



THE

Fenway News

HYPERLOCAL NEWS FOR THE FENWAY, AUDUBON CIRCLE, KENMORE SQUARE, UPPER BACK BAY, PRUDENTIAL, LONGWOOD, AND MISSION HILL SINCE 1974 • VOLUME 50 NUMBER 1 • JANUARY 5 - FEBRUARY 2, 2024

Two Projects, Two Standards On Garages

BY ALISON PULTINAS

Two active Fenway-area development proposals along Brookline Ave.—a proposed new cancer hospital at One Joslin Place in the LMA and the Fenway Corners proposal by WS Development and Fenway Sports Group that would occupy several blocks around the ballpark—share some similarities. However, the developments are quite different, given the nonprofit versus for-profit status of the proponents and the obvious difference in scale of the two projects.

Both projects include parking garages, which, given their size, triggered state environmental review by Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) analysts in the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA).

WS Development recently added the building at 96-98 Brookline and 40 parking spaces to its multiblock proposal to build up to 2 million square feet near Fenway Park. So, the plan will undergo a new round of public review. The 40 spaces would come on top of 1,489 spaces already approved, for a

new total of 1,529. All together, the parcels to be redeveloped currently hold 775 off-street spaces. The Fenway Corners plan also removes on-street parking along Brookline Avenue and the side streets. The BPDA board's July 2023 approval allows for even more parking capacity, if negotiated with the BPDA and the Boston Transportation Department after the City completes its Fenway Transportation Action Plan.

One Joslin Place, the 688,000-sq-ft hospital proposed jointly by Dana Farber Cancer Institute and Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center on the block between Pilgrim Road and Brookline Avenue. It would have underground parking for 250 cars. The site sits adjacent to two existing above-ground garages—a 756-car facility at 375 Longwood Ave. and a 700-space garage at 170 Pilgrim Rd. owned by BIDMC—as well as 322 underground spaces at Longwood Center next door.

The state considers traffic congestion and related impacts when reviewing new de-

velopments. The EOEEA review for the new hospital requires a two-step process: an Environmental Notification Form and a subsequent Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

WS Development's multiple-acre project includes four below-ground garages. In contrast to the process mandated for the hospital, it was approved in 2021 without the second round of analysis. What changed in two years? Why would a major project involving millions of square feet of new development be exempt from filing an EIR?

The 2021 certificate for the project, now dubbed Fenway Corners, issued by the MEPA office offers some clues. Although the plan exceeded mandatory EIR thresholds for transportation, the project involves no financial assistance from the state. In contrast, the proposed cancer hospital could potentially receive bond funding from the Massachusetts Development Finance Authority.

Even more significantly, updated regulations triggered by proximity to environmental justice (EJ) populations weren't finalized until June 24, 2021—the day after the WS Development filed its proposal for public review.

Most Boston census tracts, including in the Fenway and Mission Hill, meet the criteria that the state uses to define an EJ population. That proximity triggered the EIR requirement for the hospital, given the expected additional car trips its garage would generate.

As described at mass.gov/info-details/environmental-justice-populations-in-massachusetts, the Commonwealth considers four factors in

defining an environmental justice community:

- Annual median household income is 65 percent or less of the statewide annual median.
- Minorities make up 40 percent or more of the population.
- 25 percent or more of households identify as speaking English less than “very well.”
- Minorities make up 25 percent or more of the population and the annual median for household income in the municipality where the neighborhood is located doesn't exceed 150 percent of the statewide median.

The public comment period for the Notice of Project Change and the amendment to the Planned Development Area that the Fenway Corners filing would require will close on Jan. 26. Submit comments to BPDA Ombudsman Michael Sinatra at Michael.A.Sinatra@boston.gov. Register for the remote public hearing on the change, Tues, Jan 16 from 6-8pm, at bit.ly/4ar6BvV.

The deadline for public comments on the One Joslin Place proposal is Jan. 11. Submit comments to Tyler Ross at Tyler.C.Ross@boston.gov. Ross held back-to-back public meetings on Jan. 3 and 4. The individuals appointed to the One Joslin Task Force include representatives who also serve on the Fenway Citizens Advisory Committee, which reviewed the Fenway Corners proposal. They are Pam Beale, a Kenmore Square business owner; Richard Giordano of the Fenway CDC; and Tom Yardley of the Longwood Collective. The Task Force also includes Medical Area and Mission Hill representatives.

Alison Pultinas lives in Mission Hill.

REPAIRS CLOSE GREEN LINE THROUGH JAN. 28

For most of January (Jan. 3–12 and Jan. 16–28), the MBTA will halt Green Line service between Kenmore and North Station; along the entire E Line; and on the B Line between Kenmore and Babcock Street. The agency plans to offer these alternatives:

- **Kenmore/North Station**—free shuttle buses between Kenmore and Copley, then walk to Back Bay Station to ride the Orange Line for free; free commuter rail

service between Lansdowne and South Station; free accessible vans between Kenmore and North Station.

- **E Line**—free use of the #39 bus, and added buses during the shutdown.
- **B Line**—free shuttle buses between Kenmore and Babcock Street; free use of the #57 bus.

For more information, visit www.mbta.com and click on “Alerts” near the top of the page.

LET THERE BE LIGHT!

PHOTO: MARIE FUKUDA



PHOTO: ALISON PULTINAS

▲ “They just magically appeared,” said one resident, but the trees on Gainsborough between Hemenway and St. Stephen streets didn't light themselves. A mail carrier was sure that property management company Brigs LLC strung the lights; Sheri Olans, a St. Stephen Street resident, confirmed that the Gainsborough Street Neighborhood Association coordinated the effort with Brigs.

▲ On Dec. 6, the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services, Fenway Civic, and Samuels & Associates hosted the Fenway's annual tree-lighting ceremony, which featured hot drinks and refreshments. The event recently added a luminary walk and community free skate at 401 Park.

Uncommonly Good Artists



PHOTO: ALISON PULTINAS

During a public celebration at the Design Media Center on Saturday, Dec. 16, the MassArt community presented awards to six “creatives” who exemplify public practice in the arts. College president Dr. Mary Grant spoke eloquently and personally about the recipients chosen through an open nomination process. The Common Good Awards represent a special project launched by Grant's office as part of the school's 150th anniversary. The first public art college in the U.S., it opened in 1873 for training teachers to teach drawing. Honored on the 16th:

- **Wilco**, the rock band recognized for its work in North Adams with MassMOCA and the Solid Sound Festival.
- **Property owners Karl Frey and Patty Cullen**, who worked with the nonprofit Arts and Business Council of Greater Boston to maintain Lowell's Western Avenue Studios as affordable workspace.
- **Artist Silvia López Chavez**, known especially for her local murals.
- **Retired BPS art teacher Jozeph Zaremba.**
- **The Secret Society of Black Creatives**, a group formed during the pandemic to support new artists.
- **Pediatrician and musician Dr. Lisa Wong**, former president of the Longwood Symphony Orchestra.

—ALISON PULTINAS

FENSVIEWS

Are Nonprofits Gaming Boston's PILOT Program?

BY PORTIA BUCHANAN

Boston's universities are some of the richest institutions in the world. For example, according to *U.S. News & World Report*, Harvard—which houses its schools of medicine, dental medicine, and public health in the Longwood Medical Area—has a \$50.8 billion endowment, the largest of any university in the country.

Many of Boston's institutions are nonprofit organizations, exempting them from property taxes. In total, nearly half of the property in Boston is tax exempt; this includes properties designated for open space, City facilities, and transportation, in addition to property owned by educational and medical institutions. Because 74 percent of Boston's annual budget is funded through property taxes, Boston's residents and commercial owners bear the

brunt of the cost to both maintain and grow our city.

In an effort to lessen this burden on residents, Boston instituted the Payment in Lieu of Taxes program in 2012. More commonly referred to as PILOT, this program asks that nonprofit educational, medical, and cultural institutions in possession of at least \$15 million in tax-exempt real estate voluntarily give 25 percent of what they would otherwise pay in property taxes back to the City. Of this, half of the requested contribution can be offset by community benefits. What qualifies as a community benefit, however, remains vague and largely at the discretion of each institution. Despite the City's best efforts, around \$60.8 million dollars have gone unpaid since the program's implementation.

