

Rehab Project, Tower Construction Crowd Roxbury Tenants of Harvard's 2023 Agenda

BY ALISON PULTINAS

Controversy has resurfaced in Mission Hill over Roxbury Tenants of Harvard's (RTH) latest plan for the 109 households in the RTH Community Housing, Community Apartments, and 779-779 Huntington Ave.—the so-called “old neighborhood.”

The original proposal—labeled the TRIO project—was voted down at a community-wide special meeting in 2019.

The approximately \$24 million renovation plan proposed life-safety features for apartments on Francis Street, Fenwood Road, and St. Albans Road, “right sizing” all units and adding accessibility where possible for first-floor residences. Prior to the work, tenants would be relocated temporarily to furnished apartments—the first option being units at 777-779 Huntington.

The promised fire-safety upgrades could happen without relocations, but after the original plan's defeat at the special meeting, everything ground to a halt with

the pandemic.

In 2019, the RTH resident board voted to right-size all units in the organization's 900-plus portfolio, regardless of whether they carry income restrictions or rent at market rates.

Whether the occupants are seniors or families, multiple variables—including the presence of foster children, live-in aides, or children in joint custody—make defining right-sizing complex. So, public housing administrators shy away from enforcement despite right-sizing's being a HUD guideline. Family sizes are not static.

City Councilor Kenzie Bok has said that the Boston Housing Authority does not require seniors to move when their household size decreases. RTH has argued that 13 of the 109 households are “over-housed” (occupants have more space than they need), and that two are “underhoused” (with less space than needed).

At a special meeting on Nov. 16 in the RTH gym, Trinity Management leadership and consultants presented an “enhanced” TRIO project. This time, it passed with a 98-71 majority. Board member Justin Lizhi Le served as parliamentarian. Some attendees questioned the process and facilitation. For example, microphones were shut off when some residents were speaking.

The renovation work will take place on an accelerated timetable, with work on 21 Fenwood Rd. scheduled to begin this month. However, information about relocations for the current occupants has not been shared yet.

In the 2019 plan, RTH planned to subdivide larger apartments into smaller units, losing old-fashioned dining rooms

and parlors. That raised questions, and now there is a promise that units will be split only if needed by residents, although zoning violations might be triggered. The vagueness of the phrase “needed by residents” has also raised questions.

Roxbury Tenants of Harvard faces several tasks in the coming months for its

recently approved 13-story building at 775 Huntington. The City's Neighborhood Housing Trust voted on Dec. 15 to award \$3 million in funding, split between 57 affordable rentals and 24 income-restricted condos. And the deadline for the state's Department of Housing and Community Development winter funding round is Jan. 19. The group has a Feb. 28 Zoning Board of Appeal hearing for 26 and 28 St. Albans Rd. because of violations related to consolidation of the adjacent parcels for the future tower at 775.

Alison Pultinas lives in Mission Hill.

Let's Relaunch the Community Fridge!

Audubon Circle's Community Fridge, a free-food-distribution site, closed late last year. Jyoti and Aaron Mehta, owners of The Wine Press on Beacon Street, want to reopen it, but they need help. If you can volunteer, email market@winepressbrookline.com and include “volunteer” in the subject line.

Lights, Cookies, Action!



This year's Fenway tree lighting, an annual tradition, livened up the Back Bay Fens near the Kelleher Rose Garden on Dec. 7. The event featured performances by the Boston Children's Chorus; hot cider and cocoa, refreshments from Tasty Burger; holiday cookies baked by East Fens resident Marie Fukuda; Red Sox mascots Wally and Tessie, as well as Santa; and speeches by elected officials, including Mayor Michelle Wu (pictured top). Wu highlighted how Boston's Community Choice Electricity program (www.cityofbostoncce.com/) can help save money on electricity bills and increase use of renewable energy, with rates lower than Eversource's locked in through the end of 2023. A luminary walk (pictured bottom) concluded the evening, with the high-energy band Grooversity leading the way and attendees carrying special lanterns to The Rink at 401 Park for a community skate. The solar lanterns double as phone chargers and are made by LuminAID, which donates one lantern to a family in need for each lantern sold.

FUNNY FENWICKIAN CRUSHES CARTOON-CAPTION CONTESTS



Carol Lasky brandishes her Best of Rejects mug outside of Fenway Park.

BY LESLIE POND

East Fens resident Carol Lasky is on a roll. In 2022, she won four cartoon caption contests: the *Cartoon Stock* and *Bartender* magazine's contests, *The Washington Post's* Clowning Achievement Award, and the most coveted of all—*The New Yorker's* contest.

Her big *New Yorker* win came in November with a caption she submitted for a Bob Eckstein cartoon depicting a group of pumpkin-headed suits at a conference table.

With 8,175 captions submitted for the weekly contest, editors chose Lasky's entry, “Thanks for carving out a little face time,” as one of three finalists. Readers then voted it the winner.

Lasky's achievement is the culmination of years of devoted—or as she freely admits, “obsessive”—captioning. “I've been a *New Yorker* reader and fan since forever,” she says. “I don't think I've missed more than a week or two of entries since the competition began almost 840 contests ago.”

What's Lasky's winning approach? She begins with a deep dive into the humorous potentials: Who is speaking? What happened in the frame before the cartoon? What can we learn from body language and facial expressions? And what's the most concise arrangement of words that captures the moment and brings the funny?

“I also consult with a captioning collaborator, my son Colin, who has won the contest once and been a finalist once. We volley ideas via text throughout the week, often right up to the deadline for submission late Sunday night,” Lasky adds.

Presaging her recent wins, Lasky won the “prestigious” Best of Rejects Award for her baseball-themed caption in 2021. This honor was conferred by the *New Yorker* Cartoon Caption Contest Rejects and Enthusiasts' 8,000-plus-member Facebook group. The award is a coffee mug, the contents of which undoubtedly spurred her successes in 2022.

In addition to being a captioning champion, Carol is the founder and creative director of Cahoots Design and vice-chair of the Ward 4 Democratic Committee.

Leslie Pond lives in the West Fens.

