



THE

# Fenway News

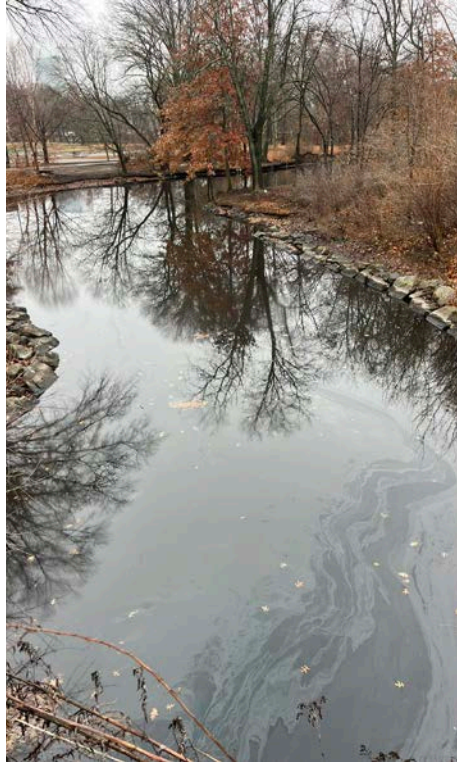
HYPERLOCAL NEWS FOR THE FENWAY, AUDUBON CIRCLE, KENMORE SQUARE, UPPER BACK BAY, PRUDENTIAL, LONGWOOD, AND MISSION HILL SINCE 1974 • VOLUME 51 NUMBER 1 • JANUARY 3 - JANUARY 31, 2025

## MUDDY RIVER OIL SPILL

PHOTOS: RYAN HATCHER



A goose with a dark coating of oil on its back, near 300 The Fenway on Dec. 10.



On Dec. 10, oil remained visible on the Muddy River across from 191 Park Drive in the West Fens.



Geese with a dark coating of oil on their backs, at the intersection of Westland Ave and The Fenway on Dec. 10.

On Sunday, Dec. 8, an oil leak originated at the northern end of Leverett Pond (on the Boston/Brookline border) and contaminated downstream portions of the Muddy River. The spill made news in local and national media, with coverage by outlets such as the Associated Press, Newsweek, and USA Today.

Despite deployment of booms and other containment materials, area residents noticed a sheen coating the Muddy River and a strong petroleum odor as far downstream as the Back Bay Fens until a rainstorm swept across Boston on Dec. 11.

While the media spotlight has faded for the most part, the work to monitor the river and identify the source of the spill is ongoing. The Fenway News will continue to follow the impacts and mitigation efforts. In the meantime, we suggest recent coverage by Sam Mintz in the Brookline News: [tinyurl.com/rvnp5xyy](https://www.brookline.com/news/2024/12/11/boston-oil-spill-muddy-river/).

- Carol Lasky and Leslie Pond

## NEWS FROM THE MBTA

BY ALISON PULTINAS

In December, the MBTA's General Manager Phillip Eng marked the end of more than a year of service interruptions for the Track Improvement Project for the Red, Orange, and Green Lines. As chief engineer Sam Zhou explained at the Dec. 19 Board meeting, "...we caught up with 40 years of deferred maintenance. Closing a discrete section of the system, working round the clock and partnering with outside contractors and T's own workforce proved to be the most efficient way to get the job done."

Also announced in December, a progress report on the legally required accessibility improvements for the Green Line. The E Line, however, is not the first project. The first project is the aboveground C Line stations on Beacon Street. The MBTA filed extensive paperwork with the state environmental reviewers on Dec. 23; public comments are due Jan. 22. At least one station, Kent Street, is proposed to be eliminated. Construction would begin in the fall of 2025.

And bad news, according to the report, there will be a longer wait for the promised elevators at Hynes. The MBTA seems to blame delays on the future Parcel 13 development, an air rights project filed in 2022 for the corner of Boylston and Mass.

Ave. "Design work has been placed on hold until a funding strategy for construction can be identified."

The E Line also has its own hold up sagas. For example, with the Symphony Station redo, construction bids received in July were deemed too high. Instead, the T will proceed with a Construction Manager at Risk strategy, refining design and reposting the bid package with an anticipated start next summer. It is expected to be a three-year project.

The inaccessible surface stops on the E Line—Back of the Hill, Fenwood, Mission Park, and Riverway—will remain dangerous for at least another three years. Eventually, there will be relocated tracks and raised platforms long enough to serve the new Type 10 trains. The projected schedule has 2029 listed as the earliest possible completion of the work. The redesign would close the Fenwood and Back of the Hill stops due to the complexities of building stations at these locations. According to the report, plans should be completed by the end of 2026 with bids advertised the following year.

*Alison Pultinas lives in Mission Hill.*

## Wall Demolition Under Bowker Overpass

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE EMERALD NECKLACE CONSERVANCY



The Emerald Necklace Conservancy announced that after multiple delays, the wall under the Bowker Overpass (pictured left), north of Comm. Ave., finally came down in mid-December (pictured right), thanks to advocacy and funding from the Conservancy, Charlesgate Alliance, and Massachusetts Department of Conservation & Recreation. Opening up the sightlines along the Muddy River and revealing the size of the parkland is a major step toward the long-term revitalization planned for Charlesgate Park.



# FENSVIEWS

## Local Stories That Mattered in 2024

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

### Alison Pultinas

One of my favorites was Steve Wolf's thoughtful guest opinion piece on the future high rise at 2 Charlesgate West in the May issue: "When Good Buildings Make Bad Neighbors." His writing credits the design firms for their work, while giving a clear explanation of the concerns. It doesn't shout with negativity but poses straightforward questions of costs and benefits that months later we are still debating.

And I must acknowledge my own deep interest at Mass. Ave./Huntington Avenue, or Boston's "Uptown" neighborhood. I loved the opportunity to delve into the history of the Church Park block and the 3,500 seat Loew's State Theater while ostensibly writing about the Astor Station Post Office in the June issue. And earlier in the year I enjoyed collaborating with Alison Barnett for the stories in the February issue on the Gainsborough building at 295 Huntington Ave. Her piece focused on Maud Cuney-Hare and my own on research into so many interesting tenants, especially the dance studios.. I'm excited to share more.