In total, the Fenway/Longwood area is home to 19 PILOT-eligible institutions: Berklee College of Music; Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center; Brigham and Women's Hospital; Boston Children's Hospital; the Boston Symphony Orchestra; Boston University; Dana Farber Cancer Institute; Emmanuel College; Harvard University; the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum; Joslin Diabetes Center; MASCO (now the Longwood Collective); Massachusetts

College of Pharmacy; Museum of Fine Arts Boston; New England Conservatory; Northeastern University; Simmons University; Wentworth Institute of Technology; and the Winsor School

This year's PILOT numbers were released in late October. Although most Fenway/Longwood PILOT-eligible institutions maxed out the amount of community benefits they could contribute, only four provided the full requested amount of cash.

Together, Fenway/Longwood institutions only met 80 percent of the total PILOT amount requested of them this fiscal year, and only four of the 19 made their full payments. The Museum of Fine Arts notably only gave 10 percent of the amount the City requested. Northeastern University, Simmons University, and Emmanuel College only contributed 67, 59, and 60 percent of the amounts requested of them, respectively. Wentworth Institute of Technology and the New England Conservatory both only contributed 50 percent of the amount requested from them, and these payments consisted entirely of community benefits, with no cash contributed. This lack of full participation is not unique to the Fenway/Longwood area. In total, only 22 of Boston's 45 PILOT-eligible institutions made their full payment this fiscal year.

The PILOT Action Group—formed by community organizations, unions, and housing advocates in 2018—has been leading the charge to hold PILOT institutions across Boston accountable for their contributions. It is pushing for program reforms addressing a variety of PILOT's shortcomings, including the lack of consistent payments, the ambiguous definition of community benefits, and lack of a formal community engagement process.

Despite the shortcomings of the current program, Boston's PILOT program is considered to be one of the most successful in the country. This speaks to the program's potential to be a real force for change in Boston. If PILOT-eligible institutions are held more accountable and begin to participate fully in the program, their payments could help transform Boston into a more equitable city.

Portia Buchanan is the Planning & Organizing Graduate Intern for the Fenway Community Development Corporation.

GUEST OPINION

Fenway/Longwood PILOT Payments for Fiscal 2023

INSTITUTION	TOTAL PILOT MONETARY REQUEST	TOTAL PILOT MONETARY CONTRIBUTION	PERCENT OF MONETARY REQUEST MET
Berklee College Of Music	\$733,064	\$366,532	50%
Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center	\$3,695,627	\$3,695,666	100%
Boston Children's Hospital	\$3,711,448	\$1,999,515	54%
Boston Symphony Orchestra	\$60,292	\$60,292	100%
Boston University	\$11,767,135	\$6,300,000	54%
Brigham & Women's Hospital	\$3,620,925	\$3,024,526	83%
Dana Farber Cancer Institute	\$1,611,263	\$1,611,263	100%
Emmanuel College	\$828,134	\$160,000	19%
Harvard University	\$7,018,635	\$4,044,987	58%
Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum	\$118,702	\$20,000	17%
Joslin Diabetes Center	\$328,814	\$0	0%
MASCO	165,791	165,791	100%
Massachusetts College Of Pharmacy	\$434,908	\$434,907	99%
Museum Of Fine Arts	\$1,218,922	\$ 82,505	6%
New England Conservatory	\$68,015	\$0	0%
Northeastern University	\$6,564,462	\$1,900,000	28%
Simmons University	\$ 575,268	\$100,000	17%
Wentworth Institute Of Technology	\$891,245	\$0	0%
Winsor School	\$121,224	\$0	0%
TOTAL	\$43,533,874	\$23,965,984	55%

Source: City of Boston, <https://www.boston.gov/departments/assessing/payment-lieu-tax-pilot-program#fiscal-year-2023>

Local Stories That Mattered in 2023

Four Fenway News contributors reflect on the biggest changes that the momentous last 12 months brought to the Fenway and Mission Hill and how we covered them.

Carol Lasky

What a year of juxtapositions. The completion of Phase 2 of the multi-decade Muddy River Restoration Project represents a historic achievement in environmental stewardship. The project was catalyzed by citizen activists who spurred leaders at all levels of government to aim big in the interest of resilient urban green space and its salutary impacts on public health. Even as the dredging, landscaping, and habitat restoration work proceeded, the decades-long fight to rehabilitate the Carlton Street

Footbridge reached a successful conclusion. Bravo!

This good news stands in direct contrast with Simmons University's proposal for 305 Brookline/Longwood Place. This development project will cast shadows—both real and symbolic—on public parklands, species habitats, and a treasured urban waterway that cannot be re-restored with mitigation money. Community process has been negligible. Sadly, Simmons' plans recall the decision by City leaders over a half-century ago to sell off and bury a section of the Muddy River to accommodate a commercial parking lot.

We all know how that went.

After a long local election season, it is wonderful to see some new faces on the Boston City Council. Along with City Council President Ruthzee Louijeune, Sharon Durkan [District 8] and Henry Santana [At-Large] are among the new members who will confront the City's housing, transportation, education, public health, and environmental urgencies.

However, municipal elections continue to draw startlingly low voter turnouts. This will be a key challenge for candidates, constituents, and *Local Stories* on next page >

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.

> NEXT ISSUE <

Our next issue will appear on **Friday, February 2.**

> DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS <

The deadline for letters, news items, and ads for our next issue is **Friday, January 26.**

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SPICE IT UP!

The BPL Spice Bank, a collaboration with Greater Boston Food Bank, is accepting donations of unopened spices and dried herbs at participating branch libraries until One Boston Day in April. With the help of the GBFB, each branch will distribute donations to families and individuals across Eastern Massachusetts. Providing access to spices, the BPL and GBFB say, offers a way for recipients to maintain a sense of cultural identity and family traditions; encourages creative and nutritious cooking; and promotes the cultural abundance found in Massachusetts. If you'd like to help, drop off donations at the Newsfeed Café in the Central Library in Copley Square. Each donation will be matched by the Café. Learn more at bpl.org/news/donate-to-the-bpl-spice-bank.

From White House to City Hall, Kudos Flood Delia's Mailbox

PHOTO: RUTH KHOWAIS



West Fens resident Delia Álvarez received a certificate of recognition from the City of Boston in honor of her 100th birthday at a Dec. 21 party sponsored by the Peterborough Senior Center. Delia can be forgiven, however, if she found that a bit anticlimactic—after all, she'd already received congratulations from President Biden earlier last year.

< Local Stories from previous page communities. Real progress requires an engaged electorate.

Ruth Khowais

We've had some great articles this year—Leslie Pond's explanation of environmental issues, Ed Ballo's continuing explorations of Fenway landmarks, Steve Wolf's review of the Sargent exhibit, and opinion pieces on voting turnouts. However, I most appreciated our coverage of the Muddy River restoration.

I like to tell my friends who dwell in the suburbs that I live in downtown Boston, but at the end of my street is a river. The Muddy River is so much a part of the Fenway neighborhood. I walk by almost every day. I get to see ducks, herons, turtles basking, calming water with reflections of trees. The restoration project has gone on for two years or more and *The Fenway News* has kept us up to date with its progress. Now that Phase 2 is over, we can see an expanse of sparkling water along with new trees and plantings.

We covered this story at least three times in the last year, from Leslie Pond's detailed article "A Less-Muddy Muddy River" in March to Mary Ann Brogan's report on the Emerald Necklace Conservancy meeting in June to coverage of the ribbon cutting ceremony for the wrap up in December. Restoration of the Muddy River is essential to preventing future flooding and the removal of invasive plants brings out the beauty of a river right in our neighborhood.

Alison Pultinas

The ongoing saga of the multi-building Fenway Corners project for me is an unbelievable story. Unbelievable because it keeps getting bigger and bolder—new high-rise towers, a new street, more parking garages, all controlled by a single entity. Is Fenway Corners becoming a

riff on other WS Development ventures like the Seaport or Legacy Place?

June and August articles described public hearings and Councilor Kenzie Bok's carefully worded response that supported the project at the BPDA board and the Zoning Commission, but neighborhood voices are almost absent.