CartoonStock.com chose the caption Lasky submitted (shown) for this panel by cartoonist Liam Walsh. (Courtesy of CartoonStock.com)



“Second-hand smoke is the least of your worries.”

> **LETTERS** from previous page
MBTA of the Saint Cecilia stop on Boylston Street, east of Mass Ave. It is another example of the MBTA making decisions without community input and creating hardship by reducing access. This decision needs to be reversed.

The bus stop provides several important functions, beginning with easy transfers to the #1 bus and the Green Line at Hynes. Several churches are in the area as well, including St. Cecilia and the Christian Science Church. For

LETTERS

people with mobility concerns who live in that immediate area, the stop has been critical in allowing them to get a bus to get to Copley and then use the elevator to continue their trip on the subway, since both Hynes and Symphony currently have no elevators.

At first, the MBTA removed the shelter at the stop in an apparent effort to discourage its use by the homeless while allowing the stop to remain. Then the agency closed the stop for, it said, issues of accessibility: the stop requires one step up from street level. While making all bus stops accessible should certainly be a goal for the MBTA, to deny riders use of the stop until that goal is met only causes more unnecessary hardship.

City Councilor Kenzie Bok’s office has been an important advocate for a return of the stop. Thanks to its efforts, the MBTA has agreed to a site inspection to revisit their decision. They are strongly urged to do so because it is the right thing to do.

CHARLES MARTEL
WEST FENS

Hotel Buckminster Story Triggers
Memories of Iconic White Fuel Sign

TO THE EDITOR:

I picked up a copy of *The Fenway News* last month down at Mike’s Donuts across from Mission Church and read it with my coffee and donut. I noticed the small news story on the Hotel Buckminster in Kenmore Square. I am in full agreement with those who are seeking landmark status for this edifice. I personally think this site has regional significance.

Not because it housed both WNAC radio and WNAC-TV when I was a kid growing up. Not because German POWs were housed there during WWII. Nor because a jazz club named Storyville was in it. Not because it used to be Graham Junior College. Not because Major Mudd and his marching ants once shared an office in the basement.

As someone who used to go clubbing during college in Kenmore Square on weekend nights before the Faneuil Hall Marketplace arrived in Boston in the later ’70s, I always remembered standing in long lines waiting to get in, and all of us would stare up at the top of the Hotel Buckminster watching that unbelievable White Fuel sign atop the building. It resembled a Texas oil well coming alive or something else altogether different which I cannot mention here.

I am surprised no one mentioned this advertising icon, which was even bigger than the Citgo sign, which just sat there doing very little in entertaining anyone waiting in line.

Whatever happened to that White Fuel sign? Did it vanish into history? If it did, then it is Boston’s loss today.

SAL GIARRATANI
EAST BOSTON



Boston Arena, seen from St. Botolph Street in the 1920s.

‘I guess the police don’t want you to have any fun!’

BY ED BALLO

What is now called Matthews Arena at Northeastern University was once known as the Boston Arena. Opened in 1910, the arena was acquired by the university in 1979 and is named after George J. Matthews, Class of ’56, and his wife Hope. Matthews was the chairman emeritus of Northeastern’s board of trustees. The building is the oldest ice and multipurpose arena in the world still in use, and is so rich in sports (and other) history that it nearly astounded the senses of this detective!

As a collegiate ice-sports venue, Matthews is truly in a league of its own. This is where the hockey programs of Boston University, Boston College, Harvard, MIT, Northeastern, Tufts, and Wentworth Institute of Technology all began.

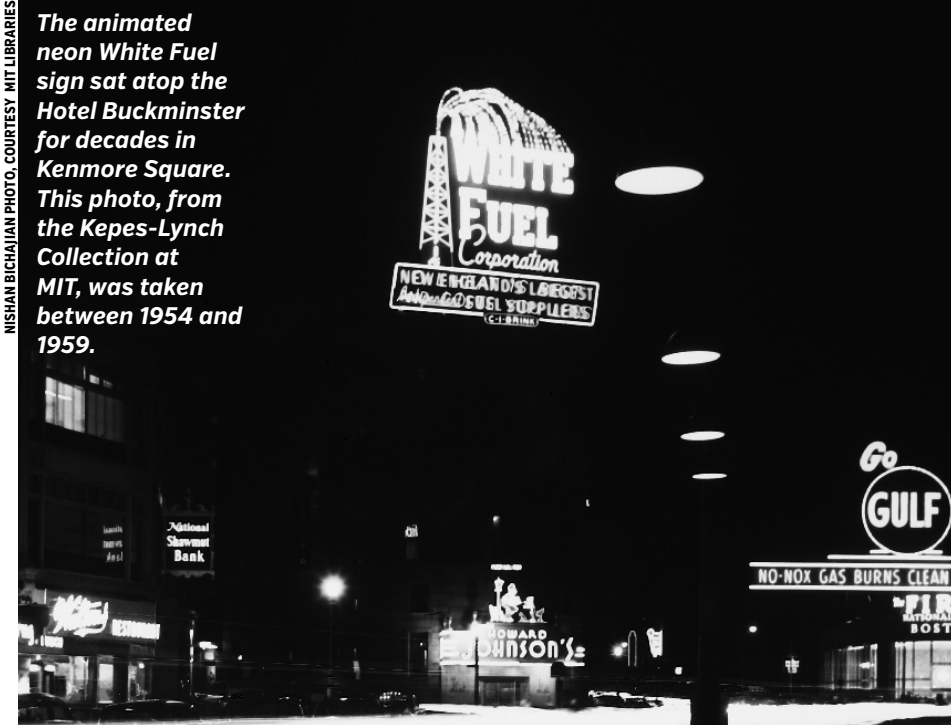
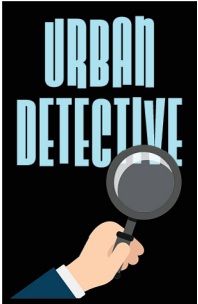
The arena was also the cradle for professional ice hockey in New England. The National Hockey League’s first American franchise, the Boston Bruins, played their first regular season game here in December 1924, and this is where they initiated their fierce rivalry with the Montréal Canadiens. The Bruins played in the arena for four years until the completion of the Boston Garden in 1928. The World Hockey Association’s New England Whalers (which became the Hartford Whalers in 1974 and now are the Carolina Hurricanes) played some of their first-season home games at the arena in 1972 to 1973. The Boston Celtics played there from 1946 to 1955 until also moving to the larger Boston Garden.