### Carol Lasky

We're steadfastly committed to keeping our communities well informed on the local impacts of development, transportation, housing, environment, and (especially dear to my heart) political issues.

The ongoing coverage of the Muddy River Restoration Project has been commendable; the paper followed the progress of the years-long dredging, landscaping and preservation operations, celebrating milestones, and keeping the public updated on the continuing challenges of stewarding our precious parklands and waterway.

Further back in each issue, The Fenway News elevates art in its myriad local forms of expression. I particularly remember Leslie Pond's review of Steve McQueen's "Lynching Tree" photograph that was on exhibit at the Gardner Museum earlier in the year. This wasn't an easy piece to write. Confronting the singular photograph was an experience of the most personal nature. Leslie brought great sensitivity to her description of the "chilling and emotional" image and accompanying soundscape: "It is one thing to know intellectually about horrors that have occurred and quite another to sit with an image and allow it to evoke distinctly uncomfortable sensations."

### Ruth Khowais

In 2024, we've covered the Muddy River restoration and evolution in the Fenway News, as well as thorough coverage of developers' projects and housing issues. But as I look back at 2024, I'm struck by our wonderful arts coverage.

Our arts coverage is in depth and celebrates smaller local exhibitions, as well as those at the MFA and Gardner. Of note is John Engstrom's thorough coverage of concerts at the BSO, where he delves into the background of the composer as well as the music.

Also, Mary Ann Brogan has kept us up to date with exhibitions at MassArt and has taken excellent photos. In the March issue, she wrote about "The Myth of Normal: A Celebration of Authentic Expression," which celebrated the 150th anniversary of the Massachusetts College of Art and Design. She explained the themes of the exhibit and discussed each work as a form of self-expression.

In July, Steve Wolf wrote about a show at the Mass. Historical Society that had connections to the Fenway: "Boston Views: Through the Lens of Arthur Shurcliff." Shurcliff worked for Frederick Law Olmsted and designed the Rose Garden in the Fenway. The exhibit included slides, drawings, and maps. Wolf points out those of interest to Fenwickians, such as before and after views of Commonwealth Ave. between Mass. Ave and Charlesgate East.

### Leslie Pond

There was no getting around it: I had to place a review of 2024 in the context of the Fenway News's 50th anniversary.

In the very first issue in March 1974, the founders declared, as part of their purpose, "we want to be able to call the Fenway 'home,' not just a place where we live. To maintain a healthy community requires hard work by many people. The FENWAY NEWS will do its part by reporting on the community's accomplishments and its hopes, but it will also be a beacon, illuminating its problems." The paper's motto, "comforting the afflicted and afflicting the comfortable," first appeared on the front page a year later and now is part of the masthead.

Every issue of the Fenway News delivers on both sides of this purpose, with two areas where the spirit of calling out issues is particularly evident.

One area is real estate development, which makes a huge impact in shaping our neighborhoods. The Fenway News's reporting delves into the labyrinth of Boston's real estate development policies and practices, with analysis that cuts through the complexity. Articles such as "Could custom amendment give Charlesgate a pass on park-protecting height limit?" (October), "Abutters raise questions about East Fens proposal" (November), "Resident objections don't seem to slow M.H. projects" (July), and "Strong opposition pushes planning board to delay vote on 80 -100 Smith" (December), among many others, help to spotlight issues, inequities, and residents' influence.

On the flip side of the motto, articles such as "City Puts Lower-Cost Housing in Mission Hill on Fast Track" (January) and "FCDC plans all-affordable housing in the W. Fens" (July) highlight wins in response to Boston's affordable housing shortage.

The second area encompasses guest opinions and letters, which represent the voices of people who live and work in and love our neighborhoods, revealing the local concerns that impact our ability to maintain a healthy community. In 2024, residents, staff at a local community-based organization, and an elected official wrote notable guest opinions on diverse topics, often with calls to action; these included: "Are nonprofits gaming Boston's PILOT program?" (January), "Open Agassiz Road" (February), "New rules boost affordable housing, but we can do even more" (March), "Fair and equitable housing: a call to action" (April), "When good buildings make bad neighbors" (May), and "Ignore process fatigue: Comments still matter in Article 80 update" (November).

And the one that made the deepest impression on me: "Let's fix the hidden burden of housing recertification" (December), in which Fenway resident Myra Shane courageously documents her personal struggle with systemic barriers to affordable housing recertification and calls for low-income tenants who have experienced similar challenges to "stand together and demand change."

If you have a concern, or praise, we encourage you to make a difference by sending a guest opinion or letter to our editor at fenwaynews@gmail.com.

## THE Fenway News

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

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

The founders of The Fenway News adopted this motto to express their mission of exposing and opposing the dangers the neighborhood faced in the early 1970s: rampant arson, predatory landlords, and a destructive urban renewal plan. While the Fenway has changed since then, we remain committed to the spirit of identifying problems and making our neighborhood a better and safer place to live.

> NEXT ISSUE <

Our next issue will appear on Friday, January 31.

> DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS <  
The deadline for letters, news items, and ads for our next issue is Friday, January 24.

## December in the Fenway



The crowds came out for the Fenway Tree Lighting on Dec. 4. See page 7 for more details and photos!

PHOTOS: REPRESENTU LLC (RACHEL WILSON)

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# FENS VIEWS

## Managing Stress in the New Year: Wellness Tips from a Chiropractor

BY DR. INYOUNG YANG, DC

Feeling exhausted in the wake of the always-stressful holiday season? Facing emotional challenges in the new year? Determined to make 2025 your year to feel better and prioritize your health? As a wellness doctor and chiropractor, I've seen firsthand how anxiety can manifest physically, especially in older adults. Here are some simple and effective strategies

### 1. MOVE YOUR BODY

Physical activity is one of the best ways to manage stress. Gentle exercises like walking, tai chi, or yoga help release muscle tension, improve circulation, and boost your mood.

