hockey at the BCYF Tobin Community Center. The sport, growing quickly in Europe and Canada, puts three players on a rink installed on a basketball court.

# Urban Detective Unpacks Westland Avenue's Grand Axis

BY ED BALLO

Walking along Westland Avenue toward the West Fens may not seem very historical (especially when you're hauling your groceries back from Whole Foods), but these blocks hold some tantalizing morsels of history.

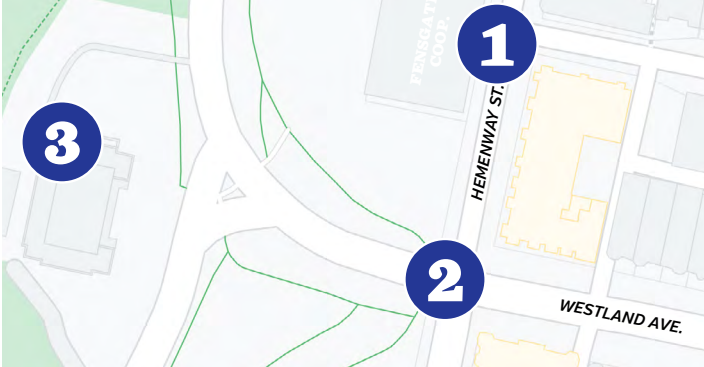
Hemenway Street 1 was once the sole road that led northeast along a stretch of marshy land jutting into the Back Bay known as Gravelly Point, and it was once a part of Roxbury. Starting in 1814, the Boston and Roxbury Mill Corporation began building a mile-long dam across the mouth of the Back Bay, which became Beacon Street, and Gravelly Point was extended atop a cross dam thereby creating two separate basins. The goal of the corporation was to use the power of the tides in the basins to power mills and industry, as well as to operate a toll road to Brookline. The technical failure of the scheme and the ultimate need to fill in the entire Back Bay three decades later will be discussed at length in a separate installment.

Walking west, we approach the Westland Avenue Gates 2, officially

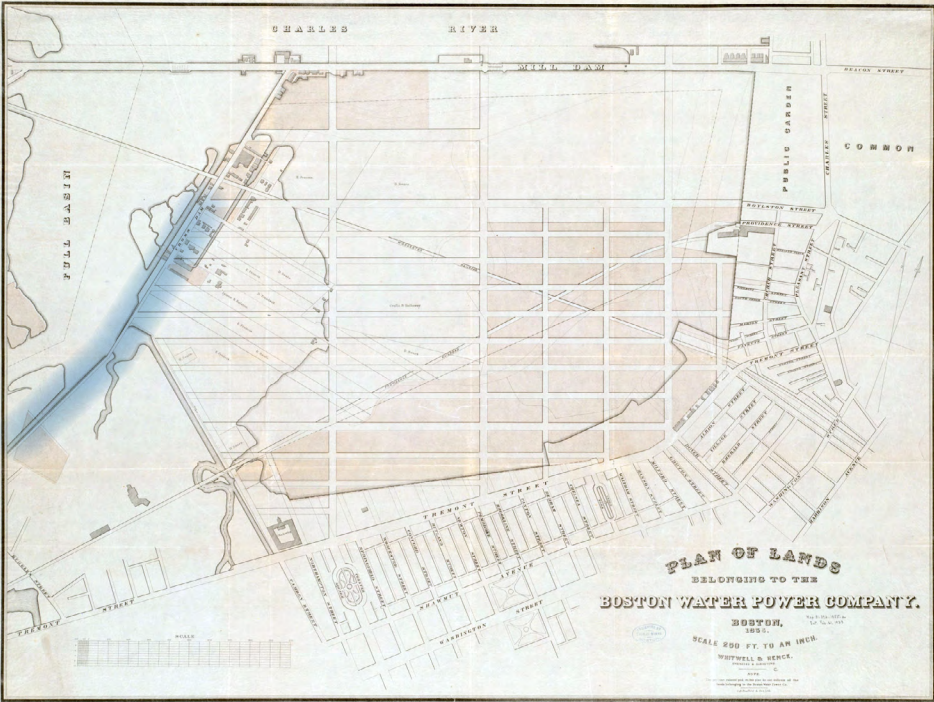
the Johnson Memorial Fountain, built between 1902 and 1905 and designed by Boston/New York architect and landscape architect Guy Lowell (1870-1927). Lowell's pedigree was unquestionable: a distinguished family, a bachelors from Harvard, and a masters in architecture from Boston Tech (later MIT). He went on to study at Kew Gardens in England and the famous École des Beaux Arts in



PHOTO: ED BALLO



Paris. Lowell is responsible for some of the Fenway's most iconic buildings such as the Huntington Avenue and Fenway façades of the Museum of Fine Arts (1909-15) and the main academic building of Simmons University (1904). Fur-



Hemenway Street began as a dam that ran across the large Back Bay basin created by a private company to run mills by trapping and releasing tidal flows from the Charles. The map above, which predates the plan for the Back Bay, highlights the northern end of present-day Hemenway in blue. Guy Lowell designed the Johnson Memorial Gates. Behind the gates sits the City's fire-alarm building, built in 1925.

ther afield, Lowell designed the stables, upper and lower lock gate houses and a boathouse, all of which sit on the first Charles River Dam, built in 1910. The top of the dam is where the Museum of Science was built in the 1950s. Lastly, Lowell contributed to the landscaping design of the Boston Embankment, known to us today as the Esplanade. Beyond the gates lies the City

of Boston Fire Alarm building 3, built in 1925 in the Italian Renaissance style. The placement of the building at the end of the avenue, with the gates flanking it, creates a monumental pairing and offers an example of axial city planning that would be more easily found in a city such as Paris or Washington. Boston had the first municipal fire alarm system in the world; its first alarm was transmitted by telegraph on April 29, 1852. Unfortunately, fire alarm boxes were kept locked to prevent false alarms, with only designated people in each district possessing a key. This practice proved disastrous in the fire of 1872, which consumed much of downtown, since it slowed the response time. To date, the fire of 1872 stands as Boston's most devastating conflagration.

Ed Ballo lives in the West Fens.



# FENSVIEWS

## ‘Reimagined’ 55 Should Serve Riders

BY ALISON PULTINAS

What is it, restore or reimagine? The discourse about Fenway’s 55 bus route has changed. Is the push for an alternative route the riders’ choice or is something else going on? In other words, who’s driving this bus?