The arena also served as a concert venue during much of its lifetime. Perhaps the most (in) famous concert took place on Saturday evening, May 3, 1958. This was the “Big Beat” rock ‘n’ roll show, which featured Jerry Lee Lewis, Chuck Berry, and Buddy Holly and the Crickets. The show was promoted by Ohio-based disc jockey Alan Freed, who did so much to promote this new genre that he is honored with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame and has been inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. The concert in question was nothing short of raucous: dancing in the aisles led to riots’ breaking out. Outside the arena, someone was stabbed. The police were called in and Freed himself was arrested, which was when he uttered his now infamous line, “I guess the police don’t want you to have fun!” The Doors played the arena in 1970 as well as Phish in 1992.

The arena also served as a political venue and hosted every U.S. president from Theodore Roosevelt in 1912 to John F. Kennedy in 1946. Rodeos were held in the 1950s, some of which featured Roy Rogers and Dale Evans. Boxing was a staple of the arena for decades, and Muhammad Ali, Joe Louis, and Sonny Liston were some of the boxers who fought matches here.

Unfortunately, sometime after acquisition by the university, the picturesque Spanish Mission entrance façade of the 1910 building was remodeled into a blander 1980s functionalism. But look carefully under the brick arch to see some of the original detailing!

Ed Ballo lives in the West Fens. His periodic “Urban Detective” column presents small bites of local history to help decipher the city around you and enhance your appreciation of it.



NISHAN BICHAIJAN PHOTO, COURTESY MIT LIBRARIES

The animated neon White Fuel sign sat atop the Hotel Buckminster for decades in Kenmore Square. This photo, from the Kepes-Lynch Collection at MIT, was taken between 1954 and 1959.

DASHBOARD

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- **MISSION HILL:** Trash and recycling on Tuesday and Friday

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PHOTO COURTESY OF WIKIPEDIA



Renovation of the arena entrance, following Northeastern’s acquisition, stripped away most of its picturesque Spanish Mission detailing, but the renovators left some of the original features in the arch.

Celebs Draw More Attention Than Winners At Earthshot Prize Awards



The entrance to MGM Music Hall prior to the Earthshot Prize Ceremony.



A fan of the royals stands outside MGM Music Hall

BY LESLIE POND

The Fenway received a royal visit on Dec. 2 with the arrival of the U.K.’s Prince and Princess of Wales for the Earthshot Prize awards ceremony at the MGM Music Hall, which was decked out for the occasion with climate action messages. On a chilly afternoon, some fans waited hours on Ipswich and Lansdowne streets to catch a glimpse of their favorite celebrities. One group of friends I chatted with had come to see Billie Eilish and Rami Malek. A few people waved small British flags. One fan of the royals had created an elaborate welcome sign for Prince William and Princess Kate.

The main impetus for the hour-long ceremony, however, was the awards for innovative solutions to “repair the Earth” and the winners themselves—who seemed to receive much less local press than the royals did. The Earthshot Prize (<https://earthshotprize.org>), now in its second year, will run for 10 years total. Awards are given in five categories, and each winner receives £1 million (roughly \$1.21 million) and tailored support to develop their work at scale. This year’s winning organizations, selected from among 15 finalists (one from the U.S.) and hundreds of nominees, included:

- The award for “Protect and Restore Nature” went to **Kheyti**, a start-up in India that has created a greenhouse-in-a-box to help farmers reduce their climate risk.
- **Mukuru Clean Stoves** in Kenya won the “Clean Our Air” award

- for developing and distributing inexpensive cookstoves that are safer and healthier for families.
- **Indigenous Women of the Great Barrier Reef**, based in Queensland, Australia, received the “Revive Our Oceans” award for their work to build the next generation of women rangers, using traditional knowledge and modern tools to protect and repair marine ecosystems.
- The U.K.’s **NOTPLA** placed first in the category of “Build A Waste-Free World” for using seaweed to make biodegradable packaging products as alternatives to single-use plastic.
- **44.01** in Oman won the “Fix Our Climate” award for technology to capture carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and store it in rocks. [44.01 is the molecular weight of CO₂.]

As gratifying as it can be to host such a high-profile celebration in Boston, I had to wonder about the exclusivity of the event and the carbon footprint generated by many of the celebrities and other attendees traveling by plane and SUVs (were any of them EVs?). I couldn’t help but envision more inclusive and green alternatives, such as a multimedia event on the newly renovated, environmentally sustainable City Hall Plaza that could be accessible to many more Bostonians and offer inspiration to take urgent climate action. Especially since the Earthshot Prize winners themselves didn’t come to the awards ceremony due to carbon-footprint concerns.

Leslie Pond lives in the West Fens.

Neighborhood Newsline

Bureaucratic Woes Delay Funds From Yawkey Way Privatization

CONCERNED RESIDENTS ASKED *The Fenway News* to investigate why no one from the Boston Planning and Development Agency was responding to inquiries about Fenway Park Yawkey Way Demonstration Project Funds. Previously, Brian Norton of the City’s Office of Workforce Development had informed *The Fenway News* that \$100,000 would be disbursed in 2022 and \$100,000 in 2023. However, months went by without any requests for proposals.

In late December, Lacey Rose of the BPDA communications office answered a public records inquiry and said: “We are planning to issue an RFP for these funds in January. With the transition of OWD to being its own cabinet[-level agency] and the departure of a few BPDA staff who manage the dispersal of these funds, the process has taken a few months longer this year than in previous years, but it is moving and we’re looking forward to reviewing proposals. An RFP for the 2023 funds will go out late summer or fall of 2023.”