These exercises are especially beneficial for older adults as they maintain flexibility, balance, and mobility. Regular movement helps lower stress hormones and keeps

your body healthy, which is essential for overall well-being. We're fortunate to live in a neighborhood and city that offer so many healthful places to walk.

### 2. FOCUS ON DEEP BREATHING

Stress often leads to shallow breathing, which increases tension in the neck, shoulders, and back. Deep breathing exercises, such as diaphragmatic breathing, can help calm your nervous system and reduce physical tension. Take slow, deep breaths in through your nose, allowing your abdomen to rise, and then breathe out slowly through your mouth. This practice promotes relaxation and can help your body recover from stress.

### 3. IMPROVE YOUR POSTURE

Poor posture can contribute to stressful discomfort, especially you've been sitting for long periods. When you slouch, you place unnecessary strain on your spine, which can

increase muscle tension. Focus on sitting with your feet flat on the floor, your shoulders back, and your head aligned with your spine. Maintaining good posture not only reduces physical discomfort, but also supports your nervous system and helps you feel more centered.

### 4. REGULAR CHIROPRACTIC CARE

Many people experience muscle tightness, headaches, or back pain when things feel out of control emotionally. Chiropractic adjustments can help release built-up tension in your spine, improve nervous system function, and relieve discomfort. Regular chiropractic care is especially beneficial for older adults, as it helps maintain mobility and supports your body's natural ability to manage stress.

### 5. STAY CONNECTED WITH LOVED ONES

Social support is essential for reducing stress. Take the time to talk to family members or friends about your feelings. Sharing your thoughts and concerns can provide emotional relief and help you feel more grounded. Whether it's a simple chat or a deep, ongoing conversation, having a personal support system can make a big difference in managing stress and improving your mental well-being.

### 6. PRIORITIZE RESTFUL SLEEP

Stress often disrupts sleep, but getting adequate rest is vital for recovery. When you sleep, your body heals and restores itself. Establishing a calming bedtime routine can improve the quality of your sleep. Avoid screens before bed, try a warm cup of herbal tea, and listen to relaxing music to help your mind unwind. A good night's sleep will leave you feeling more refreshed and better able to cope with stress.

*Inyoung Yang is the founder and Chiropractor of Record of Evolve Chiropractic & Physical Therapy in the East Fens.*

## GUEST OPINION

## A Reflection at the End of the Legislative Session

BY JONATHAN COHN

When the clock struck midnight and Dec. 31 became Jan. 1, we didn't just enter a new year, we also entered a new session for the Massachusetts Legislature. Now that the 2023-2024 session has wrapped up, it's timely to take stock of what happened. Overall, the session moved slowly, with legislators continuing a trend of consolidating policy changes into large, must-pass bills and taking few contested recorded votes.

### FAIR SHARE

In November 2022, voters approved the Fair Share Amendment, a surtax on income over \$1 million, with the funds dedicated to investments in education and transportation. The benefits have been clear. Because of Fair Share revenue, the Legislature was able to pass permanent universal school meals, free community college, in-state tuition for all students (regardless of immigration status), expanded investments in early education and childcare, fare-free bus service on regional transit authority lines, and new investments for the MBTA. It's been surpassing revenue projections, so there will be more to come.

### TAX CUTS

Although voters sent a message in support of raising revenue to fund critical investments, Healey and the Legislature spent 2023 prioritizing cutting taxes. Almost 40 percent of the 2023 tax package—passed nearly unanimously by the Legislature and supported by the Governor—consisted of regressive tax giveaways, disproportionately benefiting the Commonwealth's richest residents, corporations, and estates. Multimillion-dollar estates received a tax break of almost \$100,000 each. Day traders, speculators, and multinational corporations also come out well ahead. Considering possible steep federal cuts from the new administration in Washington, legislators may soon realize how unwise this focus was.

### HOUSING

Every five to six years, the Massachusetts Legislature passes a housing bond bill to authorize the Commonwealth to borrow funds from the bond market to finance critical investments in affordable housing production and preservation. The topline numbers of this year's bill were higher than those in the past, with important new investments in public housing and decarbonization (although the amount of money that will be spent is unclear). The bill also contained more policy changes than previous bills. The Legislature legalized accessory dwelling units as of right, created a process for sealing eviction records, established a pilot program for foreclosure mediation, and created an Office of Fair Housing, among other steps.

That said, the Legislature left out key pieces of Healey's own proposed bill, such as a measure to allow cities and towns to use real estate transfer fees to raise money for affordable housing (Boston had such a home rule petition, and will need to file in the new session) and lowering the required threshold for passing inclusionary zoning ordinances. The Legislature also refused to take up Boston and other cities' home rule petitions seeking to stabilize rents. And none of these changes would accelerate housing production quickly enough to blunt the impact of the Governor and Legislature's new cuts to emergency shelter stays.

### CLIMATE

The Legislature continued its recent tradition of passing a climate omnibus bill each session, with this session's bill focused on siting reform for renewable energy infrastructure. The bill consolidates local, state, and federal permits to streamline the permitting process; builds community engagement earlier into the siting review process; and strengthens protections for environmental justice communities. The bill also takes steps to accelerate the transition away from gas by authorizing the sale and transmission of utility-scale geothermal, requiring the Department of Public Utilities to consider the public interest in reducing emissions when evaluating gas system expansions, and other steps. The bill also included measures to accelerate the growth of solar and wind, to ensure that clean energy jobs are good-paying union jobs, and to improve the charging infrastructure for electric vehicles.

### GUN CONTROL

Massachusetts typically ranks near the top of states for gun violence prevention, and the robust package passed this summer will continue that legacy. The bill raises the age an individual can own a semi-automatic rifle to 21, cracks down on ghost guns (those that can be created via 3D printing and are thus untraced), updates the state's assault weapons ban, expands the state's "red flag" law, and prohibits firearms in certain sensitive places (such as polling locations and government buildings), and other steps.