The question posed at a Dec. 7 public meeting—*Can the 55 be part of a richer network as the Fenway neighborhood gets denser?*—introduces a relevant theme. Clearly, the current limited schedule and truncated trip reduced the connectivity of the former route. Restoring service to downtown seems like an obvious fix to increase access to other transit and destinations. But that’s not what we heard at the December meeting.

When the protests against the T’s cuts started, Rep. Jon Santiago boasted of how the South End’s activism had saved the 43 bus, a route that shared several downtown stops with the 55. A petition drive that he initiated was critical.

### GUEST OPINION

Perhaps even more so was his own daily experience of riding the bus to work at the State House. The MBTA reduced frequency on the 43, but the route—Ruggles Station along Tremont to Charles St. South, then turning at Beacon toward Park Street Station—didn’t change. The Orange Line runs nearby, but that apparently wasn’t a factor.

MBTA planners justified service cuts on the 55, however, by citing the proximity of other transit like Brookline Avenue bus routes and the Green Line stops. Yes, they aren’t far, but transit planning should include redundancy. Service interruptions are frequent (see D Line shutdowns and future closure of Symphony Station for construction), and as more residential development adds to Boston’s population, transit options should increase, not decrease.

When the 55 runs on time, the inbound trip takes 10 to 13 minutes from Queensberry to Copley Square—faster than using the Green Line once you factor in walking (and no station stairs to climb).

The outbound trip takes longer, and there are obstacles. Construction on Ipswich Street—which began with the Arts Academy demolition and continues with the new music venue attached to Fenway Park—has affected the 55’s on-time performance. Parcel 12 construction at Mass. Ave./Boylston Street also interferes with traffic flow. In addition, cars parked on Ipswich near St. Clement Shrine make the turn from Boylston to Ipswich difficult. The traffic

light at the west end of Ipswich, by the CVS, is long, and the left turn from Boylston to Kilmarnock adds another delay.

Retaining service on Ipswich is important if we imagine concert-goers, BAA students, and even Red Sox patrons riding the 55—and why shouldn’t we? Fenway destinations are regional assets; improved transit should be a given when the music hall opens. Obstacles on the route that slow the 55 must take priority as topics for the Fenway Transportation Study.

Are there strategies that can improve bus performance, such as eliminating on-street parking and using Van Ness Street to cross Boylston to Kilmarnock? Instead we heard at the meeting talk of extending the route—possibly by adding a Boylston/Brookline/Longwood Avenue/Avenue Louis Pasteur loop.

Online survey results shared at the meeting by Cassie White of the Fenway CDC showed the top reason for riding the 55 was traveling to work. Resident Brenda Lew remembered standing-room-only trips for morning commuters. The bus would be nearly full leaving Queensberry Street with riders heading downtown. The stop on Beacon Street across from the State House was a key destination.

The 55 route has many supporters and in years past had many riders, especially for the inbound morning commute. As an alternative to boarding a crowded Green Line car, it had many advantages—riders primarily boarded at West Fens stops and settled in for a short trip downtown. The Prudential area and Copley Station also were favored stops.

The American Community Survey data discussed at the meeting tells a story of a carless, walkable neighborhood: more than 49 percent of Fenway residents walk to work. Many undoubtedly work in the medical area, but do they really need a bus to Longwood? The bus routes that travel on the avenue experience notorious traffic congestion from Louis Prang to the Fenway and on Longwood at Avenue Louis Pasteur and near the parking garage at Children’s Hospital at Binney Street.

The well-attended December meeting, organized by local advocates and elected officials, started the conversation with the title “Reimagine.” Under the pandemic’s influence nothing feels normal. However, if we imagine a Fenway future with hundreds of new apartments occupied in the next five years, we need multiple transit options. A comfortable short bus ride from the neighborhood to downtown just might work again.

*Alison Pultinas lives in Mission Hill.*

### Protect The Community: In Support of Mayor Wu’s Vaccine Mandate

We applaud Mayor Michelle Wu’s recently announced vaccine , “B Together.” The policy applies to visitors and employees in certain indoor spaces, including restaurants, fitness clubs,

patients haven’t been vaccinated. In Massachusetts, the figure is about 70 percent.

The vaccine mandate gives us a fighting chance to lessen the impact of the current surge, as the number of COVID-19 cases in statewide continues to set new records day after day—surpassing 1 million cases and more than 20,000 deaths—with the numbers projected to continue increasing at least into January. A vaccine requirement is an important tool in this pandemic, especially as our testing capacity isn’t yet meeting needs. It’s also easy to implement—neighbors who recently visited New York City report that it typically takes a minute or less to check vaccination status at the door.

Throughout the pandemic, people in low-income households and communities of color have been hit particularly hard. Equitable access through a vaccine mandate can help lessen the COVID’s unequal impact.

Mayor Wu’s vaccine mandate provides much-needed support for healthcare and other frontline workers. We fully support taking this important step to protect our community and the physical and mental health of our loved ones.

**LESLIE POND, KRISTEN MOBILIA, HELEN COX WITH IORY ALLISON, PATRICIA AMEND\*, ARLENE ASH, JOHN BALL, GRETCHEN BENNETT\*, BOB BINNEY\*, DOLORES BOOGDANIAN, MARY ANN BROGAN,**

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*\* Ward 5 Democratic Committee executive board (Ward 5 includes Fenway/Kenmore precincts 2 and 10)*

### ZONING HEARING

The Zoning Commission of the City of Boston hereby gives notice, in accordance with Chapter 665 of the Acts of 1956, as amended, that a virtual public hearing will be held on January 12, 2022, at 9:15 A.M., in connection with a petition for approval of the Boston University Fenway Campus 2021-2031 Institutional Master Plan (“IMP”), filed by the Boston Redevelopment Authority d/b/a the Boston Planning & Development Agency.

Said IMP provides an update on recent campus development and operations, existing property and uses, future campus projections, and community benefits.

This meeting will only be held virtually and not in person. You can participate in this meeting by going to <https://bit.ly/3mnveSQ>. A copy of the petition may be obtained from the Zoning Commission electronically, and you may also submit written comments or questions to [zoningcommission@boston.gov](mailto:zoningcommission@boston.gov).

Interpreting services are available to communicate information at this hearing. If you require interpreting services, please contact the following: [zoningcommission@boston.gov](mailto:zoningcommission@boston.gov) or 617-918-4308. The meeting is scheduled for January 12, 2022. Please request interpreting services no later than January 7, 2022.