305 Brookline Comments Show Opposition to Shadows

ON DEC. 12, THE BPDA POSTED 400-plus pages of public comments on the 305 Brookline/Longwood Place project, Skanska USA’s plan for redeveloping the Simmons residential campus between Pilgrim Road and Brookline Avenue. Although Longwood-area representatives on the Impact Advisory Group (IAG) generally support the project, multiple organizations and individuals weighed in opposing the proposed building heights on the parcel because of the shadows they would cast on public parkland in the Emerald Necklace. Support for the development came from more than 150 identical two-page form letters—nearly all without specific addresses but *with* the opening line “As a Boston resident and worker in the city...”

The Emerald Necklace Conservancy’s Karen Mauney-Brodek asked planners to work on a sunshine-protection policy for all city parks, stressing the need to focus beyond the Common and Public Garden. East Fens resident Tim Horn noted at the IAG’s Dec. 6 meeting, the shadows are real problems, not something you can solve with mitigation money.

The BPDA board voted in November to schedule a hearing to approve Planned Development Area No. 134—Longwood Place. Initially expected to appear on the board’s December agenda, the hearing is now set for Jan. 19. PDA designation replaces existing zoning, essentially linking community benefits to bonuses in height and density. (*A letter on this topic appears on page 2.*)

Committee Opens Review of CPA Funding Requests

BOSTON’S COMMUNITY PRESERVATION ACT COMMITTEE has moved into high gear for reviewing applications for 2023 CPA funding. Nonprofits, as well as the Mayor’s Office of Housing and the Boston Parks and Recreation Department, apply between August and October for projects related to affordable housing, open space, or historic preservation. Decisions are expected to be finalized by the end of January. Only one application has come from the Fenway—the Ruggles Baptist Church in Audubon Circle has applied for \$500,000 for roof and masonry repairs. No applications were submitted for projects in Mission Hill. The Committee next meets Jan. 9 at noon, and will meet at least two or three more times later in the month to review applications.

Arts Academy Names New Building for Arts Giant Elma Lewis

BOSTON ARTS ACADEMY HAS NAMED its new building after Dr. Elma Lewis, who devoted a lifetime to bringing culture into the lives of Boston’s African American community. She founded the Elma Lewis School of Fine Arts, which offered a robust program in art, drama, music, dance, and costume design. Additionally, she founded the National Center of Afro-American Artists. A graduate of Emerson College and Boston University, Lewis was one of the first recipients of the MacArthur Foundation Fellowship for her dedicated work in the arts. She also received the Presidential Medal for the Arts from President Ronald Regan.

Rent Level Torpedoes Mission Hill Fitness Studio

A DISAPPOINTING LOSS for Mission Hill: on Dec. 24, *The Boston Globe* reported the shutdown of fitness studio Trillfit, a black-woman-owned business at 1484 Tremont St., across the street from the Tobin Community Center. In 2019, Heather White and Melisa Valdez opened the studio in ground-floor space just after the apartment building was constructed. The property—now marketed as The Tremont—is owned by an affiliate of the Wingate Company, led by Mark Schuster. *The Globe* quoted Trillfit’s Heather White as saying she couldn’t afford to pay the \$10,000 monthly rent any longer. She plans to retain her 14 employees to lead online classes and pop-up events.

BPL Announces Most In-Demand Books of 2022

THE BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY has published its list of the most-checked-out books of 2022, and at the Parker Hill Branch, the top five titles were:

- *The Vanishing Hal*, by Brit Bennett
- *Mothering Heights* by Dav Pilkey
- *Normal People* by Sally Rooney
- *Dog Man: Brawl of the Wild* by Dav Pilkey
- *Beautiful World, Where Are You?* by Sally Rooney

For the systemwide list, visit <https://tinyurl.com/bdd9xt5m>.

CONTACTING THE BPDA

The Boston Planning & Development Agency recently began omitting phone numbers for specific project managers from meeting notices and other announcements. If you need to reach a project manager by phone, call the BPDA main line, 617-722-4300, and ask to speak to that project manager.

CORRECTION

A photo caption in the December 2022 issue stated that Nasreen Latif planted marigolds on a vacant lot next to the Symphony Road Community Garden. In fact, the flowers were planted in a vacant plot *within* the garden. We regret the error.

Celebrating the Green Line Extension, Way at the Other End

BY ALISON PULTINAS

On Dec. 12, staffers Dorothy Fennell and Samantha Ormsby of the Longwood Collective (formerly MASCO) celebrated the Green Line Extension’s opening by passing out free coffee to morning commuters along Huntington Avenue. After 25 years of advocacy, planning, and construction, the MBTA’s five new E Branch Green Line stations are saving serious commuting time for Longwood-bound travelers. The final stop for northbound trains jumped from Government Center to Union Square in March. Now the electronic station signs say MEDFD/TUFTS—dropping the R, just as a native Bostonian might. According to the MBTA, the Medford Branch runs approximately 3.7 miles and includes five fully accessible stations at East Somerville, Gilman Square, Magoun Square, Ball Square, and Medford/Tufts (College Avenue). Now the E line runs direct from Lechmere to East Somerville, and the D line serves Union instead. The two lines branch off after Lechmere. The MBTA estimates that the opening of the extension will remove 26,000 vehicle trips per day from local streets. The new on-board announcement is “Medford/Tufts,” although destination signs on inbound trolley cars have taken longer to change and often remain blank. *Alison Pultinas lives in Mission Hill.*