There is support for the proposals apparently because of the run-down condition of so many of the existing buildings owned by Fenway Sports Group or the D'Angelo family. Then there are the promised community benefits, including a daycare center and restoration of the Duck House on Agassiz Road...but there are also 1,500 parking spaces.

Mat Thall's May investigation into the identity of WS Development ownership was eye-opening; still a lot more remains to follow up.

There are also beautifully written obituaries in the paper every year. This is writing that emotionally connects a community, recounting the lives of neighbors who many of us might not have known at all.

Leslie Pond

As I write this two weeks before the new year, there's no doubt that 2023 will be our planet's hottest year by far since instrument-based recordings started in the late 1800s. This will continue our heating trend, with 2014 to 2023 becoming the hottest decade recorded since 1880.

Human-caused climate change stands center stage, with global warming impacts such as extreme heat, wildfires, drought, and flooding more prominent than ever before. Yet globally, nationally, and locally, we are falling short of our 2030 and 2050 goals to slow climate change.

What can folks at a hyperlocal community newspaper do in the face of the climate crisis? We can write and talk about it.

In the United States, about 70 percent of people are worried about

climate change and its impacts, yet roughly the same percentage rarely or never talks about it, according to polling by the Yale Program on Climate Change Communication. So, we can raise awareness, share concerns and solutions, and hopefully, pass the baton to you to talk about climate change and take actions—individually and as a community—that contribute to limiting further global warming and increasing climate resilience.

The *Fenway News's* climate and environmental coverage in 2023 spanned local, federal, and international efforts. Eleven of the 12 monthly issues had at least one climate-related item, and most included multiple items—articles, guest opinions, photos, or calendar listings, and even ads.

Notably, we covered the Earthshot Prize Awards ceremony; State Sen. Will Brownsberger's survey of constituents on home energy and energy efficiency; what the federal Inflation Reduction Act means locally; the Colleges of the Fenway's 17th Muddy River Symposium; concerns about the carbon footprint of new fossil-fuel infrastructure in the Fenway; Audubon Circle's green stormwater infrastructure; Mission

Hills' pollinator gardens; the City of Boston's tree-protection ordinance; local tree-maintenance volunteers; and options offered by the City and local organizations to help us do our part to reduce carbon pollution.

Multiple stories centered on the Emerald Necklace, focusing on the Muddy River Restoration Project's progress and the shadows that the Longwood Place development proposed for Simmons University's residence quad would cast on the park. The former project, which prioritizes reducing flood risk, has positive impacts on climate resilience and habitat biodiversity; the latter has anticipated negative impacts.

Climate change enters all aspects of our lives, and art is no exception. In the hope that art can help move us to envision a sustainable future and integrate climate action into our lives, we covered exhibits by artists confronting the reality of the climate crisis and the intersecting biodiversity crisis.

With fossil-fuel emissions and global warming continuing unabated and climate solutions making advances, let us know if you have a hyperlocal climate topic we should cover in 2024.



Virtual Public Meeting

Fenway Corners (West)

JANUARY

16

6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Zoom Link: bit.ly/4ar6BvV

Toll Free: (833) 568 - 8864

Meeting ID: 161 484 3031



Project Description

The BPDA is hosting a joint Impact Advisory Group (IAG) and Public Meeting for the Fenway Corners (West) project located in the Fenway. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the recently filed Notice of Project Change (NPC) and Planned Development Area (PDA) Development Plan Amendment. The meeting will include a presentation followed by a conversation with the IAG members, then Q&A and comments from the public.

The information at this meeting is crucial to you as a Boston resident and stakeholder. Language Access services are available at no cost to you. If you require these services, please contact quinn.w.valcich@boston.gov no later than: 1/9/24

对于您作为波士顿的居民和利益相关者，本次会议的信息至关重要。与会的语言服务免费。如果您需要这些语言翻译服务，请在下方的日期时间之前联系 quinn.w.valcich@boston.gov : 1/9/24 作为波士顿居民和利益相关者，这次会议中的资讯对您非常重要。我们可以向您免费提供语言辅助服务。如果您要求这些服务，请在以下时间之前联络 quinn.w.valcich@boston.gov : 1/9/24

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Close of Comment Period:
1/26/2024

Website:
bit.ly/Fenway-Corners-West

MOH Income-Restricted Rental Opportunity Our Lady's Guild House 20 Charlesgate West, Boston, MA 02215

140 Affordable Units

# of Units	# of BRs	Est. Sq. Ft.	Rent	Maximum Income Limit
140	SRO	215	\$1,200	80% AMI

Important: Currently, this building has a single-gender requirement for people who identify as women only. This gender restriction will end upon the beginning of construction, in early to mid-2025. At that time, all tenants will be required to move out in order to complete a full renovation of the building. Once construction has completed, all units will be open to all genders and gender identities.

Minimum Incomes set by owner + based on # of bedrooms + Area Median Income (AMI)		Maximum Incomes set by HUD/MOH + based on household size + Area Median Income (AMI)	
# of BRs	80% AMI	HH	80% AMI
0	\$36,000	1	\$83,120

Minimum Incomes Apply. Minimum incomes do not apply to households with housing assistance (Section 8, MRVP, VASH) or for the units in this development that include a project-based voucher.

Applications are available for pickup Monday thru Friday, 9 AM to 5 PM at Our Lady's Guild House, 20 Charlesgate West, Boston, or the Fenway CDC Office, 66 Westland Ave., Boston.

Information Session available online at www.LiveOLGH.com

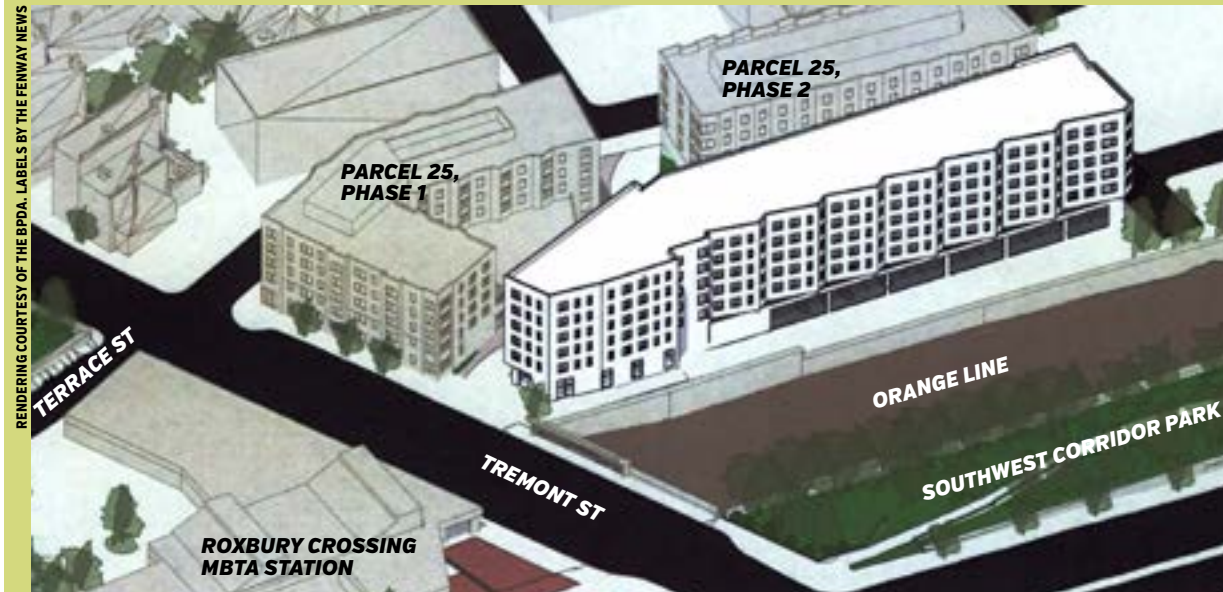
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City Puts Lower-Cost Housing in Mission Hill on Fast Track



BY ALISON PULTINAS

Mission Hill is currently experiencing the impacts of Mayor Michelle Wu’s recent executive order to streamline reviews for affordable housing. In just three months, the plan for 94 income-restricted apartments for Roxbury Crossing’s Parcel 25 Phase 3 has quickly progressed.