For the Commission,  
JEFFREY M. HAMPTON, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

## THE 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 <

Our next issue will appear on  
**Friday, January 28.**

#### > DEADLINE <

The deadline for letters, news items, and ads for our next issue is  
**Friday, January 21.**

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### No Paper Issue for January :-((

We’d planned to be back in print this issue, but the Omicron-fueled COVID spike forced us to recalculate. We couldn’t ask our distribution team to

risk exposure to deliver the paper—or expect you to take any extra risk to pick one up. We’ll resume printing as soon as case numbers improve.



## Mass-Vax Sites, Three Local, Return

The Commonwealth has re-opened its high-volume vaccination sites and added boosters to the menu for anyone 5 or older. For details or to make an appointment at these (or a dozen other sites statewide), visit [vaxfinder.mass.gov/](https://vaxfinder.mass.gov/). The City also maintains a comprehensive map of sites at [www.boston.gov/departments/public-health-commission/covid-19-vaccine-boston](https://www.boston.gov/departments/public-health-commission/covid-19-vaccine-boston).

- **Melnea Cass Recreation Complex** reopened on Jan. 5 (120 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd, outside of Nubian Square; hours—Mon-Fri, 9:30am-5pm)
- **Fenway Park** reopened on Jan. 6 and reportedly expected 1,500 people on its first day (hours—Weds & Fri-Sun, 8am-6pm; Thur, 10am-6pm).
- **Whittier Street Health Clinic** (1290 Tremont St., across from Boston Police HQ; ages 5 and up; hours—Mon-Fri, 8:30am-5pm; Sat, 9am-5pm).

## IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

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

The University of Virginia pulled out of the Wasabi Fenway Bowl just three days before the event's inaugural edition, "due to the number of COVID cases impacting its roster." COVID had already scuttled the inaugural bowl in 2021. Fenways Sports Management confirmed the cancellation of the bowl following an initial announcement on Twitter. 🏈

**The Sunday Globe featured a glowing profile of composer, organist, and conductor Richard Clark. Prior to his appointment as director of music for the Archdiocese of Boston and the Cathedral of the Holy Cross, Clark served for close to three decades as music director for St. Cecilia Church on Belvidere Street.** 🎵

Two medical professionals from the LMA sent a memo to CDC director Rochelle Walensky arguing for a "circuit breaker" policy to prevent the collapse of local health care systems. Under the proposal—submitted by a doctor from the Brigham and a faculty member at Harvard Chan School of Public Health—once a city or region hit a certain number of COVID infections, restrictions on risky indoor activities like restaurant dining, shows, and gyms would kick in. With hospitalization rates near the highest they've been during the pandemic, the two wrote, "it is possible that uncontrolled spread of Omicron could quickly overwhelm hospital capacity." 🏥 **In more spiking-COVID news, the Huntington Theatre lopped off the final week off its current production—Teenage Dick, which had been scheduled to run through January 2—because of the Omicron surge. A retelling of Shakespeare's Richard III, set in a present-day high school, the play can still be streamed through the Huntington's website, <https://www.huntingtontheatre.org/season/2021-2022/teenage-dick/>.**

## @ THE CENTER

The Fenway Community Center is now open six days a week. Visit [www.fenwaycommunitycenter.org](https://www.fenwaycommunitycenter.org) for more details. Masks and vaccines required.

- Tuesdays, 2:30pm: MARTIAL ARTS.

Classes are designed for all abilities.

- Wednesdays. 6:00pm: GUIDED MEDITATION.
- Fridays. 12:30pm: BINGO.

## SENIOR EVENTS

All Peterborough Senior Center programs require RSVP to Tracey or Sara at (617) 536-7154. To receive Zoom links and call-in numbers, email Mallory Rohrig at [mallory@operationpeaceboston.org](mailto:mallory@operationpeaceboston.org).

- Tue, Jan. 1, 12pm: BINGO AT THE FENWAY COMMUNITY CENTER.
- Thu, Jan. 20, 11:30am: COFFEE & CONVERSATION AT THE FENWAY

COMMUNITY CENTER. Special guest: Yanni Tsipis of WS Development.

- Tue, Jan. 25, 12pm: CURIOSITY KIT DISCUSSION AT THE PETERBOROUGH SENIOR CENTER
- Thu, Jan. 27, 11:30am: COFFEE & CONVERSATION AT THE FENWAY COMMUNITY CENTER. Special guest: City Councilor Kenzie Bok.

## Neighborhood Newsline

### Development Roundup

- **Comments on SCAPE's 2 Charlesgate West** high-rise are due Jan. 8. The presentation from the Dec. 15 public meeting is available at <http://www.bostonplans.org/projects/development-projects/2-charlesgate>. SCAPE purchased the properties at 1161 Boylston St. and 2 and 6 Charlesgate West from Steven Belkin in 2019 for \$39 million.
- On Jan. 13, the BPDA Board votes on the life science lab project for **109 Brookline Ave.**
- The 13-story residential proposal for **775 Huntington Ave.** received approval of a Boston Civic Design Commission subcommittee on Dec. 15. However, project massing remained a concern for Commissioner Mimi Love. BPDA Project Manager Ebony DaRosa has not yet posted the public or agency comments received on the proposal.
- A three-month demolition delay imposed by the Boston Landmarks Commission for the single-family house at **14 Eldora St.** in Mission Hill expires Jan. 26. The 1892 house is one of five on a short, steep block. In her statement, Landmarks Commission staff architect Yolanda Romero described the future loss as a negative impact on the street's urban design character. The owners are Paul and Greg Grant, brothers known in the neighborhood for their student-rental properties. The developers have followed a strategy of building as of right in order to avoid challenges from abutters.

### Art Supply Store on Huntington to Close

Blick Art Materials, located on at the inbound entrance plaza to the Green Line's Symphony Station at the corner of Mass. and Huntington Avenues will close in the near future. Blick's landlord did not renew the store's lease.

### Berklee Updates

- Berklee College of Music has named Kaitlin Passafaro its new vice president of Community and Government Relations. She previously ran the Mayor's Office of Intergovernmental Relations, where she served as senior advisor to former Boston mayors Marty Walsh and Kim Janey. Passafaro holds a bachelor of arts in history from Boston College and a master's in public administration from Suffolk University's Sawyer Business School.
- Two Berklee faculty members edited and contributed to the new book, *Woodstock Then and Now*, a behind-the-scenes look at the iconic 1969 music festival. In 2019 Berklee hosted a symposium marking the festival's 50th anniversary. The book was edited by Alex Ludwig, assistant professor of liberal arts and sciences, and Simone Pilon, dean of academic affairs for Berklee's campus in Valencia, Spain.