### AMONG OTHER HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE LEGISLATIVE SESSION WERE:

- Becoming the fifth state to eliminate fees for phone and video calls in prisons and jails, removing a predatory practice and a barrier to families staying in contact
- Requiring employers to disclose salary ranges for jobs, a move designed to close gender- and race-based salary gaps in the workplace
- Expanding coverage for midwifery, birth centers, doulas, and screening and treatment for postpartum depression
- Enabling candidates to expense childcare to campaign accounts in recognition of the obstacle that such costs pose for parents running for office
- Strengthening the state's public health infrastructure to ensure strong public health protections for all residents regardless of race, income, or zip code
- Taking steps to diversify the educator workforce by establishing an alternative certification process
- Updating our parentage laws to be better inclusive of LGBTQ families and families formed through assisted reproduction
- Authorizing 225 new liquor licenses for Boston, covering the South End, Roxbury, Dorchester, Hyde Park, Jamaica Plain, Roslindale, West Roxbury, East Boston, Charlestown, Mattapan, and Oak Square in Brighton. The Fenway and Mission Hill were not included.

As we enter the second Trump administration, the Legislature will need to step up its game, both to better protect Massachusetts's progress and people from attacks on civil liberties and to better model what an alternative vision of progressive governance can look like.

*Jonathan Cohn is policy director for Progressive Mass and secretary of the Boston Ward 4 Dems. On Monday, Dec 30, the legislature passed two bills (that had been stuck in negotiations since July), one to control health care costs and one to stabilize the health care system.*

## Northeastern's City and Community Engagement Team Celebrates



On Dec. 11, Fenway Civic Association celebrated the Northeastern University City and Community Engagement Team at an event at Tasty Burger Fenway for their commitment to delivering food to residents through the Fenway Cares program. Northeastern students and Fenway Cares volunteers attended.

## IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

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

On Dec. 6, District 7 City Councilor Tania Fernandes Anderson was indicted by a federal grand jury on five counts of wire fraud and one count of theft concerning programs receiving federal funds. In the spring, Fernandes Anderson allegedly gave one of her staffers (who happens to be a distant relative) a \$13,000 bonus. This bonus was twice as large as the total of all other staff bonuses. It is alleged that, at Fernandes Anderson's direction, the staffer then made separate cash withdrawals, then handed the Councilor \$7,000 in cash in a City Hall bathroom. Members of the Council and Mayor Michelle Wu have called for her resignation. However, since her indictment, it has been business as usual, with Fernandes Anderson appearing at Council Hearings. Her next court date is scheduled for Jan. 29. 🐛 **Beth Israel-Deaconess residents announced plans to vote on union membership**



**as yet another Longwood hospital faces unrest within its professional ranks. The BIDMC residents highlighted the disparity between their salaries and the cost of living in Boston, along with other issues. Sound familiar? Maybe because Mass General Brigham residents voted to organize a union in 2023, and just a week before the BIDMC announcement, 400 MGB residents protested outside both the Brigham and MGH to protest lack of progress in contract negotiations. They accused MGB of bargaining in bad faith for months, with the latest pay offer not even matching the rate of inflation.** 🐛 Fenway CDC staffer Sage Carbone doesn't confine her organizing to the Fenway. In 2021 she proposed that Cambridge—where she lives—add Indigenous-language translations to street signs in recognition of the native peoples whose land the city occupies. According to the Globe, last month the city installed the first signs created under the proposal, which grew out of Cambridge's participatory budgeting process, with plans to install 100 signs across East Cambridge.

🐛 **In maybe the most ancient Broadway story line, a show's star falls ill, the understudy steps in with no notice but shines in the part...and a new star is born. This version, however, took place at Symphony Hall in late November when conductor Andris Nelsons left the podium abruptly early in the concert. Sitting in the audience, assistant conductor Samy Rachid went backstage to check on Nelsons. There he learned that in five minutes he'd have to step in and complete the program, which included a piece he'd never rehearsed (or even conducted) before. Of course, you know ICYMI wouldn't mention this if Rachid hadn't won rave notices for his work at the podium.** 🐛 Goodbye to oysters, hello to arancini at the Bower on Beacon Street. For those not obsessively monitoring local restaurants, that means that restaurateur Garrett Harker has opened Standard Italian in the All That Fish & Oyster space after closing the restaurant early in 2024. Even if you don't do the aforementioned obsessive monitoring, you have probably guessed correctly that Standard Italian serves Italian fare. 🐛 **The City's "Boston Family Days" pilot morphed into a full-fledged program with a public/private partnership and three additional participating museums. The Gardner joins the MFA in the program, which allows any school-aged resident to attend the nine museums for free on the first two Sundays of every month. Children can bring up to two other family members.** 🐛

## NEWSLINES

### Muddy River Landscaping Update

On Dec. 27, the Boston Parks and Recreation Department awarded two one-year contracts for landscaping Phase 2 of the Army Corps of Engineers Muddy River Restoration Project. Leahy Landscaping of Lynn won the bid for the north section of the Fens and A&M Home Services of Roxbury the south. Both companies previously worked on the waterfront areas after Phase 1. Responsibilities will include phragmites control, mowing, and general maintenance.

### 112 Queensberry Street Update

On Dec. 10, the Zoning Board of Appeal approved plans by Fenway CDC to replace the vacant laundromat at 112 Queensberry St. with a 24-unit apartment building. The apartment building will include both studios and one-bedroom units—all will be restricted to those making up to 60 percent of the area median income.

### BPS Issues RFP for A New Home for the EMK

Boston Public Schools (BPS) issued an interesting Request for Proposal (RFP) in December with bids due Jan. 27. This is related to the plans for the Edward M. Kennedy Academy for Health Careers (EMK). The Boston high school is currently located in two buildings—the primary one is at 10 Fenwood Rd. in Mission Hill near Brigham and Women's Hospital on Francis Street. Communication from BPS about the future of the school has been minimal, so the RFP is enlightening.