Homeowners Send Mixed Messages on Climate in Brownsberger Survey

BY RUTH KHOWAIS

To address climate change in his district, State Sen. Will Brownsberger recently conducted a survey of constituents to learn about their experiences with home energy and energy efficiency. In addition to the Fenway, Brownsberger’s district comprises Belmont, Watertown, Arlington, Allston, and Brighton. The survey, distributed via email to 4,610 households, asked about knowledge of electric heat pumps, whether the respondent was familiar with Mass Save, and if the respondent had taken any active steps toward increasing energy efficiency in their home. More than 2,000 people completed the survey. Homeowners—including condo owners—represented 79 percent of respondents, with renters representing 21 percent. Single-family homes constituted 45 percent of respondents, and buildings with four or more units accounted for 34 percent. Gas heat dominated among both renters and owners in the sample; just 17 percent reported using fuel oil. Eight percent of homes had electric heat pumps. Among small-building homeowners, 77 percent have taken some steps toward energy efficiency—either arranging an energy audit, undertaking weatherization, or making any other use of Mass Save

services. Another 15 percent are aware of Mass Save, although they cannot recall having taken any actions. Only 9 percent have taken no steps toward energy efficiency and have no awareness of Mass Save. A subsample of 260 condo owners who live in buildings of five or more units heated with oil or gas showed somewhat less familiarity with heat pumps and somewhat higher uncertainty, but also more willingness to absorb cost increases related to going carbon-free. (Well-designed heat-pump systems can reduce the energy used to heat a home by up to 60%. Many environmentalists consider them an essential tool for meeting the Commonwealth’s ambitious goals for slashing carbon emissions statewide.) As several in this group pointed out, however, condo associations can be inflexible. Condo owners can face daunting challenges in persuading their associations to invest in building-wide systems changes. As one Fenway resident commented, “Thank you for the survey—as one of your city constituents who owns a unit in a multi-family (12 units), I hope you will continue to respect the diversity of housing stock in your district.” Brownsberger concluded that there is no one solution for the climate crisis, and whatever we do as a state needs to heed that condo owner’s

advice to respect the area’s diverse housing stock. Brownsberger said that he undertook the survey because he was struggling to understand why heat-pump adoption rates have stayed

so low. “The survey responses,” he said, “tend to confirm that raising [heat-pump] adoption rates will be difficult and expensive.” *Ruth Khowais lives in the West Fens.*

COMMUNITY meetings

TUE, JAN. 10 Join the Parks Department for the virtual **BACK BAY FENS PATHWAYS MEETING #2**. The project scope includes rehabilitation of pathways in the Back Bay Fens to improve accessibility and site conditions. The project includes assessment and prioritization of pathway work, as well as Boston Parks standard project design work. For the Zoom link, visit <https://www.boston.gov/calendar/back-bay-fens-pathways-design-meeting-2>. 6pm.

WED, JAN. 11 The BPDA hosts a virtual meeting of the **BOSTON UNIVERSITY CHARLES RIVER CAMPUS 2023-2033 TASK FORCE**. The Task Force serves as the advisory body for BU’s institutional development and institutional master plan. This meeting will focus on the proposed Institutional Master Plan. Note that this is a combined Task Force and public meeting. It will begin with a 30-minute presentation of the project by the development team. After a 45-minute discussion by the Impact Advisory Group, the floor will open for 45 minutes of public Q&A. Register

at bit.ly/BUTF-1-11. Contact Tyler Ross at tyler.c.ross@boston.gov with questions. The IMPNF comment period ends Jan. 31. Meeting at 6pm.

WED, JAN. 11 & JAN. 25 The Boston Transportation Department hosts **BETTER BIKE LANE OFFICE HOURS**. Over the next three years, BTD plans to expand Boston’s bike network to put 50 percent of residents within a three-minute walk of a safe and connected bike route. Learn more about our plan at <https://tinyurl.com/2p95eux9>. Schedule a 15-minute phone call or video chat using <https://calendly.com/active-transportation/bike-lanes> to talk to the project team. 3-7pm.

THU, JAN. 12 The BPDA hosts a virtual Public Meeting for the **165 PARK DRIVE PROJECT**. The meeting will focus on the recently filed project notification form and include a presentation about the project, followed by Q&A and comments from the public. Register at bit.ly/3uU8ZYp. Contact Quinn Valcich at Quinn.W.Valcich@Boston.gov with any questions. 6pm.

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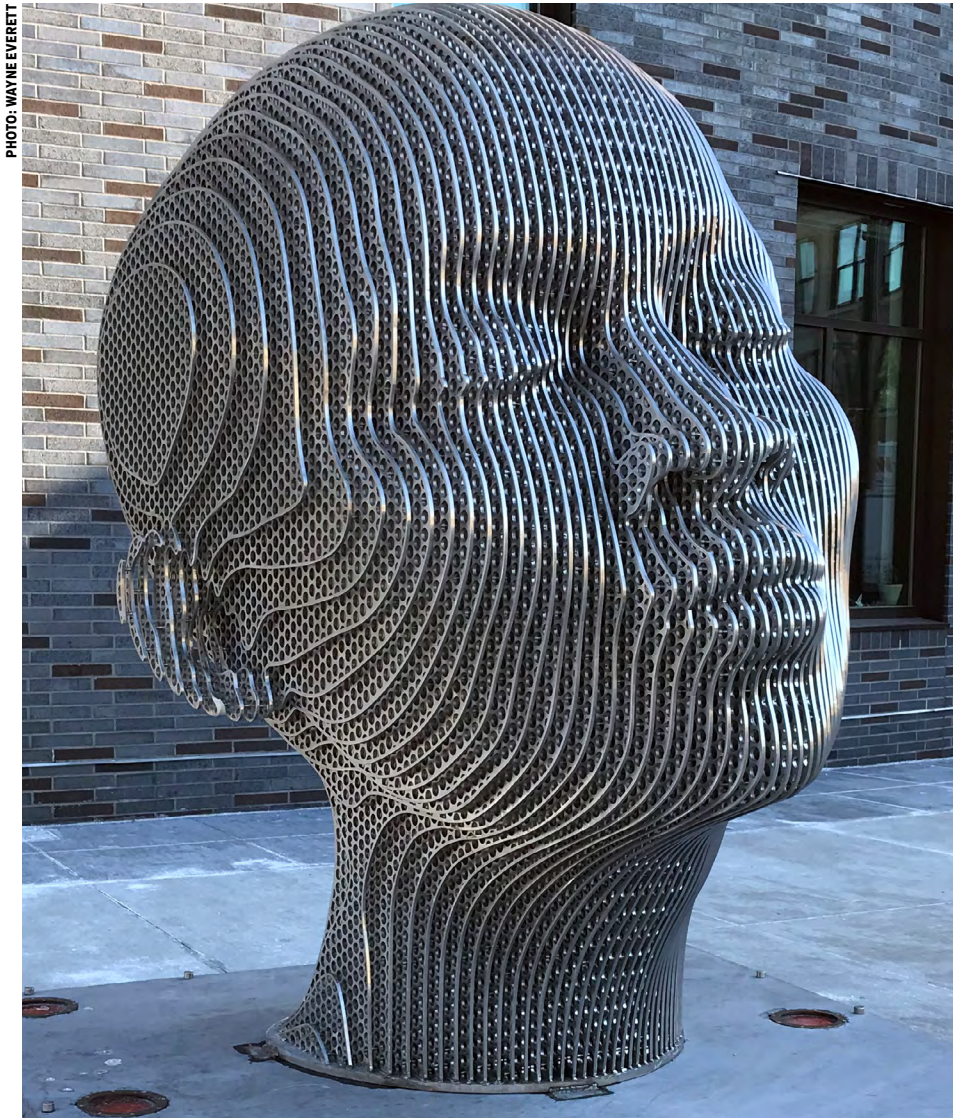
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The Arts