### BPDA Opens Nominations for P-3 Project Review Committee

The City's planning agency has set an early-February deadline for responses to a request for proposals for developing parcel P-3 in Nubian Square, at which point a community-evaluation process will begin. A project review Ccommittee (PRC) will provide a channel for direct community review of proposals submitted for the parcel. After reviewing the submissions, PRC members will work together to make a recommendation to the BPDA on which proposal should be selected. To apply or to nominate someone else, complete the application at [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf0xzGQ-J0EYIa0QYk-1NYsuZz4yQLGHLRilplQq8CAMmlNg/viewform?mc\\_cid=e122cbb15b&mc\\_eid=320aa2ee8e](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf0xzGQ-J0EYIa0QYk-1NYsuZz4yQLGHLRilplQq8CAMmlNg/viewform?mc_cid=e122cbb15b&mc_eid=320aa2ee8e). For a paper copy of the application or for more information, email or call Kelly Sherman at (617) 918-5493 or [Kelly.sherman@boston.gov](mailto:Kelly.sherman@boston.gov).

## FENWAY CARES WINS COVID-RECOVERY FUNDING

BY STEVE WOLF

**G**ov. Charlie Baker signed a bill in December distributing \$4 billion in COVID recovery money; its hundreds of line items included a \$50,000 earmark for Fenway Cares—enough money to cover the cost of nearly 8,500 bags of food over the next year. Formed early in the pandemic, the group now gives food away for residents in need. "People may be surprised to hear that food insecurity is so prevalent in Fenway that Fenway Cares has distributed more than 10,000 free bags of produce since the beginning of the pandemic," said Rob Kordenbrock, executive director of the Fenway Community Center, one of six groups that make up Fenway Cares. The others are the Audubon Circle Neighborhood Association, Fenway Culture Boston, Fenway Civic Association, Fenway CDC, and Operation P.E.A.C.E.

State Rep. Jay Livingstone led the effort to insert the earmark into the bill; according to his office, Reps. Chynah Tyler, Jon Santiago, and Dan Ryan and Sen. Will Brownsberger all supported the amendment. "Fenway Cares has been critical to addressing food insecurity in the Fenway throughout this pandemic," Livingstone said. "I am proud to represent a community that works to support its neighbors and am happy that we could secure funding so that Fenway Cares food distribution can continue throughout 2022."

*Steve Wolf lives in the West Fens.*

## 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](https://fenwayhealth.org)

## FENWAY CDC IS HIRING!

**WE'RE LOOKING FOR**  
a Director of Community Programs to oversee our resident services

department, which supports low- and moderate-income residents through job-skills training, employment opportunity referrals, housing-related and social services, education, food access, financial coaching, health and wellness programs.

For a complete job description and information on applying, please visit [tinyurl.com/FCDCcareers](https://tinyurl.com/FCDCcareers).



Fenway Community Development Corporation  
Improving Lives and Building Community



## 28 THE FENWAY RENOVATION GETS BACK ON TRACK

BY MARY ANN BROGAN

The construction site at 28 The Fenway has remained dormant for more than a year. Since a *Fenway News* article appeared in November 2020, there should have been significant progress on the 42 studio units and two penthouse apartments that would house the owners of Maverick Suites, LLC—Frank Hoff and Bruce Miller—and their families.

Like many historic properties in the Fenway, 28 The Fenway has transformed multiple times. Along with 30 The Fenway, it was originally built as a private home for the Thayer family. Then, it became Miss Caroline’s School for Girls. In the 19th century, between one-third and one-half of Boston’s population lived in boarding houses, and after the girl’s school, the parcel became one of these boarding houses. It transformed again into a dormitory, then most recently became an MIT fraternity house with 53 rooms, which closed in 2018.

Enter Maverick Suites, which has a history of buying lodging house licenses and converting the buildings into studios for short-term rentals. Miller of Maverick Suites emphasizes that the company’s properties are developed from rooming house licenses already in place and not from the stock of apartments that house most of the neighborhood’s residents. The company has short-term rentals available throughout Boston and New England.

Miller reports that the delay for 28 The Fenway’s completion is multifold. There have been permit difficulties for the two penthouses. Pandemic and supply issues have also played a role. Miller does expect that things to move along smoothly now, and expects to see these short-term rental studios open this year.

He is excited about nearby developments, like Parcel 12, and thinks that short-term rentals will complement the neighborhood’s expansion. Miller stresses that Maverick pursues a policy of respecting the historic nature of its properties and preserving their history and beauty. Maverick has yet to determine the building’s future name.

Mary Ann Brogan lives in the East Fens.

## Boston School Committee: Ballot Box Politics

BY ALISON PULTINAS

*Editor’s Note: In November an overwhelming majority of Boston voters approved an advisory measure calling for an elected school committee. A “yes” vote supported ending the current system, with the mayor appointing school committee members, and returning to a committee of elected members that predated 1992. A “no” vote opposed the return to an elected system.*

The wording of the ballot question left no room for nuanced debate. Education advocates and Boston Public School families identified lack of accountability under the current appointed-board process as the major concern. Voters apparently felt that electing new faces to sit at the table is a solution. Clearly, there has been a disconnect between the general public and the Boston School Committee.

A pitfall of making laws at the ballot box is that issues get painted in broad strokes. There was no option to support a hybrid committee (some elected, some appointed), the option all the mayoral candidates supported (except Annissa Essaibi George, who proposed enlarging the committee from seven to nine members by adding appointees selected by the City Council).

2021 gave us ample opportunities to observe the current practice for appointments. The 13-member nominating panel met 12 times on Zoom, and all interviews were public. The application process for prospective committee members includes 11 questions to be answered in writing. A panel reviews all applications submitted by the deadline; the review committee constitutes a diverse group that by state mandate includes four current BPS parents chosen by parent groups, a Boston Teachers Union representative, a current BPS principal, a representative of the Boston Municipal Research Bureau, a local college president (currently Valerie Roberson from Roxbury Community College), an appointee of the state education commissioner, and four members selected by the Mayor.

As many City Hall observers know, because of the unexpected resignations of

chair Michael Loconto, acting chair Alex Oliver Davila, and Dr. Lorena Rivera, there were several vacant committee seats to fill. The standard term of office is four years and appointments are staggered so that every year, a new application process begins. Each year, at least one or two incumbents must reapply for their seats in order to remain on the Boston School Committee.