The RFP is titled "Lease and Purchase of Educational Space" and seeks proposals from qualified property owners for a 20- to 25-year lease of approximately 140,000 to 200,000 square feet. This building would serve as the long-term home of EMK, with an option to purchase the property for a nominal fee at the conclusion of the lease term.

With a \$37.8 million Bloomberg Philanthropy grant, which was announced a year ago, BPS seeks to transform EMK into a national model of career-connected learning, eventually doubling their current enrollment. Initially the large grant raised speculation that EMK could be one of the new build projects for Boston. However, the phrase "analyzing site options" used in the BPS Long Term Facilities Plan Update was not auspicious. And as the RFP indicates, BPS is instead looking to acquire a property for a long-term lease.

As described in the October FN story, the school will shut down their Mission Hill campus at the end of the current school year and move 9th and 10th graders temporarily to the former Abraham Lincoln building on Arlington Street in Bay Village. Admission is by lottery. Applications for September 2025 are due Feb. 3.

### Community Preservation Meetings in Full Swing

This month, Boston's Community Preservation Committee (CPC) began their annual fast-paced multiple meetings of reviews to discuss and vote on the historic preservation and open space and recreation applications received in the 2025 funding round. The public meetings are virtual and not recorded. Applications from the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Ruggles Baptist Church, and Mission Grammar School are on the list to be discussed. The CPC did a preliminary vote on the affordable housing proposals at the Dec. 12

meeting—Victory Programs at 81 South Huntington (41 studios) and Mission Hill Pathway at 77 Terrace Street (48 condos) made the final cut.

## SENIOR EVENTS

For more information, view the calendar at [operationpeaceboston.org](http://operationpeaceboston.org) or drop by between 11am to 3pm for a paper calendar. Call 617 536-7154 to get added to the mailing list.

- Tue, Jan. 14 at 12pm: RECYCLED JEWELRY CRAFTS WITH SAGE CARBONE
- Tue, Jan. 21 at 12pm: SCREENING OF "THREE AMIGOS"
- Thu, Jan. 23 at 12pm: CONVERSATION WITH CITY COUNCILOR SHARON DURKAN
- Thu, Jan. 30 at 12pm: SAFETY AND SCAM PRESENTATION WITH OFFICER ELIZABETH EVANS

## @ THE CENTER

The Fenway Community Center is open six days a week. Visit [fenwaycommunitycenter.org](http://fenwaycommunitycenter.org) for details.

- Thu, Jan 16 and 30, 3pm to 4pm: SLOW FLOW YOGA
- Tue, Jan 21, 3:30pm to 5pm: WOMAN'S WELLNESS GROUP
- Sat, Jan 25, 3pm to 5pm: PAINT WITH LYDIA

# Mission Hill Real Estate: EnVision Hotel

BY ALISON PULTINAS

The EnVision Hotel at 81 South Huntington Ave. is a shelter operated by the non-profit Victory Programs. The building sits on the border of Mission Hill and Jamaica Plain, next to The Riverway. Hotel operations ceased during the pandemic and in November 2021 Victory Programs moved in with support from the City and Commonwealth.

Recently the Boston Public Health Commission announced the hotel would be one of the four locations for the harm reduction vending machines, which dispense Narcan and clean syringes for active drug users. Although staff from the facility met in November with the Mission Hill Community Alliance, the topic of the vending machine was not mentioned. Instead, the discussion focused on the future conversion of the building to permanent supportive housing for 41 extremely low-income residents.

Taylor Morley, chief operating officer for Victory Programs, explained that the facility will remain as a shelter [there are currently 55 occupants] for at least two to three years as the renovation plans are made and fundraising continues. On Dec. 26, Morley signed the agreement with the City for the permanent affordable housing restriction and the acquisition of the property from the former hotel operator. The sale price was \$15.75 million.

*Alison Pultinas lives in Mission Hill.*



PHOTO: ALISON PULTINAS

## COMMUNITY meetings

**TUE, JANUARY 7** In 2023, City Councilors and Mayor Michelle Wu approved protections of the city's tree canopy by amending the City of Boston Code. This amended ordinance extends protections to all trees growing on property owned by the City. Within the ordinance is an opportunity for residents to be actively involved in the management of the urban forest through the convening of an **URBAN FORESTRY ADVISORY COMMITTEE**. The next meeting is virtual, and takes place from 6pm to 7:30pm. Check [boston.gov/departments/parks-and-recreation/urban-forestry-advisory-committee#meeting-schedule](https://boston.gov/departments/parks-and-recreation/urban-forestry-advisory-committee#meeting-schedule) for the Zoom link.

**THU, JANUARY 30** The Fenway CDC invites you to share your thoughts about future affordable housing development, organizing, and community programs at their first-ever **COMMUNITY VISION CONVERSATION**. This is one of three Town Hall-style meetings. Childcare will be provided with advance notice. Interpretation services available upon request. 5:30 to 7:30pm. 300 The Fenway, Simmons University. RSVP at [eventbrite.com/e/community-vision-conversation-tickets-1116836842059](https://eventbrite.com/e/community-vision-conversation-tickets-1116836842059). Contact [sfarrell@fenwaycdc.org](mailto:sfarrell@fenwaycdc.org) with questions.

### FREE TRANSPORTATION FOR OLDER ADULTS

Holistic Health Access Initiative is connecting older adults to medical appointments, pharmacies, grocery store trips, and more. Call Age Strong Commission for more information 617-634-4366.



## Book Northeastern's Event Space, Northeastern Crossing

Northeastern University's City and Community Engagement provides individuals with complimentary access to a conference room and classroom space. Advance reservations are required for both spaces. Event organizers may only host programming that is free to participants.