Portrait of the Artist As...



“The Creative” by Simon Donovan and Ben Olmstead was recently installed outside of Boston Arts Academy on Ipswich Street in the West Fens. The center of the head contains images of the various artistic disciplines taught at the school. At night, the sculpture is lit by colored LED lights.

Crafty! Tapestries Make Art From Data to Convey Climate Impacts



BY LESLIE POND

Soft City,” a map installation created by just practice (<https://justpractice.work>), a design research practice founded by Amanda Ugoryi and Sophie Weston Chien, had a short run in December at the Boston Public Library. It served as a companion to the Leventhal Map and Education Center exhibition “More or Less in Common: Environment and Justice in the Human Landscape.”

The beauty of the three large, colorful tapestries draws the viewer in, and with closer examination, the visual and tactile experience makes a powerful, lasting impression.

The tapestries capture in an unusual format a large amount of data from several sources, including *Climate Ready Boston* and the U.S. Census. They map the past, present, and future of Black

neighborhoods in Roxbury, Dorchester, and Cambridge, showing where people live; locations of water, greenspace, impervious surfaces, and commercial/ industrial areas; and areas predicted to flood due to climate change. They reveal the contemporary environmental impacts of historical redlining.

Especially remarkable are the thoughtful, color-coded use of more than ten colors of yarn (pictured); how the variation of height through tufting adds another data dimension and a 3-D effect; and the incredible level of detail. And the unusual invitation to “please touch” the artwork (laid horizontally on top of sawhorses) elicits a visceral connection to the environmental crisis happening in our backyard and to the designers themselves.

Leslie Pond lives in the West Fens.

Exeunt Omnes

BY JOHN ENGSTROM

A dozen Canadian geese,
Grayish-beige-
sepia feathers with
Streaks and slashes
of black,
Congregate
In silent communion
On a patch of ice
In mid-river.

Yesterday,
One of them was
Barking like a dog.

Some geese
Bend down
To drink,
while others

Bathe and preen
in the freezing water.

Then, at a signal
To which we humans
are Deaf & blind—
Exeunt Omnes
(though not to
“a dead march”
As in Shakespeare)
Treading in single file
along
The ridge of ice,
One goose
at a time.

These avian northerners
Do not appear to
Differentiate themselves

Visually by gender—
Males & females have
The same coloring—whereas
Ducks (I mean those
in these parts) have
Unmistakable
Color coding
Dictated by sex.

The male ducks look like
A Fauvist oil, while
Females look like
A Chinese watercolor.
Put more succinctly:
Male ducks are flashy,
Females are subtle.
Ducks are gentle & sociable
With each other and
Most of the time

Co-exist in a cordial stand-off
With the more
Aggressive,
dominating,
militaristic geese.

But one
Had other fish,
Or geese,
To fry.

More than geese
Abandoned him
that afternoon.

He watched
without dismay
As all the
Overstuffed baggage of

Hurt, trauma,
Sorrow &
Disappointment
floated off
Into the horizon
At the vanishing point,
Where it dissolved
Into emptiness.

He waved goodbye
to everything
As the wind picked up
& he had the biting cold
As a reminder
What a blessing
Is warmth
On a cold day.

John Engstrom lives in the West Fens.

ALL YOU NEED IS LOVE—AND YARN



Is the West Fens turning into a hotbed of guerilla art? In addition to Gerry Cooper’s annual adornment of trees along Kilmarnock Street and the Peterborough Playground with old CDs, an anonymous crafter installed a temporary yarn piece on Star Market fencing along Boylston Street.

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Mission Hill Fenway
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Fenway Studios Moves To Improve Accessibility

BY RUTH KHOWAIS

The Fenway Studios building on Ipswich Street is 120 years old and a National Historical Landmark. It has been a home and working studio for many artists in the Fenway and is a vital part of the Fenway Cultural District. But the building isn't handicapped accessible. Stairs lead up to the front entrance, go steeply down to the art gallery, and are the means to get to every studio in the four-story building.

In a meeting on Dec. 1 with architects, State Sen. Will Brownsberger, and the Fenway Studios Board of Directors, studio members Alan and Nan Hass Feldman presented the idea of making the building universally accessible.

Nan Hass Feldman has a neurological disorder

that has made her increasingly unable to use stairs. She and her husband pointed out that this could happen to others in the building as they age. They also pointed out that an inaccessible building could discourage disabled visitors from visiting the studios.

The solution isn't easy. One proposal developed by architect Doug Manley would install an elevator in connecting the basement, where the art gallery is located, and the lobby, but the Fenway Studios lacks the resources to complete such a project.

Architect Lynne Spencer said that the building would have to get a variance from the Architectural Access Board and that they have not completed a comprehensive code analysis.