Ernani DeAraujo, who was appointed a year ago to fill Loconto’s unexpired term, chose not to reapply. Neither did Dr. Hardin Coleman, who finished his last term on Dec. 31.

That means the school committee will be filled primarily with new faces. The two appointees from Janey’s term of office took their seats this summer and were reappointed by Mayor Wu in November.

A high school student elected from the Boston Student Advisory Council serves as an eighth member of the committee, but has no voting rights—another point of contention.

Worth noting is the low number of applications, even with an annual \$7,500 stipend members and no shortage of urban education activists in our city. Nonetheless, just 14 candidates applied for the two open seats. The review committee held 11 interviews in December, interviewing applicants who included two recent BPS graduates. Chair Laura Ciardi stated that Mayor Wu is looking for strong leaders and demonstrable commitments to the district. In an unusual move, the two new appointees were not announced as of Jan 3, with Wu’s office saying the postponement was due to the Omicron variant outbreak.

Chapter 108 of the Massachusetts Acts of 1991 spell out the multi-step process for appointments. The nominating panel has 30 days to submit slates of three to five names for each vacant seat; the lists are arranged alphabetically,; and a nominee can appear on more than one list. The mayor then chooses appointees from the panel’s selections.

At a Dec. 6 Government Operations Committee hearing, City Councilors Julia Mejia and Ricardo Arroyo presented a home-rule petition for an elected committee. The

petition calls for a phased transition to a 13-member committee with three citywide at-large members added for the term beginning in January 2024. Two years later, the original seven appointed members would be replaced by nine members elected to represent Boston’s nine council districts.

At the Dec. 6 hearing, Mejia’s opening statement from the Boston Education Justice Alliance stressed “how policy after policy enacted by the Boston School Committee hurts Boston Public School students and families.” Others spoke of the Boston School Committee’s responsibility for holding the central office accountable and argued committee members’ first responsibility is to the community. Councilor Kenzie Bok said, “the *how* question is the key...what is the mechanism for accountability?”

Advocate Neema Avashia argued that the current system creates no checks and balances for the powers of the School Committee. NAACP chair Tanisha Sullivan testified that the mandate for an elected committee “mitigates a stain on our democracy” but doesn’t make all BPS problems go away. Critics cited committee members who listen impassively during public comment then unanimously approve the Superintendent’s initiatives—even ones passionately opposed in hearings by families, students, and teachers.

*Boston Herald* columnist Joyce Ferriabough Bolling said, “it shouldn’t be rocket science to implement what Bostonians overwhelmingly voted for in November, a fully elected school committee...it shouldn’t take three years to implement the change we have needed for nearly 30 years.”

How will this debate play out? As with so many Boston regulatory processes the state legislature will play an oversized role. City councilors have promised more hearings in 2022. Councilor Arroyo said, “everything that happens with public education is political.” There appears to be broad commitment to an open and transparent process, but as nominating-panel parent member Charlie Kim asked at their last meeting, “are we really driving change?”

Alison Pultinas lives in Mission Hill.



### First Fenway Dispensary Opens; Mission Hill May Get Its Second

Recreational-use dispensary MedMen opened at 120 Brookline Ave. in late December. The 4,725-square-foot dispensary represents the company’s first Massachusetts store. MedMen, which operates 29 stores in six other states, announced its arrival with full-page ads in the *Boston Herald* and *Dig Boston*, but not the *Boston Globe*. Despite the Brookline Avenue address, customers enter at the back of the building, pictured, facing Van Ness Street.

Meanwhile, on Dec. 15 the Boston Cannabis Board approved equity applicant Jody Mendoza’s proposal for Team Green, a recreational dispensary at 1441 Tremont St. in Mission Hill. The board initially rejected the proposal because of its proximity to Raices, the future shop at 123 Terrace St., but Mendoza convinced the board that Mission Hill’s density meant a Tremont Street location would have little impact on business at Raices. The approval vote remains conditional, because the Zoning Board of Appeal has the ultimate authority over licensees with buffer-zone conflicts. Team Green has a ZBA hearing date for Feb. 8.

## 12 Hemenway Street Sale: A Hostel Takeover?

BY ALISON PULTINAS

Some dramatic real estate news: Berklee College of Music bought 12 Hemenway St. for \$18 million. The sale, on Dec. 14, surprised neighbors wary of institutional expansion in the residential community.

Historically known as the Hotel Parkgate, 12 Hemenway was operated for decades by the Portnoy family as a lodging house. In 1982, a building permit and zoning variances were granted to combine the corner building, 15 Haviland, with 12 Hemenway for an approved occupancy of 219 persons. The Portnoys were negotiating a \$400,000 sale of the property to American Youth Hostels, which operated the hostel at the Hemenway location until 2011. At the time of the AYH sale, the Zoning Board of Appeals imposed a proviso that lodging-house tenants be allowed to remain in the building at rates no higher than what the hostel would charge. The proviso also included a clause keeping the combined buildings on the city’s tax roll, despite AYH’s status as a nonprofit.

So, controversy isn’t new for the property. In 2016, Emerson College created more by leasing it to house students while building a dorm at its downtown

campus. Neighbors took their being shut out of the review process as a sign that the building’s supposedly temporary use as a dorm would become permanent.

Berklee bought the building from 12 Hemenway LLC, a company owned by Karan Suri of Beverly Hills, California. Suri had operated the property as Found Study Boston, a private dorm, also still known as Boston Fenway Inn. Online reviews are mixed—from “shadiest place ever” to compliments for the front desk staff. For a time, Google listed the location as a three-star hotel, but Found Study restricts tenants to college students only. All studios and singles are booked for the spring semester.

Suri, associated with Found Hotels, also owns the former Milner Hotel at 78 Charles St. South and the Copley Square Hotel at 47 Huntington Ave.

Most controversial of all for the neighborhood—missing filings from Berklee College of Music. Berklee is years late with updates of its 2011 institutional master plan, with only a two-page letter submitted in 2016 detailing its merger with the Boston Conservatory.

Alison Pultinas lives in Mission Hill.



# CPA PANEL MULLS LOCAL REQUESTS

BY ALISON PULTINAS

Deliberations on 2022 allocations under the Community Preservaion Act began in November and will continue through January. The Community Preservation Committee (CPC) decides how to spend approximately \$29 million in public (albeit virtual) meetings. The funds support projects in the three categories—affordable housing, historic preservation, and open space—promoted by community-based organizations and advocates or City agencies. The committee uses a formula that targets 50 percent of funds for housing, and 20 percent each for the other two categories, leaving a 10 percent reserve for use if needed.