Parcel 25 occupies vacant land leveled for the ill-fated I-95 highway extension. They acquired the site from the MBTA. Bounded by Gurney, Tremont, Halleck, and Station streets, it sits adjacent to Wentworth Institute of Technology’s parking lots, the Orange Line tracks, and Southwest Corridor Park.

More than 10 years ago, Mission Hill Neighborhood Housing Services (MHNHS)

Flaherty explained that the plan changed for several reasons: the current real estate market, the huge demand for affordable housing, and much weaker demand for new office space.

The cost and delays associated with the environmental cleanup of the former MBTA land for the Phase 2 building at 1 Halleck

acquired the site and has since completed two buildings with income-restricted housing—Phases 1 and 2—and commercial space on the ground floor. Phase 3 originally received City approval in 2014 as a 10-story office building. MHNHS director Patricia

Street project proved a wake-up call, said Flaherty. The 2014 plan for Phase 3 called for extensive excavation to build underground parking, and that simply wasn’t feasible. The new building will include a first-floor garage, entered, from Station Street, but with far fewer spaces than originally planned.

The proposed new building would contain 94 apartments. It has no studios, and 70 units contain two or more bedrooms. This is more than the two completed buildings at 1 Gurney and 1 Halleck combined. In a presentation to the BPDA board, architect Nick Buehrens described the zig-zagging design of the building along the Orange Line as a long, pleated façade. The building would rise six stories and measure more than 300 feet long.

In December, the project team hit three significant milestones: funding commitments from both the City’s Community Preservation Committee (which can support affordable housing) and the Neighborhood Housing Trust, plus the BPDA Board’s unanimous vote of approval on Dec. 14. Next up is a Zoning Commission hearing on Jan. 10.

Alison Pultinas lives in Mission Hill.

With River Dredging Over, Plans Emerge to Fix Poor Water Quality

BY LESLIE POND

The recently celebrated completion of the years-long Muddy River Restoration Project has expanded our vistas of the Muddy River and its environs, exposing scenic areas hidden for decades by tall swaths of phragmites. Yet what isn’t as visible is the Muddy River’s current status as the most polluted tributary to the Charles River.



Charles River.

The Back Bay’s tidal basin has undergone multiple transformations over the centuries. In pre-colonial times, Indigenous peoples built fish weirs around what is now Boylston Street. By the 1800s, however, the area was “a great cesspool” with “a greenish scum, many yards wide” and water “bubbling like a cauldron with...noxious gases,” according to an 1849 report. Initial draining and filling of the basin started in the mid-1800s, and in the 1890s Frederick Law Olmsted led development of the Muddy River as part of the Emerald Necklace, which functioned as green infrastructure to absorb and treat stormwater. But the negative impacts of urban development in the mid-20th century severely compromised the Muddy River.

For 2022, the Muddy River’s water quality received a C grade from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, up from a D- in 2019. One of the main factors in the EPA’s recreational-health grading system is the level of contamination by E. coli bacteria. A C grade indicates that the river met swimming standards some of the time and boating standards most of the time but is still not an acceptable grade.

Two main sources of pollution include stormwater runoff from streets and other impervious surfaces and combined sewer overflows. In combined sewer systems, like Boston’s, domestic waste and stormwater enter the same pipes for wastewater treatment; during heavy rainfall, however, stormwater can cause overflows that discharge into local bodies of water and create a health hazard.

The Charles River Watershed Association (CRWA) and Emerald Necklace Conservancy (ENC) are now working on plans to restore the Muddy

River’s ecology and increase its resilience to climate change.

For the first step in a participatory process, CRWA and ENC held a hybrid community visioning workshop at the Fenway Community Center in November that attracted about 60 attendees and was facilitated by the Consensus Building Institute.

Speakers introduced the history of the Muddy River and provided background on the water quality issues summarized above. Attendees, both in-person and online, had opportunities to discuss in small groups and share why they care about the Muddy River and their vision for a fully restored and accessible Muddy River.

“We learned that people care deeply about this tributary to the Charles River...Community members who live, work and play in the Muddy River watershed are the real experts and are critical partners... toward a cleaner Muddy,” says Emiy Norton, CRWA’s executive director.

ENC president Karen Mauney-Brodek emphasizes, “To sustain a healthy Muddy River, neighborhoods throughout the Emerald Necklace, in Boston and Brookline, must coordinate efforts...for long-lasting success.”

Speakers also discussed the future, specifically the likelihood that climate change will bring increased precipitation and a greater risk of flooding, as well as higher temperatures that worsen urban heat islands and heighten drought conditions. Nature-based solutions, such as installing green infrastructure, can improve water quality and climate resilience and provide additional co-benefits.

According to Mauney-Brodek, one of the most important takeaways from the workshop is: “what many people don’t realize is that while the Emerald Necklace parks outline the most visible portion of the Muddy, its watershed is much larger, and far more built up—with significant paving and construction that allows polluted stormwater runoff to feed into the river.”

The community process that will shape the plan is set to include five additional public meetings and last into 2025. Norton explains, “the tangible outcome will be a list of projects that will yield meaningful improvements to the river in terms of water quality, biodiversity, and habitat health, and will help realize things that community

members have deemed important in their neighborhood, such as walkability, more greenspace, and cooling. That list will be prioritized, and together, CRWA and residents can start to advocate and fund-raise for implementation.”

A second meeting will focus on existing conditions. Norton expects that the meeting, originally slated for this month, “will be pushed out to later in the spring in order to have a more detailed existing conditions analysis,” due to the

complexity of the Muddy River’s flow and its multiple sources of pollution.

Learn more:

- To see the slides from the November workshop, visit tinyurl.com/fhv27nrk.pdf.
- To watch a recording of the workshop, visit tinyurl.com/bdhjvfn.
- For more information on the stream-restoration program, visit crwa.org/stream-restoration.

Leslie Pond lives in the West Fens.



Virtual Public Meeting

2 Charlesgate West

JANUARY
11
6:00 PM - 7:30 PM

Zoom Link: bit.ly/47TPaSy
Toll Free: (833) 568 - 8864
Meeting ID: 161 549 0248



Project Proponent:
SCAPE
CHARLESGATE
LLC

Project Description

The BPDA is hosting a virtual Public Meeting for the proposed 2 Charlesgate West project in Fenway. This meeting, originally scheduled for Thursday, December 21, 2023, has been rescheduled for Thursday, January 11, 2024. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the Draft Project Impact Report (DPIR) and its potential impacts. The meeting will include a presentation followed by questions and comments from the public.

Please request interpreting services no later than 5 days before the meeting date.

Se encuentra disponible el servicio gratuito de interpretación de la información brindada en estas reuniones. Si necesita servicios de traducción, contáctese con: (scott.greenhalgh@boston.gov) (617.918.4271). Por favor, solicite los servicios de interpretación a más tardar 5 días antes de la fecha de la reunión.

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: scott.greenhalgh@boston.gov (617-918-4271) 会议定于 2024 年 1 月 11 日 (2024/1/11),请在会议前 5 天内申请口译服务。

mail to: **Scott Greenhalgh**
Boston Planning & Development Agency
One City Hall Square, 9th Floor
Boston, MA 02201
phone: 617.918.4271
email: scott.greenhalgh@boston.gov

Close of Comment Period:
1/23/2024

Website:
bit.ly/2-Charlesgate-West

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

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

Last month *The Globe* published a powerful and sweeping reexamination of a 1989 murder that rocked the city—and especially Mission Hill—to its foundations. “Murder in Boston,” also available as a podcast and an HBO documentary, dug into the murder of Carol DiMaiti Stuart by her husband Charles in 1989. Charles shot Carol, who was pregnant, in their car after leaving a childbirthing class in the LMA. He then shot himself and called 911 to report that a Black man had attacked the couple on the edge of Mission Hill. He gambled that a largely white power structure would buy his story and shift suspicion elsewhere. At first, the gamble paid off: *The Globe* found that the Boston Police Dept. replaced two detectives who suspected Charles’s explanation with two who bought it, leading to multiple raids on the homes of black men in Mission Hill. It also found that as many as 33 relatives and friends of Charles knew what he was up to but never tipped off police. Six weeks later, as investigators closed in, Charles jumped from the Tobin Bridge. ➔



➔ **The *Globe* reported that the union representing workers at Pavement’s eight locations (including three in the Fenway) have joined with workers at other area indie coffeehouses to create Local 325 of the national union UNITE HERE!** ➔ **The Theater Offensive—which will begin operating this year from the black box theater in “The Bon” apartments on Boylston—will stage a “Queer Prom” fundraiser at Tenderoni’s on Feb. 18 with performances from young queer artists and “retro-roller rink vibes and tasty snacks.”** ➔ **Every year, mega-best-selling author James Patterson sends hundreds of unsuspecting bookstore employees a \$500 bonus. Among this year’s 600 lucky winners: Noah Willette of Trident Booksellers on Newbury Street. Multiple area stores, in fact, had winners, including Cambridge’s Harvard Bookstore. Why does ICYMI note that? Because it will open a branch this year at the Prudential Center.** ➔

EATS BEAT

We’ve got a backlog of edible news this month!