BOOK HERE:



1175 Tremont St, Boston, MA 02120



[communityengagement@northeastern.edu](mailto:communityengagement@northeastern.edu)



[communityengagement.northeastern.edu](https://communityengagement.northeastern.edu)



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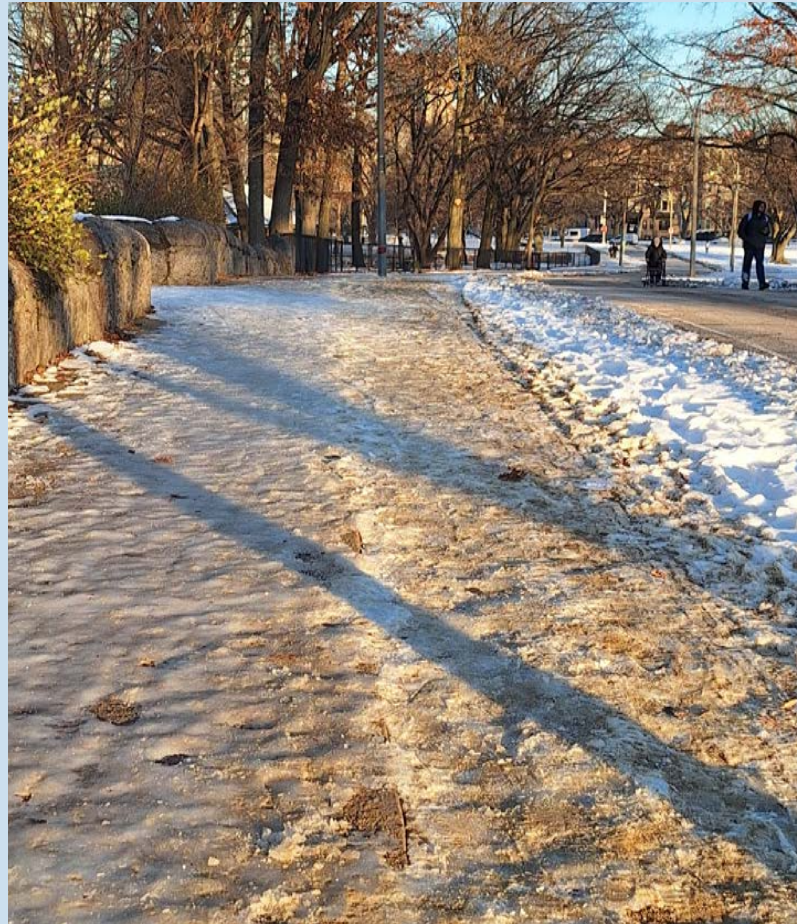


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**N** Northeastern University  
City and Community Engagement

## ICY SIDEWALKS IN THE FENWAY

PHOTOS: LESLIE POND



We truly appreciate District 8 City Councilor Sharon Durkan’s timely email on Dec. 21, which stated “Let’s fight the formation of ice patches on our sidewalks!” It encouraged neighbors to “grab a shovel or spread some ice melt before the freeze sets.” Most property owners took heed and cleared the walkways in front of their buildings (left). To avoid fines, Boston property owners must clear sidewalks and curb ramps within three hours after it has stopped snowing.

However, the Fenway has stretches of sidewalk that—for many years—have often been covered with ice in the winter. Two of these are the main thoroughfares between the East Fens and West Fens: Boylston Street between the Victory Gardens and the John Boyle O’Reilly Memorial (center, on Dec. 23), and Agassiz Road.

Spending a few minutes along Agassiz Road on Dec. 26 revealed the challenges for pedestrians. One person using a walker took to the street because both sidewalks were covered in snow, ice, and sand (right). Other pedestrians did the same. Luckily, cars were infrequent. Some people dragged their grocery carts through the snow and dirt. Those who braved the icy sidewalk often slipped and slid. “I almost just fell down,” said West Fenway denizen Walter Platt, Jr.

While spreading sand over snow and ice helps a little, it’s clearly not enough to enable safe walking. Who has responsibility for clearing the snow and ice along this section of Boylston Street, Agassiz Road, and other neglected sidewalks (not in front of buildings) in our neighborhoods?

- Leslie Pond

## MassArt Honors Frederick Wiseman

PHOTO: ALISON PULTINAS



In the words of MassArt president Dr. Mary Grant, the annual Common Good Awards ceremony at MassArt’s Design and Media Center celebrates how art and design are central to civic life. The public event on Dec. 7 recognized six individuals, including Fredrick Wiseman, a documentary filmmaker for more than 50 years, who turned 95 on Jan. 1.

In her introduction, Dr. Grant described him as an icon and major contributor to American cultural history, art, and social justice. “I like making movies,” he said. Then, he ended his thank you speech paraphrasing someone he called “a famed American philosopher,” Hollywood producer Samuel Goldwyn, who said a version of: “if you want to send a message, send a telegram.”

- Alison Pultinas



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# COMMUNITY VISION CONVERSATION

## WITH FENWAY CDC

Please join us and share your thoughts about our future affordable housing development, organizing, and community programs.


THURSDAY, JANUARY 30, 2025

5:30 PM - 7:30 PM

300 THE FENWAY

Simmons University

Join us for in-depth conversation and refreshments. Childcare will be provided with advance notice. Interpretation services available upon request. Contact [sfarrell@fenwaycdc.org](mailto:sfarrell@fenwaycdc.org) with questions.

RSVP NOW

<<<<




Fenway Community Development Corporation  
Improving Lives and Building Community

# The Arts

## Elena Todd Checks on Streetfeet Archive in Mission Hill

PHOTO: ALISON PULTINAS



Writer and actress Elena Dodd of Putney, Vermont visited the Parker Hill Library in December to check on the archive she created in the 1990s to document Streetfeet. The multicultural theater program was active in Mission Hill for more than 15 years beginning in 1975. The oak cabinet contains memorabilia—programs, scripts, and photographs from performances and workshops held outdoors—at the library and the Tobin Community Center. The archive is accessible to the public. Dodd is working on a new index for the material. A dedication ceremony in 1991 honored the gift of the cabinet from local carpenter Bill Iacono.

## Holiday Happenings Around the Fenway

PHOTOS: MALLORY ROHRIG



On Dec. 14, the Fenway Community Center held a Holiday Market featuring local artists and craftspeople.