The City’s Treasury Department runs the program (<https://www.boston.gov/community-preservation/what-community-preservation>), which accepts the applications and distributes the funds collected from a property-tax surcharge approved by voters in 2016.

The committee considers housing proposals first to coordinate with state funding rounds and the Department of Neighborhood Development’s Housing Trust grants. If a planned project is applying to multiple funding sources, the agencies work together for equitable distribution. The committee held a preliminary vote on Dec. 13 to distribute \$14.6 million to nine housing projects.

CPC staff have accepted 34 applications for historic preservation and 21 for open space acquisition or improvement. The committee will discuss those applications at meetings

this month. The total requested for all three categories equals \$36 million.

The Boston Parks Department asked for \$3 million to add to a fund for purchasing land. Parcels purchased with CPA funds must put in place a permanent conservation restriction.

Applications for projects in our coverage area include a \$100,000 request to fund work on the renovated entrance to the Huntington Theatre; a request for \$600,000 to repair the roof and 22 windows at Ruggles Baptist

Church in Audubon Circle; a Boston Architectural College request of \$502,920 for urgent exterior repair on its historic 951 Boylston St. building. Advocates working with the Emerald Necklace Conservancy requested \$650,000 for a new Evans Way Bridge in the Fens.

At the Dec. 13 CPC meeting, Boston Parks Department Commissioner Ryan Woods and planner Cathy Baker-Eclipse spoke favorably about the bridge application, suggesting the project would meld well with the City’s capital project for the Back Bay Fens pathways.

*Alison Pultinas lives in Mission Hill.*

### 16 STADIUM CONCERTS?

Live Nation has asked the City to allow up to 16 concerts at Fenway Park this summer, between June 7 and Sept. 10. The request adds four dates canceled last year on top of twelve new dates. The Licensing Board will take comments about concert impacts in the neighborhood through Jan. 28. Address comments to Kathleen Joyce, Mayor’s Office of Consumer Affairs & Licensing, Room 809, Boston City Hall, Boston 02201. You can also send them electronically to [MOCAL@boston.gov](mailto:MOCAL@boston.gov).

## Group Submits Guild House Offer

In December, the Our Lady’s Guild House Restoration Coalition submitted a proposal to buy the historic Our Lady’s Guild House (OLGH) in Kenmore Square. The group would preserve both the property and its longtime function as affordable single-room-occupancy (SRO) housing for women with limited incomes. The Coalition comprises OLGH residents and Fenway neighborhood activists.

Archbishop (later Cardinal) Richard J. Cushing OLGH established the 137-room lodging house in 1947. For decades, the Daughters of Mary of the Immaculate Conception, a religious order based in Connecticut, operated it as a haven for single women without the means to pay for other housing, including low-wage working women, retirees, and disabled women.

The Daughters control the Massachusetts charitable corporation that owns the property. An agent hired by the order created controversy with a campaign to squeeze out low-income residents and rent rooms at higher rates to college students.

The Daughters hired Colliers International, a commercial real estate company, to sell the building last year. Colliers sought bids by Dec. 1 and said a buyer would be chosen soon after that.

Because of the building’s charitable mission, state law requires the Daughters to file a formal notice, at least 30 days before closing a sale, with the Attorney General’s Public Charities Division for authorization to proceed. By law, the division and the Supreme Judicial Court must approve any sale in order to assure no breach of the charitable trust.

The Restoration Coalition argues that the AG’s office and the SJC must reject any sale that violates either IRS regulations or Massachusetts law. State law requires a dissolving public charity to donate its remaining assets to a similar Massachusetts public charity that will use the assets to further the dissolving charity’s original mission as nearly as possible.

Under its bid, the OLGH Restoration Coalition’s proposes to continue operating the property as SRO housing for women with limited incomes and to preserve the structure’s historic interiors, artwork, furnishings and chapel.

COMPILED BY OUR STAFF

# The Arts

## MFA Unveils New Galleries, Plans 20th MLK Celebration

COMPILED BY OUR STAFF

Last month the Museum of Fine Arts unveiled five reimagined galleries that tell new stories about some of the oldest works in the MFA’s collection. Filled with natural light, the newly renovated spaces showcase 550 featured objects—spanning from the beginnings of Greek art (about 950 B.C.E.) through the fall of Constantinople in the 1400s to today.

Many pieces are on view for the first time or after a long period in storage, including the recently conserved Monopoli Altarpiece and a colossal seated marble sculpture of a goddess.

The previous month the museum opened seven renovated galleries devoted to the visual culture of the Dutch Republic and Flanders, bringing together nearly 100 paintings by artists including Rembrandt, Rubens, Gerrit Dou, Frans Hals and Anthony van Dyck.

The “Netherlandish” installations examine a variety of themes: women artists and patrons; the growth of the art market; and the unexpected connection among still life paintings, the sugar trade and slavery. Many of the featured paintings arrived at the MFA as part of a 2017 gift from Rose-Marie and Eijk van Otterloo and Susan and Matthew Weatherbie, which elevated the MFA’s holdings into one of the country’s foremost collections of 17th-century Dutch art and significantly strengthened its representation of Flemish works from the period.

Both sets of galleries will be open during

the free open house on Monday, Jan. 17, in commemoration of Martin Luther King Jr. Day. This year marks the 20th anniversary of this annual celebration, which the museum reports has welcomed more than 120,000 visitors over its two decades. Massachusetts residents get free admission—including

access to special exhibitions—with tickets available in person on a first-come, first-served basis. After entry, you’ll be asked to validate their Massachusetts ZIP code to enjoy free admission. The open house runs 10am-5pm.

While at the open house, don’t miss “Paper Stories, Layered Dreams: The Art

of Ekua Holmes” and “Fabric of a Nation: American Quilt Stories,” both reviewed in our Decmeber issue.

Remember, the City’s new vaccination requirement ([link here](#)) goes into effect on Jan. 15, requiring you to show proof of vaccination. The MFA also requires all visitors to mask up.