- **D.W. French** has opened in the former Orfano space on Boylston Street across from Star Market, serving a classic French bistro menu.
- A *Globe* “Food” section piece on long-running local restaurants gave a shout-out to Jim Hoben on *El Pelon*’s 25th anniversary.
- **Our Fathers** has moved into the Tasty Burger spot at 1301 Boylston. Founded in Allston as a Jewish deli, the Fenway version seems more like a mezze platter of Mediterranean foods,

mixing deli classics like Reuben sandwiches and matzoh-ball soup with shawarma, falafel, and even caprese salad.

- **Ken Harker** ran restaurants that pleased customers for years in the Hotel Commonwealth, then got the boot during the pandemic. Happily, his flagship **Eastern Standard** has resurfaced just up Beacon Street at the Bower apartment building.
- The East Fens welcomes **Manhattan Bagel & Coffee** to the corner of Mass. Ave. and Haviland Street. The menu, heavy on bagels and cream cheese (duh), also offers fancy coffees, sandwiches, and baked goods.

NEWSLINES

Parks Department (Finally) Shares Fens Pathways Schedule

Our report last month on the Back Bay Pathways plan noted that the Parks Department did not provide information on the project’s schedule by our deadline. Liz Sullivan, director of external affairs and marketing for the department, has since filled in some of the blanks. She projects that the department will file for needed permits either this month or in February; release the final plan in March; put the work out to bid in April; and see construction begin over this summer. “Given the phased nature of the project,” she said by email, “specific sequencing and timing details [of construction work in the park] will be available once the definitive design is in place.”

Vicinity Energy Clears Another Bar for Brookline Ave. Pipe

At its Dec. 7 hearing, Boston’s Public Improvement Commission approved the planned location for a steam pipeline down the middle of Brookline Avenue from Lansdowne Street to IQHQ’s future lab at 109 Brookline Ave. National Grid representative Michael Tupper continued to raise objections about the line’s proximity to its own infrastructure, although Vicinity had already agreed to add extra insulation and poured concrete between its steam line and National Grid’s plastic gas pipe.

WS Development Expands Fenway Corners Footprint

A recently disclosed two-year-old agreement will likely add a new building to the 2.1-million-square-foot Fenway Corners proposal, forcing it to return to the City for necessary approvals. The 100-year-old, three-story property at 96-98 Brookline Ave. was the holdout in four blocks controlled by the WS/Fenway Sports Group/Twins partnership. Owners William F. Crowley Jr. and Stephen H. Newman (Punters Pub) signed a purchase and sale agreement in July 2021, although inclusion of the parcel in the Fenway Corners proposal only became public this past December. The agreement with 98 Brookline Avenue Associates LLC specifies a closing date before June 30, 2024, with an option to extend the deadline to Sept. 30. An amendment to the Fenway Corners West Planned Development Area will need approval from the Boston Zoning Commission—another Brookline Avenue tower is anticipated. 96-98 Brookline Ave. housed the rock club and bar Copperfield’s for decades, the Tilted Kilt franchise for just a year, and Fenway Johnnie’s since 2018.

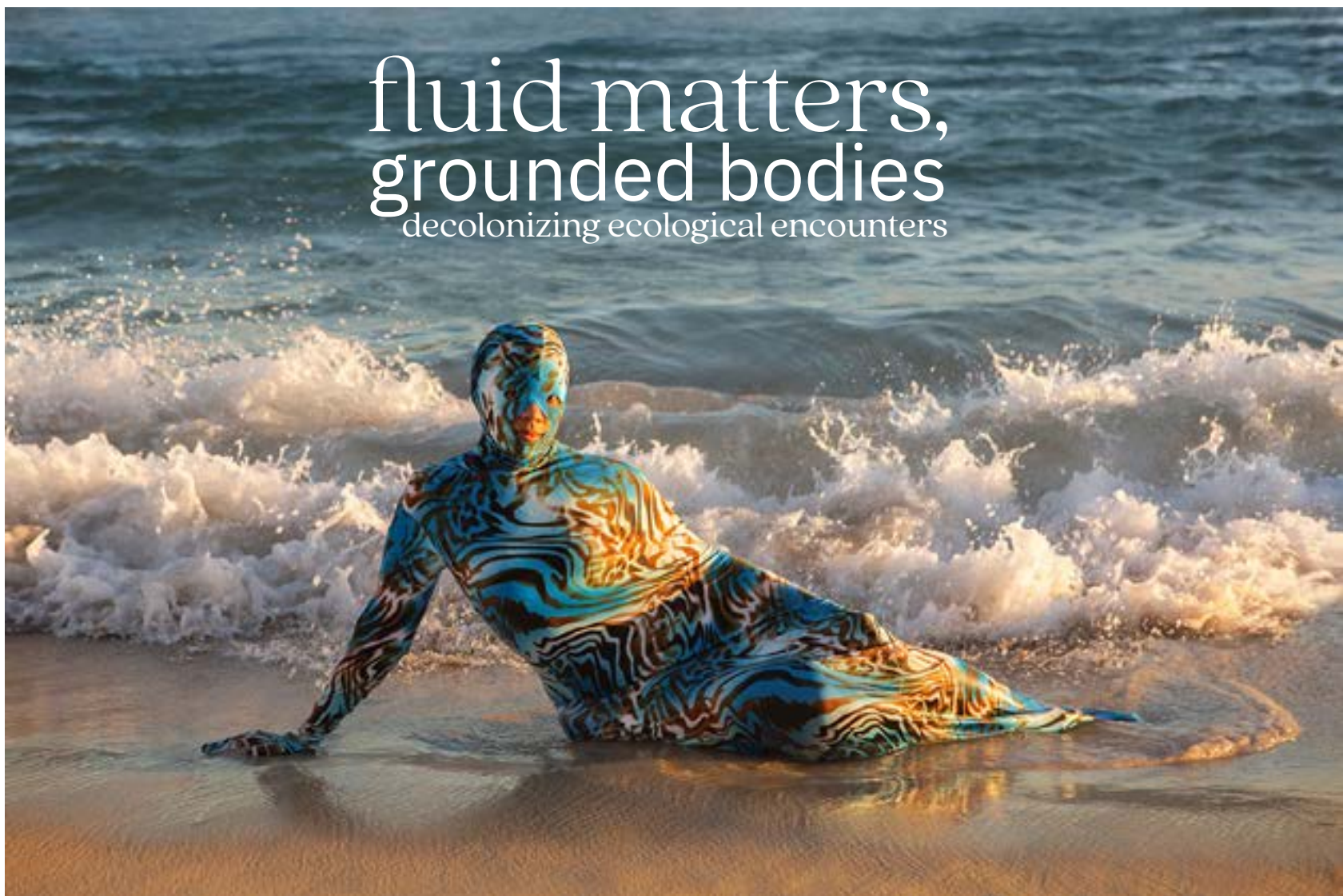
BPL Lists Its Most Popular Books for 2023

In mid-December the Boston Public Library released its end-of-year wrap-up. Across the library system, the ten books most frequently checked out were *Lessons in Chemistry* by Bonnie Garmus; *Tomorrow, and Tomorrow, and Tomorrow*, Gabrielle Zevin; *Spare*, Prince Harry, Duke of Sussex; *Book Lovers*, Emily Henry; *I’m Glad My Mom Died*, Jennette McCurdy; *Happy Place*, Emily Henry; *101 Essays That Will Change the Way You Think*, Brianna West; *The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo*, Taylor Jenkins Reid; *Demon Copperhead*, Barbara Kingsolver; and *It Starts with Us*, Colleen Hoover.