PHOTOS: JEREMIAH ROBINSON (MAYOR'S OFFICE)

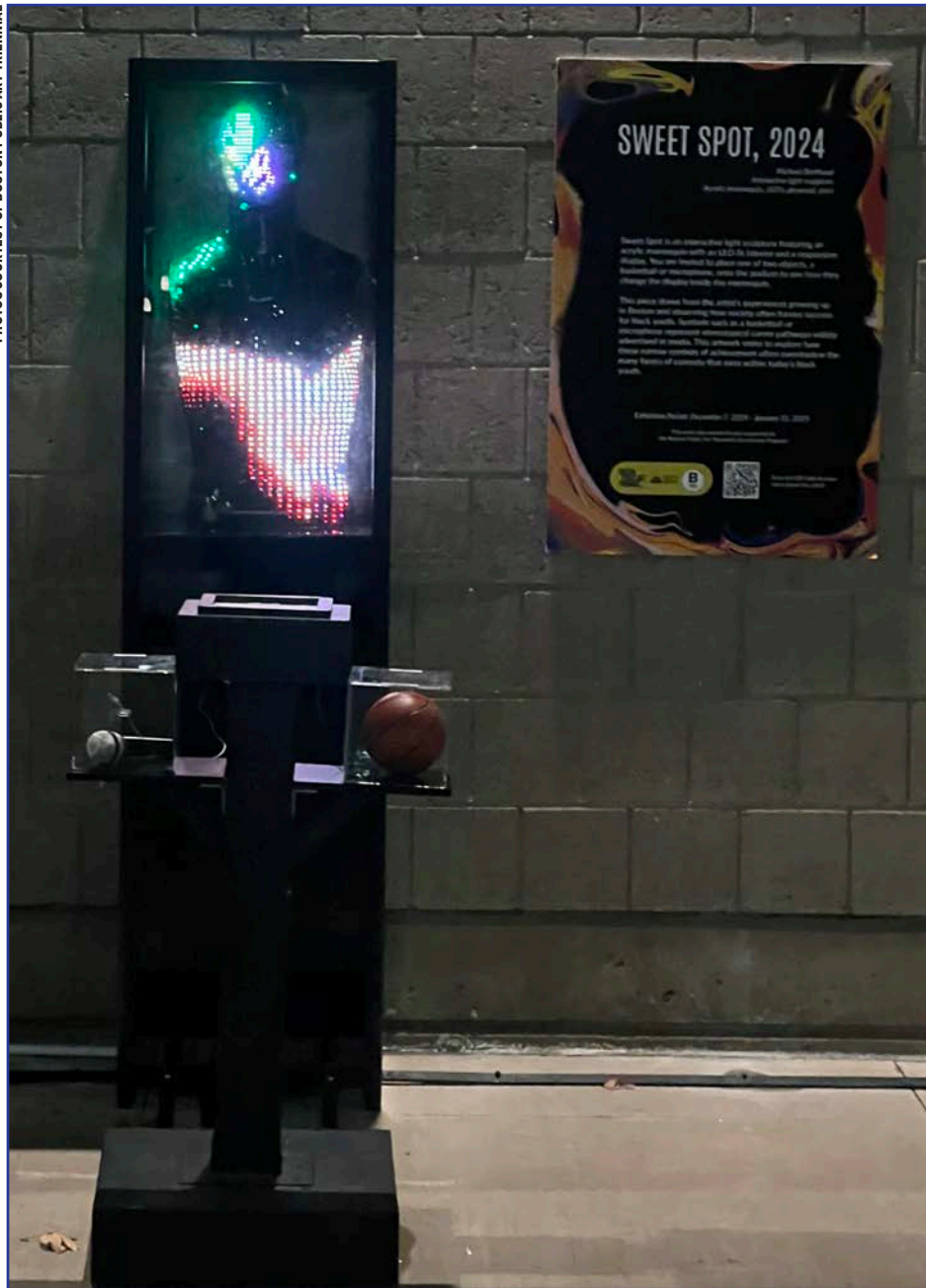


On Dec. 4, the The Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services, Fenway Civic Association, and Samuels & Associates hosted the annual Fenway Tree Lighting. The event featured the Boston Children's Choir (left photo), remarks from elected officials (District 8 City Councilor Sharon Durkan is pictured center), the tree lighting, a luminary walk, and more.

# The Arts

## Michael Berthaud Unveils “Sweet Spot” in Nubian Square

PHOTOS COURTESY OF BOSTON PUBLIC ART TRIENNIAL



Michael Berthaud (pictured below), a 23-year-old multimedia artist, grew up in Mission Hill, where he observed how narrow society’s view of black youth success can be.

“Symbols such as a basketball or microphone represent stereotypical career pathways widely advertised in media. It’s important to visualize the many different interests that youth within Roxbury engage in,” Berthaud said in a press release.

In response, he created “Sweet Spot,” (pictured left) an interactive light sculpture featuring an acrylic mannequin with an LED-lit interior and responsive display.

“Sweet Spot” visitors can place a basketball or microphone box onto the sculpture’s podium to see how they change the display inside the mannequin.

The goal of his project “is to visualize the ways in which stereotypical representations in media subtly erode the imagination and creativity of black youth,” Berthaud said. “This artwork seeks to explore how these narrow symbols of achievement often overshadow the many facets of curiosity that exist within today’s black youth.”

Berthaud, who is working as a game designer after graduating from Boston Latin School and Wentworth Institute of Technology, was selected as one of four Accelerator Artists this year with the Boston Public Art Triennial.

“Sweet Spot” is on view outside the Nubian Square Branch of the Boston Public Library, 149 Dudley St., through Jan. 31, 2025.

- Kelsey Bruun



# January

## CALENDAR

ALL CALENDAR EVENTS ARE FREE UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED

### Now ➔ Sun, 1/12

Celebrate printmaking at the Fenway Gallery’s exhibition **MUTUAL INSPIRATION: PRINTMAKING ACROSS GENERATIONS**, which showcases the reciprocal inspiration of Boston master printmakers and their students. Open Sat. and Sun. 1pm to 4pm. 30 Ipswich St. [fenwaygallery.org](http://fenwaygallery.org).