## What Your Neighbors Read Last Year: BPL Lists Most Popular Books of 2021

COMPILED BY OUR STAFF

In Dec. 28, the Boston Public Library’s Readers Services Department published its annual list of the top borrowed titles of the year for adults, children, and teens. Systemwide, the top ten books checked out for adults in 2021 were:

1. *Where the Crawdads Sing*, Delia Owens
2. *Educated*, Tara Westover
3. *The Vanishing Half*, Brit Bennett
4. *Normal People*, Sally Rooney
5. *Such a Fun Age*, Kiley Reid
6. *The Silent Patient*, Alex Michaelides
7. *Circe*, Madeline Miller
8. *Parable of the Sower*, Octavia E. Butler

9. *Becoming*, Michelle Obama

10. *The Dutch House*, Ann Patchett

The top ten books checked out of the Parker Hill Branch of the library (all ages) were:

1. *Born a Crime*, Trevor Noah
2. *Normal People*, Sally Rooney
3. *Save Me the Plums*, Ruth Reichl
4. *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, Dale Carnegie
5. *Dog Man and Cat Kid*, Dav Pilkey
6. *The Silent Patient*, Alex Michaelides
7. *There There*, Tommy Orange
8. *All the Light We Cannot See*, Anthony Doerr
9. *Pete the Cat: I Love My White Shoes*, Eric Litwin
10. *Lord of the Fleas*, Dav Pilkey

And at the newly renovated Roxbury Branch in Nubian Square, the top-ten books checked out (again, all ages) were:

1. *Dog Man: Fetch-22*, Dav Pilkey
2. *Ao Haru Ride*, Io Sakisaka & Inori Fukuda Trant
3. *Brawl of the Wild*, Dav Pilkey
4. *Too Small*, Tola by Atinuke
5. *Bob Books Beginning Readers Set 1*, Bobby Lynn Maslen
6. *Guts*, Raina Telgemeier
7. *Lord of the Fleas*, Dav Pilkey
8. *I Will Take a Nap!*, Mo Willems
9. *People Before Highways*, Karilyn Crockett
10. *Dog Man: For Whom the Ball Rolls*, Dav Pilkey & Jose Garibaldi

## Skate and Slake: Follow a Spin On Ice With A Warm Drink at the Rink

With COVID numbers driving demand for outdoor activities, the winter schedule for the Rink at 401 Park has taken on new importance. Every Sunday join Ice Flow Yoga with Elin Schran of Joy Skate Productions. Sign up for the free event at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/iceflow-al-fresco-the-fenway-skating-class-for-adults-of-all-levels-tickets-217055909067>. The rink will also feature skating lessons with members of the Skating Club of Boston (<https://skatingacademy.org/campus/fenway-campus/>), Broomball with Volo Sports (<https://www.volosports.com/Boston>) and a monthly run club organized by REI (<https://events.hoka.com/reirunjanuary>).

After skating, sample something from Time Out Market’s Après Skate Van, which features cocktails and spiked hot drinks like the Boozy Coffee, Spiked Hot Chocolate, and Hot Buttered Rum at right. The van also serves up non-alcoholic beverages and Eastern Standard Provision’s soft pretzel bites and Liège Belgian Waffles. (Those pretzels originated with the late, lamented Kenmore Square bistro.) Adults skate for \$10, and college students, seniors, and kids under 12 skate for \$6. Rent skates for \$6. Throughout the season, skaters can book ice time at [401park.com/icerink](http://401park.com/icerink) or purchase tickets in person. The rink is open Monday-Friday, 3-9pm; Saturday, 11am-10pm and Sunday, 11am-8pm. Contact [hello@401park.com](mailto:hello@401park.com) for details on private rentals.



PHOTO: BRIAN SAMUELS



# January

## CALENDAR

### COVID PRECAUTIONS KEY

- V** Proof of vaccination or negative PCR text within 72 hours
- M** Masking required
- R** Reduced seating capacity
- Z** Remote viewing

#### Wed, 1/12

- SIERRA CLUB MASSACHUSETTS ADVOCACY HOUR.** Join the chapter for a presentation and discussion of PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) in drinking water. Register at [www.sierraclub.org/massachusetts/advocacy-hour](http://www.sierraclub.org/massachusetts/advocacy-hour). 5pm. **Z**
- Join the **MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL SOCIETY** for *Useful Objects: Museums, Science, And Literature In Nineteenth-Century America*. This hybrid event examines 19th-century American museums. Museums of this period included everything from botanical and zoological specimens to antiquarian artifacts and technological models. Intended to promote “useful knowledge,” these collections generated broader discussions about how objects were selected, preserved, and classified—and who gets to decide their value. This issues shaped broader debates about the scope and purpose of museums

in American culture that continue to resonate today. Visit [www.masshist.org/events/useful-objects-museums-science-and-literature-nineteenth-century-america](http://www.masshist.org/events/useful-objects-museums-science-and-literature-nineteenth-century-america) to register for the in-person and online event. 1154 Boylston St. 5:30pm to 6:30pm. **V M Z**

#### Wed, 1/12, 1/19, and 1/26

Not sure what book to read next? Try the Boston Public Library’s live reader recommendation hour on Twitter to ask a librarian. Tweet at @BPLboston using the hashtag #ShelfServiceLive to describe what you’re looking for, and they’ll do their best to find your new favorite read. 3–4pm.

#### Wed, 1/12 & 1/26 **M**

**FENWAY FAIR FOODS.** Fair Foods welcomes Fenwickians to get a free bag of fresh fruits and vegetables. Mask required. Holy Trinity Orthodox Cathedral, 165 Park Drive. 3–5pm. Contact Anar Kansara at [akan-sara@fenwaycdc.org](mailto:akan-sara@fenwaycdc.org) for more info.

#### Tue, 1/18 **Z**

The **MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL SOCIETY** hosts an online lecture, *The Emergence Of The Marriage Market*. When did Americans begin using the term “the marriage market,” and what does that tell us about society at the time? This article-

in-progress traces the emergence of the concept of marriage as a market subject to supply and demand to the early nineteenth century. Yet even as they referred to the “marriage market,” with its impersonal feel, many Americans resisted marriage’s complete commercialization. Marriage brokers—professional matchmakers—and matrimonial advertising attracted both clients and controversy. The metaphor of the marriage market reflected the entanglement of the sentimental idea of home created by marriage and a competitive, chaotic expanding antebellum economy. 5:15–6:30pm. Register at <https://18308a.blackbaudhosting.com/18308a/The-Emergence-of-the-Marriage-Market-Virtual>.