Top-five lists for library branches differed from the systemwide list. At the Parker Hill branch, *I’m Glad My Mom Died* and *Tomorrow, and Tomorrow, and Tomorrow* were joined by Michelle Zauner’s memoir *Crying in H Mart*, and two “Dog Man” children’s chapter books by Dav Pilkey. At the Central Library in Copley Square, *Tomorrow, and Tomorrow, and Tomorrow*, *Lessons in Chemistry*, *I’m Glad My Mom Died*, and *he Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo* made the list joined by *Carrie Soto is Back* by Taylor Jenkins Reid.

CORRECTION

In our December issue, we incorrectly stated that the January issue would appear on Dec. 29. It appears on Jan. 5. We apologize for this error. Check out fenwaynews.org next month for the full 2024 production schedule.



fluid matters,
grounded bodies
decolonizing ecological encounters

THROUGH APRIL 6, 2024

GALLERY 360 + NORTHEASTERN CROSSING



Northeastern University
College of Arts, Media and Design
Center for the Arts
Northeastern University
City and Community Engagement

Talking About Trees

BY LESLIE POND

Urban street trees have a tough life. They face multiple challenges detrimental to their wellbeing, including construction impacts (the number-one killer of Boston's street trees), road salt, methane gas leaks, lack of water, dog pee, poor soil, disease, competition with other plants, poor maintenance of tree grates, being a poor match for the environment, damage by vehicles, and vandalism.

Yet trees provide people with multiple benefits: sequestering carbon, reducing the urban heat island effect, improving air quality, storing stormwater (which helps reduce run-off and flooding), improving human health and quality of life, and more.

This year, three dying trees were removed from the north side of Peterborough Street just west of Jersey Street in front of the Landmark Square apartments (photo at near right). Of five tree pits along the sidewalk, three remain empty (photo, far right).

If you'd like to learn more about Boston's urban forest and how you can help it thrive, contact the Fenway Civic Association's Parks and Open Space Committee (at www.fenwaycivic.org) and visit boston.gov/caring-bostons-urban-forest, where you'll find tree-care tips, how to request street-tree planting or removal, how to help water street trees, info on the City's new Urban Forest Plan, an inventory of Boston's 40,000 street trees, and more.



PHOTO: LESLIE POND



PHOTOS COURTESY CITY OF BOSTON

In November 10, advocates, Northeastern University staff, and City officials gathered across from the Veterans memorials in the Fens to plant a "Legacy" sugar maple, the first tree of a planned arboretum that will honor U.S. military veterans.

The arboretum is the vision of Gerry Wright, a Jamaica Plain activist, naturalist, and portrayer of Frederick Law Olmsted.

According to Freddie Veikley, co-chair of Fenway Civic Association's Parks and Open Space Committee, Wright collaborated for several years with Northeastern, in particular its director of horticulture and grounds, Stephen Schneider; the Boston Parks and Recreation Department, including commissioner Ryan Woods; Boston's director of urban forestry Todd Mistor; and Boston tree warden Max Ford-Diamond; and Veikley herself, to realize this first planting.

Woods made an apt connection, saying "it's really fitting that we're here for Veterans Day when it's a time to honor those who served us, and how fitting that we do that with things that serve us every day such as trees."

Learn more at boston.gov/news/legacy-tree-planted-commemorate-veterans-day.

Leslie Pond lives in the West Fens.

◀ Far left: Parks Commissioner Ryan Woods speaks at the ceremony as park rangers look on. Near left: Gerry Wright, dressed as Olmsted, joins City Councilor Sharon Durkan and others adding soil to the base of the tree.

FCC OPENS NEW 'LITTLE FREE LIBRARY'

BY LESLIE POND

The Fenway Community Center has introduced a Little Free Library—a bookcase where community members can "take a book/share a book." Its three shelves currently hold more than 80 books across many genres.

Todd Bol created the first book-sharing box at his home in Wisconsin in 2009 and co-founded the nonprofit Little Free Libraries in 2012. More than 300 million books have been shared through registered LFLs globally.

Part of LFL's mission is to expand equitable access to books in order to improve literacy—in the U.S. alone, more than 30 million adults cannot read or write above the third-grade level. Another aspect is to make books available that represent diverse voices—including BIPOC, LGBTQ+, and more—to promote understanding, empathy, and inclusion.



PHOTO: LESLIE POND

These are important roles for the LFL at the Center, as Massachusetts libraries have seen a steep rise in book challenges, following a national trend. The American Library Association tracks the number of requests to remove or restrict access to books, which rose from 10 in 2021 to 45 in 2022. Massachusetts's 2022 list has over 30 books, with most challenges involving books that represent the LGBTQ+ community and/or people of color.

In support of Banned Books Week, a national event that highlights the value of free and open access to information—held annually since 1982—the Community Center and Margaret Witham, a long-time Fenway resident (and former editor of *The Fenway News*), organized a book swap this past fall.

They encouraged community members to bring a banned book (or any book) and take a book home with them. The remaining books became part of the new Little Free Library. Example titles include Harper Lee's *To Kill A Mockingbird*, #15 on the ALA's list of the 100 most banned and challenged books from 2010 to 2019.

As Sara Doris, a Fenway resident who attended the book swap, said, "It's a very important issue for us all to think about, and it was presented in a very approachable and friendly way. I think it also started something new in the way of a neighborhood sharing and conversation around books."

Leslie Pond lives in the West Fens. You'll find other local LFLs at 31 Burbank Street; the entry to the Massachusetts Historical Society; Farmer's Horse Coffee on Mass. Ave.; Northeastern's Robinson Hall; the Countway Library at Harvard Medical School; the ABCD office at 714 Parker Street; and at the O'Bryant School on Malcolm X Boulevard.



Virtual Public Meeting

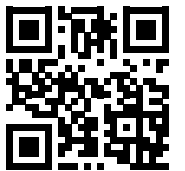
1400 Boylston Street

JANUARY
17
6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Zoom Link: bit.ly/479edjC

Toll Free: (833) 568 - 8864

Meeting ID: 160 202 2276



Project Description:

The BPDA is hosting a joint Impact Advisory Group (IAG) and Public Meeting for the 1400 Boylston Street project located in the Fenway. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the recently filed Planned Development Area (PDA) Development Plan, currently under review alongside the previously filed Draft Project Impact Report (DPIR) Filing. The meeting will include a presentation followed by a conversation with the IAG members, then Q&A and comments from the public.

The information at this meeting is crucial to you as a Boston resident and stakeholder. Language Access services are available at no cost to you. If you require these services, please contact quinn.w.valcich@boston.gov no later than: 1/12/24

对于您作为波士顿的居民和利益相关者，本次会议的信息至关重要。与会的语言服务免费。如果您需要这些语言翻译服务，请在下方的日期时间之前联系 quinn.w.valcich@boston.gov : 1/12/24

作為波士頓居民和利益相關者，這次會議中的資訊對您非常重要。我們可以向您免費提供語言輔助服務。如果您要求這些服務，請在以下時間之前聯絡 quinn.w.valcich@boston.gov : 1/12/24

mail to: **Quinn Valcich**
Boston Planning & Development Agency
One City Hall Square, 9th Floor
Boston, MA 02201
phone: 617.918.4219
email: quinn.w.valcich@boston.gov

Close of Comment Period:
1/29/2024

Website:
bit.ly/1400BoylstonStreets

BostonPlans.org | @BostonPlans
Teresa Polhemus, Executive Director/Secretary

The Arts

Art That Questions Consumption And May Spark Solutions

BY LESLIE POND

We often think of art and science as separate disciplines, yet they are intimately intertwined through the themes of experimentation and creativity.