One resident proposed installing a ramp outside at the front stairs. Another resident asked if bathrooms would have to be modified and if handicapped parking spaces would have to be provided.

Sen. Brownsberger said that he tried to include funding for artist housing as part of an economic development bill in the recently concluded session of the legislature, but the bill didn't pass. He said that he would work to find another vehicle for funding.

In the meantime, Fenway Studios is looking for grants and donations while trying to sort out the legal and architectural issues. They want the community to know that they aim to become more accessible, even if the work must be done piecemeal.

Ruth Khowais lives in the West Fens.

January CALENDAR

Sun, 1/8

Aisslinn Nossky, Handel & Haydn's flashy concertmaster, leads the period orchestra in performances of **MOZART, BEETHOVEN, AND MARTINES**. 3pm at Symphony Hall. Tickets \$15-108. Info and ticket purchases at handelandhaydn.org.

Fri, 1/13

Celebrate the unveiling of **THE EMBRACE** memorial on Boston Common. Designed by Hank Willis Thomas, the memorial commemorates the legacies of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Coretta Scott King, who met and went to school in Boston, and the civil rights leaders who worked alongside them in Boston. Watch the ceremony on large screens positioned near the Parkman Bandstand and enjoy a live DJ and hot refreshments. 1pm. FREE

Mon, 1/16

The MFA hosts its annual **MLK DAY OPEN HOUSE**. That means free admission—including access to "Life Magazine and the Power of Photography"—for Massachusetts residents. Free performances, tours, talks, art-making, and more. Tickets available in person; first-come, first-served. 10am–5pm. FREE

Wed, 1/18

CURATORIAL INTRODUCTION TO BUILDING BLOCKS: BOSTON STORIES FROM URBAN ATLASES. Join the Boston Public Library for a curatorial introduction to the new exhibition, "Building Blocks: Boston Stories from Urban Atlases." From 1860 to 1950, Boston's urban fabric underwent profound changes. "Building Blocks" travels to different areas of the metro area for an episodic view of history, illuminating the many stories that are preserved in the urban atlas collection. Beyond the stories, the rich details of the atlases help viewers imagine what one's own story might have looked like in this rapidly developing city. Exhibition Curatorial Fellow Laura Lee Schmidt will give a talk and host a Q&A session, followed by an opportunity to explore the material on display. Commonwealth Salon, Central Library. Register at <https://tinyurl.com/4sv32jdp>. 6pm. FREE

Thu, 1/19

JENNY LOVES ME! returns for a one-night performance at the Huntington at the Calderwood Pavilion. The one-man show, performed by *New York Times* best-selling author Michael Levin, tells the story of Levin's mother's escaping Nazi Germany to build a better life in America; Free tickets available by visiting bit.ly/JennyLovesMe. 527 Tremont St. 7:30pm. FREE

@ THE CENTER

The Fenway Community Center is now open six days a week. Visit <https://fenwaycommunitycenter.org> for more details.

- Every Tue, 5:30pm: KUNG FU
- Thu, Feb. 2 at 1:00pm: HANDS TO HEART CENTER CHAIR YOGA

IN MEMORIAM

James (Jim) Alan Rorick

James (Jim) Alan Rorick died Nov. 24 after a long illness. He lived for two decades on Gainsborough Street.

Jim was a daily visitor to Symphony Community Garden and—even on cold days—delighted in sitting in the sun. In 2022, he decided to become a member of the garden. He created an exuberant flower display in plot 35. Always cheerful, Jim graciously offered to assist other gardeners with watering, hauling compost and trash, and soil preparation.

Jim had worked as a pharmacist most of his life. He worked at the old Hemenway Pharmacy and later CVS on Massachusetts Avenue. After his retirement, he continued to work as a volunteer at the Poison Call Center at Children's Hospital.

He was a big Red Sox fan.

Before moving to Boston, Jim worked on Nantucket as a carpenter's helper for five years. When asked if he knew how to use a hammer he said, "no," but they hired him anyway. Honesty was also a strong trait of his.

Gerry Cooper, a good friend and Fenway neighbor, knew Jim as "a nice guy to be around." Jim frequented Gerry's collectibles store for years purchasing guitars to add to his collection.

Barbara Fay, plot coordinator of the garden, remembers Jim for his generosity and compassion for people, and as a stalwart guardian of the garden.

Gardener Elizabeth Forman admired "Jim's constant and attentive presence that will keep his memory in our hearts." As we all shall.

A community memorial is planned for later in the spring in Symphony Community Garden. All Jim's friends and neighbors are welcome to attend.

—BARBARA FAY AND ELIZABETH FORMAN

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

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

A *Boston Globe* article on the debate over medical assistance in dying featured Fenway resident John Kelly, director of Second Thoughts Massachusetts. Now that Gov. Maura Healey has signaled support, legislators plan to reintroduce a bill legalizing the practice. Gov.

Charlie Baker vetoed the legislation last year. Kelly argued against the idea, saying it represents a flawed response to the loss of control over one's body—an issue that disabled people deal with every day. ➡ **Grad students at BU gave SEIU Local 509 a landslide victory in a vote on unionizing last month. With 98% approval among voters, 3,200 grad students will come under the SEIU umbrella, joining students at Tufts and Brandeis.**

➡ Fenway Studios artist Beverly Sky can slide a new feather into her cap: New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art chose one of her handmade paper-pulp paintings as the banner image for a new show, "Decorated Paper: Selection of Publications in the Watson Library at the MET." Headed to NYC? The show continues through April 18. ➡ **Three Roxbury entrepreneurs—including Darryl's Bar & Grill proprietor Nia Grace—have received zoning approval for a new jazz club and restaurant in Nubian Square.**

Jazz Urbane Club plans to move into the ground-floor retail space at the Bollng Building (formerly Ferdinand's). The ownership group aims for a June opening, according to the *Globe*, and says on the club website that it wants to create a community space and multi-arts venue ➡ US Rep. Ayanna Pressley appeared on an end-of-year "most stylish" list compiled by *The New York Times's* "Styles of the Times." She joined models, actors, the late Queen Elizabeth II, the spotted lanternfly, and a pair of writer Joan Didon's sunglasses that sold at auction for \$27,000. ➡

HOW GREEN WAS MY FENWAY



A warmer-than-usual winter (so far) has kept grass throughout the Back Bay Fens—as in this Victory Garden plot—unseasonably green.