#### Thu, 1/13 **V M**

Join **ISABELLA STEWART GARDNER MUSEUM** for the world premiere of a dramatic monologue written by Pulitzer Prize-winning author and *New Yorker* critic Hilton Als in response to the exhibition *Titian: Women, Myth, & Power*. Mary I, England’s first reigning queen, married Philip II of Spain in 1554, shortly after he commissioned six paintings from renowned Renaissance artist Titian. Als’s monologue considers Titan’s *poésie*, or painted poetries, from the future queen’s perspective, examining the Titian paintings through the lens of Mary’s portrait, included in the exhibition. Through this new monologue, Als introduces a new “gaze” to these paintings. Tickets at [tnew.gardnermuseum.org/28379/28382](https://tnew.gardnermuseum.org/28379/28382). Free for members. 7–9pm. 25 Evans Way.

#### Mon, 1/17 **V M**

Celebrate Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s life and legacy and carry on his pursuit of justice with a Day of Service at the **ISABELLA STEWART GARDNER MUSEUM**. Excerpts of Dr. King’s speeches will serve as inspiration to design your own advocacy art

to share with someone important in your life. *Witness: Spirituals and the Classical Music Tradition*, a four-part video series featuring Boston-based ensemble Castle of our Skins will screen in Calderwood Hall. The series explores how some Black American composers have found inspiration in the rich tradition of spirituals. Pause for a brief guided meditation on your mobile device or pick up a sketching card to capture inspiration you find in the galleries. Free, but visit [www.gardnermuseum.org/](http://www.gardnermuseum.org/) to reserve tickets. 11am to 4pm.

#### Thu, 1/20 **Z**

Join the **BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY** for a virtual event with Charles Gallagher, discussing his book *Nazis of Copley Square*. The book fills in a crucial forgotten chapter in the history of the American far right, documenting a conspiracy to overthrow the US government and form an alliance with Hitler. Christian Front members imagined themselves as crusaders fighting for the spiritual purification of a nation under assault by godless Communism. The front traced its origins to global Catholic theological movements of the early 20th century, Sunday sermons and lay leaders openly espousing fascist and Nazi beliefs inspired the Front’s anti-Semitism. Co-sponsored by the New England Historic Genealogical Society and State Library of Massachusetts. 6–7pm. Register at [bpl.bibliocommons.com/events/61bb5c47e280b7290003ab98](https://bpl.bibliocommons.com/events/61bb5c47e280b7290003ab98).

#### Fri, 1/2 & Sun, 1/30 **V M**

See Artistic Director Harry Christophers in one of his final concerts with the **HANDEL + HAYDN SOCIETY** at Symphony Hall. The program features Mozart’s “sunny” First Violin Concerto, and Haydn’s “Drum Roll” Symphony No. 103. Fri, 1/28, 7:30pm; Sun, 1/30, 3pm. Tickets \$24–105. Tickets and info at [www.handelandhaydn.org](http://www.handelandhaydn.org).

## COMMUNITY meetings

**TUESDAYS** Mission Hill Main Streets **SMALL BUSINESS CONFERENCE CALL.** Join this weekly call featuring reopening guidance, support services, resources, and your questions. Register in advance at [bitly.com/smallbizbos](https://bitly.com/smallbizbos). 3pm. **Z**

**FRIDAYS** Harvard Law School’s **LEGAL SERVICES CENTER** hosts weekly virtual office hours in partnership with the Boston Public Library. Advice and referral information on

civil legal issues. 10am–12pm. For Zoom info, visit [bit.ly/LSCBPL](https://bit.ly/LSCBPL). **Z**

**THU, JAN. 13** Representative Livingstone will join the **FENWAY CDC ORGANIZING COMMITTEE** to talk about redistricting: will your elected officials be changing? 6–7:30PM. <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89184220047?pwd=VHRVWTV1ZHllanlQVExOVRUSm9ydz09#success> **Z**

## Book your next community event at Northeastern Crossing!



City and Community Engagement at Northeastern is excited to re-open our classroom and conference space reservations to organizations and individuals to host community programming!

Advance reservations are required for both spaces.  
All programming must be free to participants.

Please visit our website at [communityengagement.northeastern.edu](https://communityengagement.northeastern.edu) for all reservation policies.

Our conference space



Our classroom space



SCAN THE QR CODE TO REQUEST A BOOKING



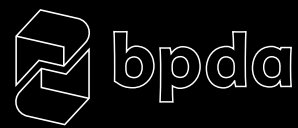
**N** Northeastern  
City and Community Engagement

Follow us on social media @nuengaged





*This ad arrived late, but don't ignore it. A January 24 public meeting will review the proposal for redeveloping the Simmons University residential quad that runs along the right-hand (outbound) side of Brookline Avenue just past the Emerald Necklace.*



# Virtual Public Meeting

## Longwood Place (305 Brookline Ave.)

**Monday, January 24**  
6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

**Zoom Link:** [bit.ly/LongwoodPlace](https://bit.ly/LongwoodPlace)  
**Toll Free:** (833) 568 - 8864  
**Meeting ID:** 160 170 5823

**Project Proponent:**  
Skanska

**Project Description:**

This is a meeting of the LMA Forum, co-hosted by the BPDA & MASCO. This meeting will function as a Public Meeting for the Longwood Place (305 Brookline Avenue) development proposal. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the proposed Planned Development Area (PDA) Development Plan, which was filed by the Proponent (Skanska) on January 3, 2022. The meeting will include a presentation followed by Q&A and comments from the general public.

The proposed PDA includes the redevelopment of approximately 5.8 acres, consisting of 1.75 million square feet of residential, office/laboratory, retail, restaurant, commercial, community space, and parking, as well as 2.3 acres of open space.

作为波士顿居民和利益相关者，本会议的信息对您来说是至关重要的。可以提供翻译服务以传达本会议的内容，您无需承担任何额外费用。如果您需要翻译服务，请通过以下方式进行联系：Edward.Carmody@Boston.gov 617-918-4422。会议定于 2022 年 1月24日，请在会议前5天内申请口译服务。

作為波士頓居民和利益相關者，本會議的信息對您來說是至關重要的。可以提供翻譯服務以傳達本會議的內容，您無需承擔任何額外費用。如果您需要翻譯服務，請通過以下方式進行聯繫：Edward.Carmody@Boston.gov 617-918-4422。會議定於2022年1月24日，請在會議前5天內申請口譯服務。

mail to: **Edward Carmody**  
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Boston, MA 02201  
phone: 617.918.4422  
email: [edward.carmody@boston.gov](mailto:edward.carmody@boston.gov)

**Close of Comment Period:**  
2/18/2022