An exhibit by the artists' group "inspiring change for the Climate Crisis" (i3C) physically juxtaposes the two disciplines by bringing climate art into the open-space desk area of the Blavatnik Life Lab. Housed at Harvard Medical School in the Longwood Medical Area, the Life Lab is part of Lab Central's life sciences start-up incubator.

Shazia Mir, Lab Central's Community and Social Impact Strategist, manages its 1823 Gallery and had met one of i3C's founders, Adriana G. Prat, at a prior exhibit in the gallery. She approached Prat about bringing together exhibits for Environmental Awareness Month. For Lab Central, the exhibit is part of its broader effort to offer sources of inspiration for researchers and entrepreneurs to innovate and find new approaches to problem-solving.

"The overall exhibit has been a great addition to our workspace. As soon as the pieces were brought in for display, they were a point of conversation for our residents and others who use our space," said Adam Kohlbus, senior associate for operations at the Life Lab.

The i3C group's mission is "to create awareness and action for the

environmental and climate crisis," said Prat. "The exhibits allow deeper engagement to a wider audience that is aligned with i3C's mission of art expression stimulated by the science of the world we inhabit and respect."

The exhibit, titled "Catch and Release" after a work of the same name by artist Jeffrey Nowlin, is the sister exhibit to "Geomorphic Foresights: Meditations on the Environmental Crisis," with paintings by Prat and Liliana Folta, at Lab Central in Kendall Square.

Prat—an i3C artist and curator, and formerly a scientist at a biotech company in Lab Central—curated "Catch and Release." According to the exhibit description, the artworks were created "in response to the human contribution to the climate crisis" and "question the excessive consumption

PHOTO: LORETTA PARK



Loretta Park's "Lunchplate 2" consists of affordable and easily accessible materials, discarded items, and unwanted objects donated by friends.

and Loretta Park. They feature repurposed found and unwanted items. For example, McGee Tuck, a self-described "found object fiber sculptor-ocean activist," often uses materials collected at the wrack line, the shore area where debris gets deposited at high tide. Barthelson's pieces from her ongoing "family debris" series were created over the course of more than a decade and stemmed from an urge to discard accumulated items in her home.

Kohlbus said he appreciates that "each piece tells a unique story, and using repurposed materials breathes life into them while avoiding the creation of extra waste."

The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that landfills in the United States release nearly 20 percent of our total methane emissions, which are potent contributors to global warming. While we don't know if technology will ever be sufficiently advanced to reduce at scale the carbon pollution emitted from our landfills, these artists are helping to reveal possibilities for life beyond the landfill.

Gallery 1832 hosts rotating exhibits, with public receptions, about every three months; learn more at www.labcentral.org/news-events/gallery-1832. For more about the i3C Artists group, visit i3cartists.com and fenwaynews.org/2023/09/29/october-2023-issue.

Leslie Pond lives in the West Fens.

and waste that is prevalent in society." The nine artworks are by i3C artists Nowlin and Rebecca McGee Tuck, i3C guest artist Lisa Barthelson,

Library Showcases M.H.'s Hidden Spaces

PHOTO: ALISON PULTIMAS



The Parker Hill Branch Library at 1497 Tremont St. hosts the exhibit "Mission Hill: Landscape and Hidden Places" through the end of January. Here, Mission Hill resident Nancy Ahmadifar poses with her photo books, which feature pictures of Mission Hill's special green space.

KAJI ASO STUDIO INSTITUTE FOR THE ARTS



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January

CALENDAR

Now → Thu, 2/29

THE DYE IS CAST: INTERESTS & IDEALS THAT MOTIVATED THE BOSTON TEA PARTY.

The Massachusetts Historical Society commemorates the 250th anniversary of the Boston Tea Party and showcases historical artifacts. The exhibit features individuals—such as Paul Revere, Phillis Wheatley, and more—whose stories give insight into why the Boston Tea Party happened. masshist.org/exhibitions. 10am–4:45pm, Monday and Wednesday–Friday. Massachusetts Historical Society, 1154 Boylston St. **FREE**

Fri, 1/5 → Sun, 1/14

IN SARGENT'S TIME: EDWARDIAN DRAMAS

features cinema set at the dawn of the 20th century. Inspired by the exhibition “Fashioned by Sargent,” this series offers visitors an experience of Edwardian elegance through four carefully curated dramas. *A Room With a View, Howards End, Daughters of the Dust and Picnic at Hanging Rock* capture the characteristic fashion of the Edwardian era. Find tickets and screening times at mfa.org/programs/film. Tickets \$12 members/\$15 nonmembers. Museum of Fine Arts, 465 Huntington Ave.

Sun, 1/7 → 1/28

The Boston Parks Department offers **FREE ULTIMATE DISC YOUTH CLINICS** at the Carter Playground Bubble for youth ages 7 to 14. Ultimate Disc, originally known as Ultimate Frisbee, is a non-contact team sport played with a disc flung by hand. Points are scored by passing the disc to a teammate in the opposing end zone. For more information and to sign up, visit boston.gov/sports. 9am, 709 Columbus Ave.

Mon, 1/15

- The Gardner Museum's **DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY OF SERVICE** honors the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Coretta Scott King with storytelling, conversation, art-making, and music. Advance registration encouraged for free timed-entry tickets. 11am to 4pm. gardnermuseum.org/calendar/dr-martin-luther-king-jr-day-service-01152024. **FREE**
- The Museum of Fine Arts holds its 22nd annual **MLK DAY OPEN HOUSE**, including guided tours, music by Boston City Singers and DJ WhySham, and more. Free admission for Massachusetts residents. Tickets available in person on a first-come, first-served basis. 10am to 5pm. mfa.org/event/open-house/mlk-day. **FREE**

Fri, 1/19

The Leventhal Map & Education Center presents a **FROM THE VAULT COLLECTION** showing focused on Native American heritage. They will explore items that document Native life and land in New England and beyond. Guest curated by Amira Madison, the Supporting Indigenous Communities Fellow at the Mayor's Office

@ THE CENTER

The Fenway Community Center is open six days a week. Visit fenwaycommunitycenter.org for details.

- Sat, Jan. 6, 10:30am: **Craft Hour**
- Wed, Jan. 17, 7pm: **DEATH CAFÉ**
- Thu, Jan. 18 & Feb. 1, 1:15pm: **CHAIR YOGA** with Hands to Heart Center Yoga
- Sat, Jan. 20, 5pm: **PAINT NITE** with Lydia
- Thu, Jan. 25, 6pm: **BOSTON BAKED BOOKS**
- Tuesdays, 4pm: **BOSTON PUBLIC HEALTH COMMISSION'S "START STRONG"**
- Fridays, 10:30am: **DROP-IN PLAYGROUP**
- Fridays, 12:30pm: **BINGO**

of New Urban Mechanics, and Raquel Halsey of the North American Indian Center of Boston. Drop in any time, 2–4pm. leventhalmap.org/event/ftv-native-american-heritage. **FREE**

Sat, 1/20

- Join the Massachusetts Environmental Justice Table for **"ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND BUILDING OUR NEW GRID –WHERE SHOULD IT ALL GO?"** At this hybrid forum, experts discuss how to build the renewable distributed electric grid we need—and how to do it quickly—while not repeating the mistakes of the past. Learn more about the Massachusetts Environmental Justice Table's vision for infrastructure, energy democracy, and centering frontline communities in the process and their current policy proposal. 2–3:30pm. Register at actionnetwork.org/events/where-does-it-all-go-environmental-justice-and-building-our-new-grid-forum.
- Do you have unwanted books taking up space on your shelf? Did a gift book not really hit the spot for you? Bring your unwanted, gently used book to the Boston Public Library's **BOOK SWAP AFTERNOON!** and swap it for something new! The library will have a selection of books from a wide variety of genres for all ages, including fiction and nonfiction. 2:30–4:30pm. Central Library in Copley Square, 700 Boylston St. **FREE**

Sat, 1/20 → Sun, 2/4

STEVE MCQUEEN: LYNCHING TREE.

The Gardner Museum shows one photo that McQueen took while directing his 2013 Academy Award-winning film *12 Years a Slave* and offers an opportunity to connect the past with contemporary issues and what may lie hidden in the beauty of nature. Information and tickets at gardnermuseum.org/calendar/steve-mcqueen-lynching-tree. Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, 25 Evans Way.