PHOTO: LESLIE POND

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Independent eateries do so much to define our community, so we collaborated with the Mission Hill Fenway Neighborhood Trust to raise their profiles with our **Eat Here!** campaign. Through May we'll run

a full page listing about 80 locally owned restaurants. When you **Eat Here!** you help local businesses thrive and continue making the Fenway, Mission Hill, and Audubon Circle special places to live.



Eat Here!

Amelia's Taqueria

1076 Boylston St.
[617] 233-2100
<https://www.amelia-taqueria.com/>

The Bebob

1116 Boylston St.
[857] 250-4641
<https://www.thebebobboston.com/>

Bobo Cafe

137 Mass. Ave.
[No phone or URL available]

Dumpling Palace

179 Mass. Ave.
[617] 266-8888
<https://www.dumpling-palace.com/>

Energize

265 Mass. Ave.
[857] 317-3868
<https://energizeboston.com/>

Ginger Exchange

250 Huntington Ave.
[617] 867-9999
www.gingerexchange.com/symphony/

Haju Kitchen

175 Mass. Ave.
[617] 982-7118
haju-kitchen.business.site/

Ichiban Yakitori

144 Westland Ave.
[617] 236-7907
ichibanboston.net/

Love Art Sushi

1 Haviland St.
[617] 982-6953
loveartsushi.com/

Mumbai Spice

251 Mass Ave.
[857] 350-4305
mumbaispiceboston.com/

Oakleaf Cakes Bake Shop

12 Westland Ave.
[617] 299-1504
oakleafcakes.com/

Pad Thai Cafe

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[617] 267-2828
www.padthai.cafe/order-online

Pavement

44 Gainsborough St.
[617] 859-7080
pavementcoffeehouse.com/

Pho Basil

177A Mass. Ave.
[617] 262-5377
phobasilboston.com/

Saigon Fusion

201 Mass. Ave.
[617] 236-1464
www.facebook.com/Saigon-Fusion/

Shin Hakata Ramen

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[857] 350-3923
www.shinhakata-ramenboston.com/

Sombrero Chiquito

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[857] 265-3254
sombroboston.com/

Supreme Pizza

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[617] 247-8252
<https://www.eatsupremepizza.com/>

Symphony Sushi

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[617] 262-3888
symphonysushi.com/

Tori Japan

1110 Boylston St.
[857] 265-3642
<https://www.torijapan.com/>

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10 Westland Ave.
[617] 208-6292
<https://www.westlandboston.com/>

Woody's Grill & Tap

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[617] 375-9663
<https://www.woodysfenway.com/>



West Fenway

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www.bashojapanese-brasserie.com/

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Blackbird Doughnuts

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[617] 450-9000
<https://www.citizen-pub.com/>

College Pizza

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[617] 266-4919
www.collegepizza-menu.com/

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www.elpelon.com/

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[617] 545-1060
www.eventideoyster-co.com/eventide-fenway/

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[857] 284-7229
www.fomuicecream.com/

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[617] 266-4976
www.gyrocity.com/

Hojoko

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[617] 670-0507
www.hojokoboston.com/

Kappo Sushi and Ramen

86 Peterborough St.
[857] 263-8168
www.sushikappo.com/

M&J Teriyaki

130 Jersey St.
[617] 424-0900
www.mjteriyaki-ma.com/

Nathalie Wine Bar

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[857] 317-3884
www.nathaliebar.com/

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[857] 263-7355
pavementcoffeehouse.com/

Phinista Cafe

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[617] 266-7700
www.phinista.com/

Regina Pizzeria

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[617] 266-9210
www.pizzeriaregina.com/fenway.html

Rod Thai

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[617] 859-0969
www.rodthaifenway.com/

Saloniki Greek

4 Kilmarnock St.
[617] 266-0001
www.salonikigreek.com/

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[617] 412-6668
www.facebook.com/thesippingroomby-breeze/

Sojuba

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[617] 424-1260
www.sojubaboston.com/

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www.suframediterraneanfood.com/

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[617] 266-1300
www.sweetcheeksq.com/

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[617] 425-4444
<https://www.tasty-burger.com/>

Thaitation

129 Jersey St.
[617] 585-9909
www.bostonthaitation.com/

Thornton's Fenway Grille

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[617] 421-0104
www.facebook.com/thorntonsfenwaygrille/
Wow!!Tikka

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[857] 250-2062
<https://wowtikka.com/>



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Audubon Boston

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[617] 421-1910
www.audubonboston.com/site/

Bar 'Cino

1032 Beacon Street
[617] 608-3220
barcino.com/brookline/

Futago Udon

508 Park Drive
[617] 505-6157
www.facebook.com/Futago-Udon-564602680690873/

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[617] 655-8443
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[617] 566-7730
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www.solaztecaboston.com/

Taberna De Haro

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www.tabernaboston.com/



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www.chachospizza-subs.com/

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[617] 286-3888
www.chilacates.mx/location/chilacates-mission-hill/

Crispy Dough Pizzeria

1514 Tremont St.
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crispydoughpizzeria.com/

Flames Jamaican Restaurant

746 Huntington Ave.
[617] 743-4035
flamesjamaicanrestaurants.com/index-2.html

Ginger Exchange

1625 Tremont St.
[617] 739-8888
<https://www.gingerexchange.com/mission/#>

Halal Indian Cuisine

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[617] 232-5000
www.halalindiancuisineboston.com/

Il Mondo Pizzeria

738 Huntington Ave.
[617] 445-6738
ilmondopizza.com/

Joseph's Pizza & Subs

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www.laughingmonk-cafe.com/

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lillysgourmetpasta.com/

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www.themissionbar.com/

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montecristomission-hill.com/

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papas pizzacompany.com/

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www.tavernoftales.com/

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