### Sat, 1/4, 1/11, 1/18, & 1/25

**MINDFUL MOVEMENT** is a series of yoga classes for adults ages 55 and older. Yoga mats and props will be provided, and all experience levels are welcome. The program is made possible by New England Baptist Hospital, Friends of The Parker Hill Branch Library, and The Mission Hill Health Movement. 10am to 11am. Parker Hill Branch Library, 1497 Tremont St., Roxbury. Pre-registration is required at [bpl.bibliocommons.com/events/66fbabd47fde612f00edce36](http://bpl.bibliocommons.com/events/66fbabd47fde612f00edce36).

### Mon, 1/6

- The **PARKER HILL WRITING GROUP** offers a monthly gathering of writers dedicated to honing their craft, exploring new ideas, and sharing their works in progress. All writers, regardless of experience level or genre preference, are welcome. The group offers a supportive environment that enables creativity to thrive and helps participants to grow as writers. This is not a class, but rather a space to let your creative juices flow. 4:30pm to 5:30pm. Parker Hill Branch Library, 1497 Tremont St. Info at [bpl.bibliocommons.com/events/6761843ad6b435360093ea61](http://bpl.bibliocommons.com/events/6761843ad6b435360093ea61).

- With the new year comes a new tax season. In the BPL’s webinar **TALK TAX: CHOOSING A RETURN/GHOST PREPARER**, Jill Maniacci, a senior stakeholder liaison with the Internal Revenue Service, will discuss choosing a reputable tax preparer, with tips from the IRS, and additional topics. 6pm to 7:30pm. Online. Register at [bpl.bibliocommons.com/events/6765dfe374596c36004d2332](http://bpl.bibliocommons.com/events/6765dfe374596c36004d2332).

### Tue, 1/7

- Join the BPL’s **GENTLE YOGA** class, where John McDonough, a community yoga teacher, will guide you through a mindful yoga flow. McDonough is a 500-hour registered yoga teacher who trained at Down Under studios in Brookline where he lives. He has been teaching yoga in community settings since 2016. His philosophy: “It’s your class, not mine.” Registration is highly encouraged. Bring a yoga mat if you are able to do so; a limited number of mats will be available. 6pm to 7pm. Central Library in Copley Square. [bpl.bibliocommons.com/events/66ed7d55d8ab2766a0c48d7a](http://bpl.bibliocommons.com/events/66ed7d55d8ab2766a0c48d7a)
- Learn about **DELICIOUS WAMPANOAG COOKING: FOODS OF THE WINTER MOON** in educator and artist Elizabeth James-Perry’s webinar, which focuses on nutritious winter foods long cultivated and wild-harvested by Northeastern Native communities. Tribal cuisine employed a combination of foods that stored well, supplemented with hunting and ice fishing. James-Perry, who is enrolled with the Aquinnah Wampanoag tribe on Noepe/Martha’s Vineyard, will also share how New England tribal communities have looked to keep and revive traditional foods to stay healthy

and build resiliency, a movement called food sovereignty. 6:30pm to 7:45pm. Online via the BPL. Register at [bpl.bibliocommons.com/events/6733b156463ec42e3d2120ad](http://bpl.bibliocommons.com/events/6733b156463ec42e3d2120ad).

### Fri, 1/10

Join a discussion with experts, researchers, and practitioners on the **INTERSECTION OF COMMUNITY AND MUSIC**, part of the Berklee Music and Health Institute Exchange Series, to learn about the impact of community music on health and well-being. 10am. David Friend Recital Hall, 921 Boylston St. [berklee.edu/events/berklee-music-and-health-institute-exchange-series-intersection-of-community-and-music](http://berklee.edu/events/berklee-music-and-health-institute-exchange-series-intersection-of-community-and-music).

### Sat, 1/11

At the BPL’s **ARTIST TALK: KAREN MOSS - BANNED BOOK PROJECT 2025**, learn how Moss uses art to focus on the challenges posed by book banning. In addition, two of the participants in her exhibition will share how their reading experiences affected their life choices and current professions. 2pm to 3pm. Central Library in Copley Square. More info at [bpl.bibliocommons.com/events/67633329fea9b97171fbdabf](http://bpl.bibliocommons.com/events/67633329fea9b97171fbdabf).

### Mon, 1/20

Boston Cares offers flexible volunteer opportunities to fit your schedule. Join an in-person New Volunteer Orientation to learn more, as part of their **20TH ANNUAL MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY SERVICE EVENT**. The registration fee will be waived for this special session. 12pm to 1pm. Boston Latin School, 78 Avenue Louis Pasteur. Sign up and find additional volunteer activities at [bostoncares.org/mlkday](http://bostoncares.org/mlkday).

## FREE TAX PREPARATION

From Jan. 16 to April 10, Vita Free Tax Preparation offers drop off and remote tax assistance for individuals with a household income of \$70,000 or less. Every Thursday during tax season at the BPL’s Kirstein Business Library & Innovation Center. 10am to 7pm. Central Library in Copley Square. Learn more at [bpl.bibliocommons.com/events/6728f57f54a602ae2c37d1a2](http://bpl.bibliocommons.com/events/6728f57f54a602ae2c37d1a2).

### Thu, 1/23 ➔ Sun, 4/13

MassArt Art Museum’s exhibition **“FUTURE FOSSILS”** presents a possible future view of the present. The artworks—imagined relics—come from artists based in North America, Latin America, and Europe. 621 Huntington Avenue. More info at [maam.massart.edu/exhibition/future-fossils](http://maam.massart.edu/exhibition/future-fossils).

### Sat, 1/25

The Huntington presents **THE RESET**, an immersive take on a “sound bath” and is created and performed by singer and sound healing artist Davin Youngs. The community is invited to bring their yoga mat and join on stage, in the orchestra, or in the seats of the Huntington Theatre at either 12pm or 4pm. Tickets start at \$25 and are available online at [huntingtontheatre.org](http://huntingtontheatre.org) or by phone at (617) 266-0800. 264 Huntington Ave.