Sat, 1/20 → Sun, 3/3

The Huntington presents **STAND UP IF YOU'RE HERE TONIGHT**, an interactive play written and directed by John Kolvenbach. Jim Ortlieb plays a man desperate for connection, bent by isolation, and deeply in love with the audience itself. Presented in the renovated, 150-seat Maso Studio, the performance blurs the line between audience and performer. Approximately 65-minute run time followed by a social hour where audiences can interact with the cast and creative team and with each other. Ticket price—\$20 to \$60—include a beverage during the social hour. Showtimes vary, but generally Tue–Sun, with matinees Wed, Sat, Sun. Visit huntingtontheatre.org for details and tickets. 264 Huntington Ave.

Wed, 1/24

A HISTORY OF BOSTON. Join Daniel Dain as he acts as your tour guide from the arrival of First Peoples up to the election of Boston's first woman and person of color as mayor. At this Massachusetts Historical Society event, Dain will explore the policies and practices that took Boston from its highest heights to its lowest lows and back again, and examine the central role that density, diversity, and good urban design play in the success of cities like Boston. Register at masshist.org/events/history-boston. In-person reception begins at 5:30pm, program begins at 6pm. Massachusetts Historical Society, 1154 Boylston St.

Thu, 1/25

- RECKONING WITH HISTORY: ART, LANDSCAPE, AND MEMORY WITH STEVE LOCKE, KARILYN CROCKETT, SARA ZEWDE, MARGARET BURNHAM AND LEE PELTON.** Panel discussion, presented as a companion event to “Steve McQueen: Lynching Tree,” explores questions of memory, history, and the role art can

play in reckoning with America's legacy of racial violence. 7–8:30pm. <https://www.gardnermuseum.org/calendar/reckoning-history-art-landscape-and-memory>. Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, 25 Evans Way. Tickets required (\$20 adult/\$18 senior/\$13 student) and include museum admission.

- THINK LIKE A FACT CHECKER: EVALUATING DIGITAL INFORMATION WITH LATERAL READING.** Have you ever come across an unfamiliar website and wondered if it was credible? Or seen information on social media and were unsure if it was true or not? This Boston Public Library workshop will focus on “lateral reading,” a method used by professional fact checkers to verify information. 6pm. Virtual event; register online at bpl.bibliocommons.com/event/s/65732f96817cb6bf4e9ae4cd.

Fri, 1/26

- Join Stacey Beuttell, senior director of Mass Audubon's Nature in the City program, for GBH's **ASK THE EXPERT: GROWING OUR GREENSPACES.** At this virtual event, ask questions about expanding greenspaces in urban areas and creating inclusive and equitable access to nature for all. 12–1pm. Register at wgbh.org/events/ask-the-expert-growing-our-greenspaces. **FREE**
- Boston Symphony Orchestra hosts a **COMMUNITY CHAMBER CONCERT.** Fenway Center, 77 St. Stephen St. 1:30pm. Tickets at bso.org/events?view=byDate&brands=12057. **FREE**

Sat, 1/27 & Sun, 1/28

ART DOCS, an ongoing film series at the Museum of Fine Arts, brings new perspectives on the creative processes of curators and beloved artists. “Klimt and the Kiss” (Jan 27) explores an iconic painting's intricate details and “Art for Everybody” (Jan 28) looks into the dark side of Thomas Kinkadee's public persona. Tickets (\$12 members/\$15 nonmembers) and times at mfa.org/programs/film. Museum of Fine Arts, 465 Huntington Ave.

Tue, 1/30

Join the Boston Public Library for **AUTHOR TALK: RACHEL L. SWARNS—THE 272: THE FAMILIES WHO WERE ENSLAVED AND SOLD TO BUILD THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.** Journalist, author, and professor Rachel L. Swarns will be in conversation with moderator Stephanie McCurry, a historian,

SENIOR EVENTS

To attend, RSVP to Tracey or Sara at (617) 536-7154. For information, visit operationpeaceboston.org. Events this month all take place at the Peterborough Senior Center.

- Tue, Jan. 9, 12pm: **CREATE AND DECORATE SNOWFLAKES** with Sara Theophall
- Thu, Jan. 11, 11:30am: **COFFEE & CONVERSATION** followed by an information session on the Medicare Advantage Health
- Tue, Jan. 16 & 30, 12pm: **TRIVIA AND BINGO**
- Wed, Jan. 17, 12pm: **KNITTING AND CROCHETING**
- Thu, Jan. 18, 11:30am: **COFFEE & CONVERSATION** followed by a rent control discussion
- Tue, Jan. 23, 12pm: **MOVIE SCREENING**
- Thu, Jan. 15, 11:30am: **COFFEE & CONVERSATION** followed by a loneliness and isolation discussion with Brigham and Women's Hospital

author, and professor, about *The 272*, described by Annette Gordon-Reed, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of “The Hemingeses of Monticello” as “an absolutely essential addition to the history of the Catholic Church, whose involvement in New World slavery sustained the Church and, thereby, helped to entrench enslavement in American society.” Augience Q&A follows the discussion. 6pm. This is a virtual event. Register at bpl.bibliocommons.com/event/6580b976b6d9893800843f73. **FREE**

Thu, 2/1

SUBLIME SOUND: SOUND HEALING CEREMONY. The Boston Public Library invites you to a 45-minute sound healing ceremony using the ethereal tones of crystal bowls. Throughout the session, the soothing vibrations from the crystal bowls will create an immersive experience, inviting you to surrender to the healing power of sound. Registration not required; seating is first-come, first-served. The BPL will open doors 15 minutes in advance of the program. Learn more at bpl.bibliocommons.com/event/6580baaba5dbe03f00769abc. 2pm, Central Library in Copley Square, 700 Boylston St. **FREE**

COMMUNITY meetings

WED, JAN 10 Stop by the **SOUTHWEST CORRIDOR PARK ACTION PLAN OPEN HOUSE EVENT** with DCR, Livable Streets, Toole Design, and Kyle Zick Landscape Architects. Learn more about the Southwest Corridor Park Action Plan and help DCR and its partners make design choices. 3pm to 5pm. Union Church, 485 Columbus Ave.

THU, JAN 11 The BPDA hosts a Virtual Public Meeting for the proposed **2 CHARLESGATE WEST** to discuss the developer's Draft Project Impact Report and its potential impacts. The meeting will include a presentation followed by questions and comments from the public. Register at bit.ly/47TPaSy or call in at (833) 568-8864; use meeting ID 161 549 0248. Contact Scott Greenhalgh at scott.greenhalgh@boston.gov with questions.

TUE, JAN 16 The BPDA hosts a joint Impact Advisory Group (IAG) and public meeting for the **FENWAY CORNERS (WEST) PROJECT.** The meeting will discuss the recently filed Notice of Project Change and amendment to the project's Planned Development Area development plan. The meeting will include a presentation followed by a conversation with the IAG members, then Q&A and comments from the public. 6pm. Register at bit.ly/4ar6BvV or call in at (833) 568-8864; use meeting ID 161 484 3031. Contact

Quinn Valcich at quinn.w.valcich@boston.gov with any questions.

WED, JAN 17 The BPDA hosts a joint Impact Advisory Group (IAG) and public meeting for the **1400 BOYLSTON STREET PROJECT** to discuss the recently filed Planned Development Area development plan, currently under review alongside the previously filed Draft Project Impact Report. The meeting will include a presentation followed by a conversation with the IAG members, then Q&A and comments from the public. Register at bit.ly/479edjC or call in at (833) 568-8864; use meeting ID is 160 202 2276. Contact Quinn Valcich at quinn.w.valcich@boston.gov with any questions.

TUE, JAN 23 The BPDA hosts a joint Task Force and public meeting to discuss the recent Supplemental Information Filing for the **840 COLUMBUS AVENUE** proposal on the Northeastern campus. This meeting will include a presentation from the university team followed by a conversation among Northeastern University Task Force members, then Q&A and comments from the public. 6pm. Register at bit.ly/47cAjSz or call in at (833) 568-8864; use meeting ID 161 170 6553. Contact Quinn Valcich at quinn.w.valcich@boston.gov with any questions.